



Bulletin 2: Summer 2016

Greetings from the Office of the Registrar & Student Services at St. Michael's College.

This is the second of eight bulletins. The focus of the bulletin this week is making sense of the Calendar and Registration Instructions & Timetable

1. The Calendar and the Timetable: What Matters?

In Bulletin 1, we directed you to the [2016-2017 Calendar](#) and the [2016-2017 Registration Instructions & Timetable](#). If you explored these two documents, you might have thought something like, “That’s too much information!” Now, if time were not an issue, we would recommend that you read through both documents in their entirety. But since it would take much too long to do this, we will recommend the most *important* sections to review over the coming weeks.

Let’s first start with the Calendar.

To get at what the most relevant sections of the Calendar are, let’s start with an important question: what is the primary objective of attending university? The answer: to obtain a degree. With this end in mind, you need to figure out what the necessary steps are to achieve it. This leads us to the [Degree Requirements](#) section of the Calendar. In this section, you will see what conditions you need to satisfy in order to graduate.

There are five different conditions that need to be satisfied in order to graduate. They fall under the following headings:

- Number of Credits
- Level of Credits
- Program Requirements
- Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)
- Breadth Requirement

Of these five conditions, the one that requires the most explanation is the third: Program Requirements.

As you can see from the chart in the Degree Requirements section, a student must complete an appropriate combination of programs: (i) 1 specialist, or (ii) 2 majors, or (iii) 1 major + 2 minors. Before we speak more about *levels* of programs—specialists, majors, and minors—we need to take a step back: what is a *program*? A program is a group of courses in a specific area. You have likely heard people say things like, “I study Philosophy” or “I’m a Biology student.” This means that Philosophy and Biology are these students’ programs. Importantly, programs come in different levels. The difference between different levels of programs is the number of credits required for completion. Here is the breakdown:

- *Specialists* require between 9-14 credits.
- *Majors* require between 6-8 credits.
- *Minors* require 4 credits.

This discussion of programs leads us to a second important area in the Calendar: the [Programs and Courses](#) section. In this section, you can view the array of different programs and courses that the Faculty of Arts & Science has on offer. As you prepare for course enrolment, you should consult this section quite a bit. Why? Well, because the courses you should choose will be determined by the *programs you’re interested in applying to at the end of first year*. (This is a point we’ll discuss more fully in Bulletin 3.) Program enrolment takes place once a student has completed 4.0 credits (i.e., usually the end of first year), and some programs have admission requirements. In the Programs and Courses section, you can check out what the admission requirements are for different programs you might be interested in. When it comes time for course enrolment, you ought to enrol in courses that will put you in a position to pursue programs (and further courses) you’re interested in.

Having now look at the Degree Requirements section and Program and Courses section of the Calendar, you might now be thinking about trying to put together your schedule for the upcoming year. This brings us to the second online resource you need to be familiar with: the Registration Instructions & Timetable.

As the name suggests, this resource has two parts: the Registration Instructions and the Timetable. The Registration Instructions are made up of six steps that you need to follow in order to successfully register for classes. We recommend reading through each of the six steps—none of which is too much reading—in order to be prepared for the autumn. The [Timetable](#) is where you can view details about course offerings for the 2016-2017 Fall/Winter Session. As you can see, you are able to search programs (e.g., Philosophy) and, more specifically, courses (e.g., PHL100Y1). By searching for courses, you will be able to find details about this year's offerings: when a class takes places, where it takes places, who is teaching it, how many spots are available, etc.

2. FAQs

We will close by looking at a few frequently asked questions about information that can be found in the Calendar or Registration Instructions & Timetable.

Question 1. Where can I find information about important dates like when classes start and the last day I can drop a class from my academic record?

- There are two places: the [Sessional Dates](#) section in the Calendar, and the Important Dates ([2016 Fall](#) & [2017 Winter](#)) section in the Registration Instructions & Timetable.

Question 2. How do I find out when course enrolment begins?

- Course enrolment dates can be found in [Step 4](#) of the Registration Instructions & Timetable. (As you will see, course enrolment for first-year students begins on July 28th.)

Question 3. The jargon used for programs and course codes is confusing: is there a place that explains what the different numbers and letters mean?

- Yes, the [Guide to Program & Course Descriptions](#) section of the Calendar does just that.

In Bulletin 3, the focus will be course selection. In particular, we will discuss *how* you should decide which courses to take during your first year in the Faculty of Arts & Science.

Regards,

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