MASTER OF SCIENCE IN APPLIED COMPUTING

2021–22 STUDENT HANDBOOK

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE
MScAC – STUDENT HANDBOOK 2021/22

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Master of Science in Applied Computing (MScAC) program.

The MScAC Student Handbook describes degree requirements, financial support, and other matters of interest to MScAC students. The handbook is revised annually. Students will be notified by e-mail of significant changes and upcoming deadlines. Please visit the MScAC website regularly at mscac.utoronto.ca

DEPARTMENT BUILDINGS

The Department of Computer Science is located in four buildings on the downtown (St. George) campus of the University of Toronto:

- Ontario Power Building (9th Floor, 700 University Avenue)
- Bahen Centre for Information Technology (40 St. George Street)
- D.L. Pratt Building (6 King's College Road)
- Sandford Fleming Building (10 King's College Road)

The MScAC student offices are located on the ninth floor of the Ontario Power Building. See: https://goo.gl/maps/Frzf4ECsaF1E2iUD8
# IMPORTANT CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Director, Professional Programs</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>BA 4281</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>Alan Rosenthal</td>
<td>BA 3218</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pocpm@cs.toronto.edu">pocpm@cs.toronto.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration begins</td>
<td>July 19, 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolment in CS courses begins</td>
<td>July 27, 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolment in STA courses begins (Data Science concentration students)</td>
<td>July 27, 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolment in STA courses begins (Other concentration students)</td>
<td>August 24, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolment in Math courses begins</td>
<td>August 24, 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolment in Physics courses begins</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Payment of tuition fees deadline</td>
<td>August 27, 2021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearing admission conditions</td>
<td>August 31, 2021</td>
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<td>Orientation 2021 &amp; Communication for Computer Scientists starts.</td>
<td>Week beginning August 30, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall graduate courses in CS begin*</td>
<td>September 9, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration ends. Payment deadline for any unpaid Fall semester tuition and fees.</td>
<td>September 10, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final date to add fall courses</td>
<td>September 20, 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final date to drop fall courses without academic penalty</td>
<td>October 25, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARIA</td>
<td>November/early December 2021 (Date TBC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration deadline for any unpaid Winter semester tuition and fees</td>
<td>November 30, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall term ends</td>
<td>December 21, 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>University closed for winter break</td>
<td>December 22, 2021 – January 2, 2022</td>
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**Winter 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>University re-opens</td>
<td>January 3, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter graduate courses in CS begin*</td>
<td>January 10, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final date to add winter courses</td>
<td>January 17, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARIE</td>
<td>Week beginning January 24, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final date to drop winter courses</td>
<td>February 20, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter term classes end</td>
<td>April 14, 2022</td>
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</table>

*For courses outside of CS, check with the home department.*

Full details of sessional dates throughout the academic year can be found on the SGS website: [sgs.calendar.utoronto.ca/sessional-dates](https://sgs.calendar.utoronto.ca/sessional-dates)
FEES AND FINANCES

The MScAC is a stand-alone program that is funded independently of the Department of Computer Science operating budget. Students in the program do not generally have an option to defer their fees*. You are expected to pay the minimum amount to register by August 27, 2021, to avoid cancellation of your “invited” registration status.

Domestic students may be eligible for government loans such as OSAP, the Ontario Student Assistance Program. See: ontario.ca/page/osap-ontario-student-assistance-program

You are eligible to apply for Teaching Assistantship (TA) positions. These will be posted in early July, and all students in the graduate programs are invited to apply at that time. Please note that must apply for a TA position to be made an offer. You will be notified about the course(s) for which you were selected as a Teaching Assistant by the first full week of September.

Students in financial difficulty may wish to consult a Financial Advisor at the School of Graduate Studies, 63 St. George Street. An advisor can help with budgeting and may have knowledge of various bursaries, grants, loans or other financial aid to help a student experiencing financial hardship. See: sgs.utoronto.ca/awards-funding/financial-aid-advising

*Students, including those in receipt of OSAP, CSL, US student loans or any major awards that cover the Minimum Required Payment may be able to defer their fees via ACORN.
PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Overview

The MScAC program is a 16-month applied research program designed to educate the next generation of world-class innovators. Students register in advanced graduate courses in disciplines such as computer science, statistics, mathematics, physics or related fields. They also complete an eight-month paid applied research internship, normally with an industry partner.

