

BDC Guidebook 2018-2019



Presented by the Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization Society

A letter from your VP Academics

Hey Hey Hey Incoming BDC Students!

Welcome to a new academic adventure and one that you will surely never forget. My name is Flavia Cordos and I am extremely excited to be your VP Academics for this 2018-2019 school year! I, along with my fellow BDC Society members, are excited to help make this year your best year yet, and like always if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask!

We understand that entering a new program can be quite an intimidating experience, and for many of you, it may be your first time engaging in the business realm as well. In this guide you will find a comprehensive third year BDC course list written from the student's perspective with useful tips, tricks, and recommendations. In addition to the academics, we've added some information on how to find a research position and how to be your best when interacting with potential career recruiters.

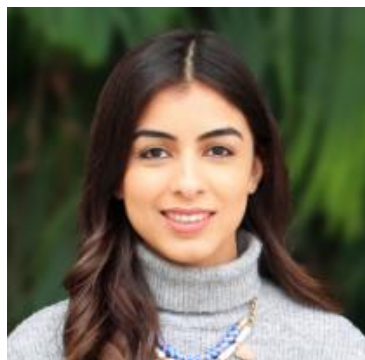
Another aspect of the guide which we hope you will make use of is the events page. It's very easy to get bogged down with academics in university to the point where you seem to be living from one assignment to the next, not taking any time to smell the roses. The BDC Society is working hard to hold events where you can have a chance to get to know your cohort including academic events, formal, socials, clothing sales, and de-stressors; so make time to come out, you won't regret it!

Lastly make sure to get acquainted with the resources you have access to. These resources are unique to BDC and there are wonderful knowledgeable individuals in the BDC office ready to help with any questions you may have. They are able to not only help you with questions about the program, but they also have a wealth of knowledge in career opportunities and post-undergraduate studies.

I am confident that this year will be one to remember and it will be an amazing opportunity for you to make it your own! We as the BDC society are here to help and we hope that you find use in this guide! Best of Luck!

Flavia Cordos | VP Academics | 2018-2019
Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization Society
McMaster University

Meet the BDCS team



Top: Hamdi Abdo, President; Dima Malkawi, VP Social; Donya Sandu, VP Finance.

Middle: Sally Min, VP Marketing and Communications; Sonia Igboanugo, VP External.

Bottom: Sarah Hordienko, VP Admin; Flavia Cordos, VP Academics.



Course tips

BIOMEDDC 3C09

This course is super dynamic and there is always so much happening at once so it is important to keep up with the work. Make sure you really pay attention during the bootcamps and do all the practice Felicia provides as it is all fair game on the quizzes and tests. The TAs are very helpful so do not be afraid to ask them for help or to see what they are looking for in the assignments. For the second half of the course, you will be doing the Drug Discovery Project, which will require a lot of planning ahead and really understanding the procedures. It is more important than ever to be well-coordinated with the rest of your group and to stay on top of things. Make sure you also pay attention in lectures and understand the content Felicia teaches because it's very helpful for your project.

Labs, Assignments, and Tutorials

- Lab quizzes
- Lab notebook and data analysis
- Three tests (written and practical)
- Two individual reports
- Two group presentations
- Participation marks

Study Tips

- Prepare the pre-lab requirements well in advance
- Make sure you understand what you are doing in lab and why you are doing it
- Do the practice assignments Felicia posts on Avenue

Course tips

BIOMEDDC 3B06

This course also involves a lot of group work so it is important for you and your group to establish a good partnership and work collaboratively together. The course consists of three components: lectures by course instructors, roundtables, and guest lectures. The first semester will consist of lectures by three different course instructors who will discuss different areas of research and commercialization. The assessments for this component will be in-class tests, group presentations and attendance. The second two components will take up the second term, with guest lectures from different industries coming in and talking about their work. The main part of the second semester will be the research project you will work on with your groups and with the help of your research mentors. At the end of the year, you will present your final projects at a poster conference called BDC Engage.