Typical program schedule for MScAC students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 (Semester 1: Sept – Dec)</th>
<th>Year 1 (Semester 2: Jan – April)</th>
<th>Year 1 (Semester 3: May – Aug)</th>
<th>Year 2 (Semester 4: Sept – Dec)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSC2701H</td>
<td>CSC2701H</td>
<td>CSC2702H</td>
<td>CSC2702H</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two approved graduate courses</td>
<td>Two approved graduate courses</td>
<td>Applied research internship</td>
<td>Applied research Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Résumé preparation begins</td>
<td>Applied Research Internship Expo (ARIE) &amp; interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applied Research in Action (ARIA) showcase + final report submission</td>
</tr>
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</table>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The first eight months (two semesters) of the program will be spent completing coursework. As an MScAC student, you must complete two mandatory courses:

CSC2701H – Communication for Computer Scientists
CSC2702H – Technical Entrepreneurship

Additionally, you must complete a minimum of four technical graduate courses, equivalent to at least 2.0 Full Course Equivalents (FCEs) and receive a minimum passing grade of B- (70%) in each course. Only then will you be deemed to have made satisfactory academic progress in the program.

You must have made satisfactory academic progress by the end of the second semester to proceed to the internship component of the program. If you have not made satisfactory academic progress by the end of the second semester, you must immediately contact the Program Manager to determine your options and next steps.

CHOOSING COURSES

Computer Science Concentration

You are required to take a “T” shaped set of courses, in which you strive for some breadth across computer science and some depth in one sub-area. To meet the breadth requirement, start by reading the course descriptions, and correlating these with the courses offered in the 2021-22 course schedule. Select three courses from three different research areas to ensure breadth, and two courses in the same research area to ensure depth.

You also have the option to choose graduate courses from departments other than Computer Science. In the past students have taken courses in Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics, but courses in other departments are also possible. You will need permission from the MScAC Academic Support for any
course you choose outside of Computer Science. You may also require permission from the respective department through their Graduate Administrator. This can be done by using the Add/Drop course form available from the SGS website and submitting it to the MScAC Program Assistant.

**Data Science Concentration**

Students in the Data Science concentration are required to complete:

- 2 graduate courses (1.0 FCE) from the Computer Science department in two different research areas
- STA2453H (Data Science Methods, Collaboration and Communication)
- An additional graduate course from the Statistics department at STA2000 level or higher totaling 0.5 FCE. Note that some of the courses at STA4500 level and higher are six-week modular courses at 0.25 FCE each.

It may be possible to take courses from departments other than Computer Science and Statistics. Your course selection must be approved by the Director, Data Science Programs

**Applied Mathematics Concentration**

Students in the Applied Mathematics concentration are required to complete:

- 2 graduate courses (1.0 FCE) from the Computer Science department in two different research areas
- 2 graduate courses (1.0 FCE) from the Mathematics department’s course offerings.

It may be possible to take courses from departments other than Computer Science and Mathematics. Your course selection must be approved by the Applied Mathematics Concentration Lead

**Quantum Computing Concentration**

Students in the Quantum Computing concentration are required to complete:

- 2 graduate courses (1.0 FCE) from the Computer Science department in two different research areas
- 2 graduate courses (1.0 FCE) from the Physics department’s course offerings.

It may be possible to take courses from departments other than Computer Science and Physics. Your course selection must be approved by the Quantum Computing Concentration Lead

**Additional information and considerations**

Ensuring you acquire breadth in a number of areas is an important learning outcome of the MScAC program. Broad exposure to new topics and techniques may inspire your choice of the applied research project and create a stronger foundation for your career. We strongly encourage you to work with the MScAC program team and your respective concentration lead to seek out a diverse set of courses that allow you to benefit from the world-class expertise in our departments.

There are two possibilities for distributing your course work over the two semesters. Most often students enrol in two regular graduate courses for credit in each of the first two academic terms. Alternatively, you may wish to enrol in three courses in the Fall semester and one in the Winter semester. The latter arrangement is used by students who want to place additional emphasis on finding the appropriate internship during the Winter semester.

One strategy used by some students is to enrol in several courses in the Fall semester to ascertain their interests and gauge workload, "dropping down" to either two or three courses before the drop date. In
making this decision, it is important to remember that the workload is normally heaviest towards the end of the semester.

You may wish to sit-in on or audit additional graduate courses. This is an excellent way to learn additional material in areas of interest to you without taking on significant coursework. Please ask the course instructor ahead of time if they will allow auditing, and/or request instructions from the respective department's Graduate Administrator on how to access the course, if permission is granted.

You should also participate in departmental and MScAC academic activities, such as seminars offered by various research groups or industry partners. Seminars allow you to appreciate the latest research in a field and are a chance to meet professors, industry partners and other graduate students.

**COURSE SCHEDULES**

See the current selection of graduate courses:

- Computer Science graduate courses
- Statistical Sciences graduate courses
- Mathematics graduate courses
- Physics graduate courses
THE INTERNSHIP PROCESS

The second eight months of the MScAC program are spent undertaking an applied research internship. This internship is a formal requirement of the program that begins after you show satisfactory academic progress through completing your coursework.

If you are an international student, you must ensure that you hold a valid work permit by May 1 allowing you to work full-time with the industry partner during the internship period. We recommend that you apply for your work permit at the same time as applying for your study permit, so that you have the required documentation right from the start of the program. If your work permit is not issued when you reach the port-of-entry in Toronto, you should contact the Program Manager, MScAC for an updated letter so that you can submit a work permit application in Canada as quickly as possible.

Details on how to apply for work permits are available from the Immigration and Citizenship Canada website: canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/intern.html

What is an applied research internship?

An applied research internship usually involves research aggregation, namely the exploration and synthesis of research results into an evaluation, study or demonstrable, industrially relevant prototype.

In the service of a company, it is expected that you will leverage your graduate academic training and past experience to explore new initiatives, improvements in process or product, or new designs that could be of potential impact. Your internship may require you to work on explorations that a company might not otherwise perform. This requires a higher standard of creative or intellectual exploration than would normally be encountered in an undergraduate co-operative (co-op) work term. For example, a role consisting only of programming tasks would likely not qualify as a research internship. That said, the scope of the MScAC internship will often involve coding or systems development that leads to a contribution to the company’s product or service offering.

Finding an internship

While the MScAC program has significant infrastructure to assist you with finding your internship, it is your responsibility to secure an internship.

The typical internship-finding timeline for projects found by our Research and Business Development team is below. However, you are also strongly encouraged to also do your own search for industry partners that may be interested in taking you on as an applied research intern. If you are finding your own internship, you must reach out to the Research and Business Development team so that they are aware of your intended search and keep the team updated with your progress. The program will get in contact with industry partners who are seriously considering you, prior to you accepting or declining an offer. The industry partners will be informed of the details of the MScAC program and the requirements for research internships. This is critical as some companies may not fully appreciate the differences between an applied research internship and a co-op job.

All internships must be approved by the Academic Director and normally have a start date during the first week of May. Further details of the internship process will be given over the course of the program.

Typical Internship-Finding Timeline

- September 2021 – January 2022

You will begin preparing a one-page résumé in September. Between late October and January 2021, we will go through various iterations of your résumé with you to ensure the content is clear and accurate. You will also receive training in how to conduct your internship search through “The Job Hunt” module in
Communication for Computer Scientists (CSC2701H). The program will also begin soliciting projects from companies interested in taking on students for applied-research internships.

- Week beginning January 17, 2022

You begin reviewing the curated internship positions the program has identified. Concurrently, industry partners offering those internships will be given access to all résumés of MScAC students. We encourage students to contact industry partners whose projects are of interest to them.