Labs, Assignments, and Tutorials

- In-class quizzes, in-class team presentations and attendance
- Three tests
- Group presentations
- Individual reports
- Career-fair reflections
- Poster Presentation (BDC Engage)

Study Tips

- Stay on track with the course content by completing the pre-class readings and videos
- Show up on time and participate in TopHat
- Start your individual report early during your winter break
- Be accommodating with your group and work collaboratively together
- Always ask the professors and your TAs for feedback

Course tips

BIOMEDDC 3A03:

This course focuses on teaching BDC students how to effectively communicate scientific knowledge through a variety of ways such as newspaper articles or journal publications. The course mainly consists of guest lecturers from different areas of research at McMaster coming in and discussing the work they do. The class also incorporates in-class group activities aimed to help students better understand the content. You are expected to submit two newspaper articles and two news and views articles based on the topics presented in class. The beauty of this course is that it will expose you to a variety of research being done at McMaster, while providing you with a great opportunity to improve your writing and explore your creativity at the same time.

IMPORTANT: Do not submit two writing assignments of the same type consecutively: wait until you receive feedback on the first one and use that to improve the second one!

Labs, Assignments, and Tutorials:

- Two critical media assessments
- Four reporting assignments. Two of each: News & Views, Newspaper Article
- Participation grade
- Final video assignment

Study Tips:

- Prepare your writing assignments well in advance so you have time to edit them
- The video requires a bit of work so make sure to not leave it until the last minute
- Be engaged in class by asking the guest lecturers questions and participating in in-class activities
- You may find that you are very interested in a specific area of research presented in class; do not hesitate to contact that professor to discuss their work further



Course tips

COMMERCE 4AK3

Accounting is different from most science courses encountered so far. It requires a different type of learning and will hit you with a lot of information in a short period of time. It is important to understand the concepts taught in class and ask questions if needed. The practice questions also come in handy.

Labs, Assignments, and Tutorials

- Online quizzes
- Midterm
- Case study

Study Tips

- Go through the lecture notes before class
- Take detailed notes and write down examples done in class
- Do as many practice questions as possible as well as the practice midterms/exams
- Use extra resources at school and from the internet
- Go to office hours for extra help if required

Course tips

COMMERCE 1BA3: Organizational Behaviour

This course will teach you the skills necessary to succeed in modern organizations and will focus on topics ranging from personality to group dynamics. It is a content heavy course that will require some memorization. The assessments consist of three group assignments, along with a midterm and final exam. By coming to lectures, paying attention, taking notes and reviewing, it is fairly achievable to do well on the group assignments, which can be a good grade-booster.

Labs, Assignments, and Tutorials:

- Three in-class group assignments
- One Midterm Exam
- One Final Exam

Study Tips:

- Try to work with other BDC students for the group assignments as it makes it easier to coordinate meeting times
- The group assignments can make or break your mark in this course: make sure to do your best and put in the effort for them
- Keep up with the lectures and review the notes after each class
- For the midterm and exams, make sure you know the definitions for terms and understand how they apply in a business setting



Social media and website information

Websites

<http://macbdcsociety.com/>

Stay up to date with events, socials, and informative talks planned by our BDCS executive team. We will be providing a calendar with your due dates, BDC events, and more so that it is easy to stay in the loop.

<https://bdcprogram-mcmaster.ca/>

Want to learn more about the BDC program itself? Check out this website when you need to confirm your course requirements, learn about faculty members, or even to plan for a future Masters degrees. It's also the perfect place to stay up-to-date with the BDC news.

<http://bdcstudent-mcmaster.ca/>

If you want to hear from upper years and BDC staff, his website has got you covered. It focuses mainly on the student experience and is told through testimonials. There are samples of past projects which will give you insight on what to expect for the year.



bdcociety@gmail.com



MacBDCSociety



@bdcociety

Don't hesitate to contact us with questions, concerns, and anything in between!



Events

A strong sense of community is imperative to enrich the experiences of all incoming third-year students, especially because one of the hallmarks of this program is teamwork and problem-based learning. With this proposition in place, the following events hosted by the BDC faculty and society provides a fantastic opportunity for students to engage in the BDC community that takes place outside of the classroom. The events illustrated below are by no means a comprehensive list, but rather, a sneak-peak into an exciting year full of opportunities.



Welcome Bonfire

Welcome to BDC! Want to get to know your cohort better? Your mentors? Well, don't worry, the BDC society got you! This event is catered to help ease the transition for incoming students. Situated in the outdoors, students will have the opportunity to socialize, eat great food, and make long-lasting friendships.

Events

BDC Industry Preview

The BDC Industry Preview is the first BDC program wide event of the year. This highly anticipated event which provides students with the direct exposure with representatives for pharmaceutical, biotechnology and related industries. Students are encouraged to begin working on some of the soft transferable skills such as networking and communication skills, which they will hone over the academic year.