We bring industry partners on campus to engage with you through our multi-day Applied Research Internship Expo (ARIE). During and immediately after the event, industry partners may contact you (or you may contact them) for information and to schedule interviews. This process normally takes 2-4 weeks but may go on longer as you become more aware of the diverse range of opportunities.

- Mid February and onwards

The job offer system management system opens 1 - 2 weeks after ARIE has concluded. For an offer to be considered official by the program, an industry partner must upload the offer into the offer management system. You must accept the offer via the offer management system. Verbal offers made during the process are not considered official. Students should resist declining interviews or declining/accepting offers until they have accepted an official offer through the offer management system.

Choosing your internship

You may get multiple internship offers and we strongly recommend that you look beyond the compensation level when choosing your internship by also taking the following into account:

- Quality of the research you will perform;
- Work environment you will be in;
- The team with which you will be working;
- Supervision you will receive; and
- Possibilities for personal growth and professional development.

Remember that the internship is the research component of your degree and addressing an interesting challenge will be helpful for your career. Some of the most rewarding internships that past students undertook were with non-profit companies, hospitals or start-ups. These organizations may not have the ability to match salaries of larger firms but may compensate for this in other ways.

Compensation for internships

When we recruit companies to our program, we tell them that the average funding level is approximately $65K for the previous eight-month period and we inform them of various mechanisms they can use to help offset some of their costs. However, your compensation is decided between you and the company and we will not negotiate compensation with the company on your behalf.

Academic supervision

After accepting an internship offer from a company, you are expected to find an academic supervisor with whom you will collaborate to address the intellectual challenges of the research over the course of the internship. We require MScAC students to meet with their supervisors a minimum of six times over the course of the internship and provide suggested checkpoints accordingly (see Appendix 1), hold any industry-academic oriented grants you may apply for (subject to company approval), and approve your final internship report. You will also have an industry supervisor appointed by the company, to whom you will report routinely. It is beneficial—but not required—for your academic and industry supervisors to
meet, so they can establish an effective way to guide your work. This may also lead to other opportunities for collaboration.

Applied Research in Action (ARIA) showcase

During your internship, you are required to participate in the ARIA showcase. ARIA is an opportunity for you to present the research you have performed during your internship and to highlight your accomplishments within the program. This event has become incredibly popular and we now see academic and industry supervisors, prospective students and companies, department members, and MScAC alumni in attendance. Many past students have reported this event as critical to developing a deep network of contacts.

Midway through the internship (September 2022), we will request materials for your ARIA presentation and will detail the process for your participation. If any issues arise concerning participation at ARIA, please contact the Program Manager immediately to discuss.

Internship Report

You are required to submit an “Internship Report” that details the research you undertook during your internship. This report will be read and signed off by your academic and industry supervisors and then by a member of the MScAC program team. All students are required to submit their report and have it signed off near the end of the eight-month internship period.

This report will form part of the file used to assess whether you have met the program requirements or not. It will not be distributed beyond the program administration; however, you should be sensitive to keeping the report sufficiently general to avoid divulging confidential company information. You should have your industry supervisor review your report ahead of submission to your academic supervisor or the program team, to ensure that the level of detail you are providing is appropriate.

The report should include:

- **Background Information:**
  - The name of the industry partner and a short description of the organization.
  - An overview and context of the overall problem the industry partner is trying to address.
  - Your original role and expected outcomes.

- **Research goals and outcomes:**
  - Description of the research problem and goals for your project.
  - How your role and expectations changed over time and the goals you were able to achieve.
  - Literature review to place your project in a broader context within the existing literature.

- **Methods you deployed:**
  - Detail the research you did and the methodology you deployed, in order to arrive at your results.
  - Explain the purpose for each step (citing proper literature), explain why (reason) it was performed and how it was done.