Annual BDCS Clothing Sale (Swag)

Now that you are a part of the BDC family, BDC swag is a must have! Each year we offer clothing items with our BDC logo on it. The specific clothing item (*toques, t-shirts, hoodies*) are determined by the 3rd year cohort and made available for purchase during the fall. This is an awesome way to represent the BDC program in and out of class, as well as identify other members of the BDC family on campus.



Intramural Sports - BDC Baller Brand

Enjoy some healthy competition and represent the BDC program in a fun and stress-free way. Intramural sports is an excellent opportunity to engage in the McMaster community and show off our athletic skills.



Events



Careers Night

The BDC program is an interdisciplinary program known to provide students with tangible industry exposure. In accordance with this thought, the BDCS host a Careers Night in collaboration with BBSS to provide students with the opportunity to connect directly with individuals from diverse career paths within the field of biomedical discovery & commercialization. Topics ranging from career progression, pertinent steps to discover passion and research interests will be discussed during this event.

Thesis Night (Orientation)

The BDC thesis is an exciting opportunity to embark on an independent study in a field that personally interests you. Come out to thesis night to hear from current thesis students and potential thesis professors regarding how to strengthen your search for a supervisor, what supervisors are looking for and everything else that you are curious about in relation to the capstone thesis project.



BDC Formal

At the end of the year, the highly anticipated annual Biochemistry and BDC Formal will be a great night to remember. So get dressed up and dance the night away and celebrate the end of a successful academic year.

Events

Destress for Success

These are several small informal events where students can take a break from the hustle and bustle of school. Events include (BP Karaoke Night, Movie Night in MDCL, Free Art Session, Morning Cootes Hike, BDC rock climbing session, etc.)



Bowling Night

The sounds of pins dropping, the roars from the crowd around you in awe of your skilful swing. The BDC society presents an end of the year social, where 3rd and 4th-year students can relax and enjoy the company of the small, tight-knit community.



BDC Engage

The annual BDC Engage Symposium is the year-end event which showcases the academic achievements of students within the BDC program. Students in all levels of the BDC program participate on this day, sharing their projects (drug discovery project, research thesis, and internship) with faculty, staff and industry representatives. The platform the BDC Engage creates is a testament to the philosophy of the program to train future leaders in biomedical discovery and commerce through experiential learning opportunities such as this event.



Research positions



Do your research. It is hard to really know what a lab is all about at first glance. You might have a specific lab in mind but it is important to research professors on faculty websites and visit lab websites to really see what you are interested in. Many labs study similar concepts and this can give you more options when applying.



Start early. Start researching different professors at McMaster and contacting those who interest you by the end of September. Lab positions fill up quickly and applying early could help you get a position in the lab you want.



Reach out to upper years. Contact current and/or past students from the labs you are interested in and see if they can give you insight on day-to-day life in lab or tips to help with your interview.



Look outside the Biochemistry department. BDC is a great program because its students end up in a variety of different labs that study a range of topics. Don't limit yourself to just Biochemistry labs! Explore the research done in different departments and see if it interests you.



Update your resume. Use the BDC Career Services to help you update your academic resume. Make sure it looks professional before sending it out to potential supervisors.



Writing emails



Introduce yourself. “I am a __ year Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization student.” Explain the purpose of your email—Are you looking for a specific position? Do you have any questions?



Explain why you are interested. Try to be honest and not fake your enthusiasm. Professors care about sincerity. Also try to keep this concise but do not be afraid to express your interest.



Attach your resume. Make sure your resume looks professional and displays relevant experiences or qualifications.

Attach an unofficial transcript. If you think a transcript will strengthen the email then include it. If not, it is not a big deal!



Do not be afraid to go talk to the professor in person. If you want to meet with the professor in person, try to schedule a meeting ahead of time. Talking one-on-one can be more productive than emailing.



Don't get discouraged by rejections or no replies. Consider each rejection as a step closer to getting the lab position you want.



Interview with the professor

Before

The first most important thing is to enter the interview prepared. Make sure you are knowledgeable of the professor's lab work and research motives. The best way to do this is to visit the lab's website and read through some of the latest papers that were published by the professor's lab as well as skim through the rest of the titles to understand the history of the research. This will give you a level up in making a good impression if the professor decides to ask you some thorough questions about the research. The professor is also likely to ask you questions about your program, your interests, and why you want to join their lab so come prepared in advance for those types of common questions.