- **Results and Discussions:**
  - Key findings that answer your research problem and evaluation that proves your contribution.
  - Figures, graphs, and tables that outline your findings. These should be understandable on their own independent of the text.
  - Interpret and analyze the results for the reader to demonstrate how they answer the research questions introduced at the beginning. Include anything that was unexpected or particularly insightful about what you did.
• Conclusions and future research plans
  o Present your original work and outline its significance
  o Impact of your work on the company: how the company will benefit from the work you have done. For example, if you developed a new algorithm, how else might it be used? If you implemented and tested an advanced technique, what was learned that could influence future uses of that technique?
  o Future Work: other research questions that arose out of what you did and/or further planned areas of development for this project.
  o Any publications, patents, or other intellectual property that may come out of this work.

You may also wish to include other issues as you see fit. A frequent question concerns the length of the report. As a general guide, two pages is too short, and more than ten pages is too long. But we are more concerned that you have adequately addressed all the issues than we are with measuring report length.

Completing the Internship & Graduating from the MScAC Program

At the end of November, we will distribute the documentation required to formally complete the degree. This will include the formal sign-off forms that require signatures from your industry and academic supervisors for your internship report, an “MScAC Completion” form and “Convocation Completion” form with the latter two submitted to the MScAC Program Office.

Once these documents are submitted and accepted, a “Recommendation for a Master’s Degree” will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and your name will be added to the convocation register. A graduation package will be sent to you from the Office of Convocation with information regarding convocation dates, tickets, etc. Please note that, while your program will formally finish by December 31, 2022, your degree will not be confirmed complete until January 2023. We will notify you when your degree recommendation has been submitted.

Final Form Submission Deadlines

The following deadlines should be met to ensure smooth processing of your final reports. Failure to meet these (or any deadlines for final report revisions) may result in your degree recommendation being delayed, which can incur additional fees and delays to post-graduate work permit documentation being issued.

Please remember that this is a busy time of the year and that you should submit the review request to your supervisors by the deadline below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalized internship report sent to the academic and industry supervisors.</td>
<td>December 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report + all completion forms sent to the MScAC Program Office.</td>
<td>December 15, 2022</td>
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STUDENT POLICIES

University of Toronto Policies

The University of Toronto has various policies in place governing graduate activity. Particularly relevant to students in the MScAC program are those policies relating to Academic Integrity, Ethics and Conduct. Full details of all the policies applicable to you during your time as a student with the Department of Computer Science: sgs.utoronto.ca/policies-guidelines

Appeals

Graduate students may appeal substantive or procedural academic matters, including grades, evaluation of comprehensive examinations and other program requirements; decisions about the student’s continuation in any program; or concerning any other decision with respect to the application of academic regulations and requirements to a student (SGS General Regulations 11.1). Students may not appeal admissions decisions, fees, or the voluntary withdrawal from a graduate program.

With the exception of appeals related to termination of registration and to failure of the Final Oral Examination, appeals are first initiated within Department of Computer Science, with the Graduate Department Academic Appeals Committee (GDAAC). Academic appeals are heard only from students who are currently registered in the School of Graduate Studies or who were registered at the time the ruling or action was taken. Students must file an appeal within eight weeks after the date of the decision being appealed.

Students must first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor or other person whose ruling is in question. Should the matter not be resolved with the instructor, and should the student wish to pursue the matter, the student must discuss the matter with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. Should such discussions fail to resolve the matter, the student may then make a formal appeal to the Chair of the GDAAC.

After receiving the Notice of Appeal, the Chair of the GDAAC will provide the person or persons who made the decision being appealed with a copy of the Notice of Appeal, and request a written response. This response, along with the student Notice of Appeal will be considered by the GDAAC committee. The GDAAC committee will make a recommendation to the Chair of the Department, who will render a decision. See the GDAAC Guidelines below and the appeals policy in the General Regulations in the SGS Calendar for further information.

The decision resulting from the GDAAC may be appealed to the Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB). The decision of the GAAB may be appealed to the Academic Appeals Committee of the Governing Council.

DEPARTMENT & UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Communications & Marketing Office

MScAC has a dedicated office responsible for communications and marketing. This office works to ensure the program’s key audiences are aware of the strengths and achievements of our students, alumni, faculty and staff. We organize several events throughout the year, including the Applied Research in Action Showcase (ARIA) and networking activities involving alumni including former MScAC graduates. The communications and marketing office takes overall responsibility for these events.
Do you have an exciting story or achievement to share? Feel free to reach out to our communications officer by contacting communications@mscac.toronto.edu. We regularly seek to profile MScAC students as part of our graduate program and research activities. Your work could appear in a local news publication, appear on social media, or be featured as part of U of T News!

As an MScAC student, you are also invited to join the Department of Computer Science’s exclusive network for alumni and students—CompSci Connect (www.UofTCompSciConnect.ca). Simply log-in with your current LinkedIn or Facebook credentials (or create a new user profile) and see computer science news, jobs, events, social media feeds and more all in one place. Our alumni network is also there to help support you through mentorship and our discussion forum.

Computer Facilities

As a graduate student in the Department of Computer Science you have access to a variety of computer resource on-campus*. The “apps” servers are for e-mail and text editing (etc.), and the “comps” servers are for heavy computation. Read more at support.cs.toronto.edu

Your “CSLab account” is the key to a number of departmental services. You will receive e-mail about activating this prior to starting the program. Please activate as soon as possible. The account also gives you an e-mail address and once you have a CS e-mail address, people will start e-mailing you at this address. Please either read your CS inbox directly or forward incoming mail to an account that you do read.

Your first point of contact for assistance with computing facilities is the MScAC “POC” (point of contact) at pocpm@cs.toronto.edu. The POC has written an introductory list of computing topics at cs.toronto.edu/~pocpm, including one about reading your CS e-mail.

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all on-campus computer facilities and student offices are currently closed. Once we return to campus, we strongly recommend that you bring a laptop with you. An external monitor, keyboard and mouse will be provided in the MScAC offices.

Student Forms and Letters

During your time in the department, you may require student forms or letters for actions such as adding/dropping courses, taking leaves of absence, or for immigration purposes. See: uoft.me/SGS-formsletters. Alternatively, visit the MScAC Program Office for help on where to find these documents.

UofT Library Services

The University of Toronto Libraries system is the largest academic library in Canada and is ranked third among peer institutions in North America. Our library services are accessible both in-person and online. See: uoft.me/uoftlibraries

Graduate Centre for Academic Communication

The Graduate Centre for Academic Communication provides graduate students with advanced training in academic writing and speaking. All programs are free, and five types of support are provided, designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers.

See: sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/gcac

The Centre for International Experience (CIE)

CIE offers the assistance of international transition advisors who support students adjusting to life in Canada. At CIE you can seek advice about Immigration and Citizenship Canada documentation and processes, including study and work permits. CIE also administers the University Health Insurance Plan for international students. See: cie.utoronto.ca
Safety
It is the goal of the University of Toronto to do everything possible to create an environment where students and staff can feel safe to live and work. See: safety.utoronto.ca

Health and Wellness
The University of Toronto offers a wide range of services to all its students to support them in achieving their personal and academic best. See: healthandwellness.utoronto.ca and uoft.me/SGS-services

QUICK LINKS
Need more information? The following links may be of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS Department website</td>
<td>cs.toronto.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate course schedule</td>
<td>uoft.me/cstimetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGS Calendar</td>
<td>sgs.calendar.utoronto.ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Fees</td>
<td>uoft.me/SGS-fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Accounts</td>
<td>fees.utoronto.ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Toronto policies</td>
<td>sgs.utoronto.ca/policies-guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGS forms</td>
<td>uoft.me/SGS-formsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for International Experience</td>
<td>cie.utoronto.ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U of T Libraries system</td>
<td>uoft.me/uoftlibraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>housing.utoronto.ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Wellness Services</td>
<td>uoft.me/SGS-services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Recreation Facilities</td>
<td>kpe.utoronto.ca/facilities-memberships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Recreation</td>
<td>kpe.utoronto.ca/sport-rec-u-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>sgs.utoronto.ca/awards-funding/financial-aid-advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career &amp; Co-Curricular Learning Network</td>
<td>cln.utoronto.ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration &amp; Enrolment</td>
<td>uoft.me/SGS-enrol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>