During

It is recommended that appropriate clothing is worn which is usually business casual as it shows that you are serious about your thesis and can work in a professional environment. Be sure to speak with confidence and maintain a professional presence during the interview. Essentially make sure you seem like the most dedicated student the professor can have on board with their team. Also, to show your passion about the lab's research, think of a few questions you can ask the professor at the end of the interview to demonstrate your engagement and enthusiasm.

After

Thank the professor for their time and consideration before you make your way out. Remember to always send a follow up thank you e-mail within 24 hours of the interview and good luck interviewing!

Finding the right professor for you

The process of finding a thesis supervisor may seem very intimidating at first. There are so many different profs that are doing incredible research to choose from, that you may not know where to start. A great starting point is looking at the McMaster Department of Biochemistry & Biomedical science website under the “people” tab (link: https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/biochem/people_faculty.html). This page provides a list of all department of biochemistry & biomedical science faculty members, as well as a brief description of their work. Additionally, you can find links to their specific lab websites on this page to help learn more about work that peaks your interest. Another valuable resource available to BDC students is the BIOMEDDC 3A03 class. This class exposes you to some of the incredible work that is going on here at McMaster and may help in directing your thesis search.

A very important aspect to keep in mind is finding a lab that is right for you. You will be spending the majority of your 4th year in lab, so it is important to feel comfortable and genuinely enjoy what you are doing. That being said, don't be afraid to attend multiple interviews, this will help you to get a feel for the type of environment and experience you are looking for.

Although the department of biochemistry and biomedical science is where most BDC students complete their senior thesis project, you are certainly not restricted to it. In the past BDC students have worked in various departments listed below.

The Department of Medicine (<https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/medicine/>)

The Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine
(<https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/pathology/>)

The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences
(<https://psychiatry.mcmaster.ca/>)

The Department of Pediatrics (<https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/pediatrics/>)

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology (<https://obgyn.mcmaster.ca/>)



Words of wisdom

BDC is an amazing program, but it can be difficult to find the best way to succeed! Don't be afraid to ask your professors or even your peers for help understanding the assignments or lab techniques, they are a wealth of knowledge. Also, schedule your week in advance and set small goals you hope to accomplish each day. It will really help you stay on top of your to-do list!

There will always be situations with factors you can and cannot control. Instead of dwelling on the circumstances you can't control, focus your energy where you can make an impact. Don't wait for the "perfect" time to start your tasks, but rather treat every minute as an opportunity to take action. In that process, brainstorming is important, but execution is everything.

I would recommend attending extra help sessions hosted by Felicia (or setting up one-on-one extra help with her), as the 3C09 tests don't have practice tests to study with and can be pretty tricky. Facebook group chats were extremely helpful to stay in the know with BDC events as well as plan meetings and decide on deadlines with your group. Don't buy textbooks (for non-BDC courses) unless the professor clearly states you need one, and always try looking for PDFs. Also as trivial as it sounds, get your sleep! Lastly, consider joining a yoga studio such as Moksha (hot) Yoga in Dundas for stress relief.

Words of wisdom

It's always good to keep an agenda with you, so you know when you will have a test or assignment. One thing I would recommend is to always start your project early and don't wait until the last minute. You never know how much you can learn within that short period of time, so just trust yourself and enjoy your life as a BDC student!

In the BDC program, a ton of your time will be spent doing group work. Make sure to communicate well with your group members in order to keep things running smoothly. Sit down with your group members to split the work, create deadlines, and set meeting times. Make sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to the timeline and expectations of your project! Also, practice group presentations together and have a plan B!

While this program has opened up many opportunities and uses innovative educational methods by means of experiential, inquiry, and team based learning, what I love most is the small and helpful community composed of like-minded, driven students.

This program gave me a network of brilliant, hard-working people. Thanks to events hosted by BDCS, I had the chance to really get to know the people in the program and make valuable, life-long friends.

Coming from a larger science program, one of the things I really love about BDC is that its small size makes it possible for you get to know your entire cohort. It's amazing to look back on the strong friendships that I have formed within the last year.

Words of wisdom

Take every rejection as one step closer to finding the perfect thesis for you!

Take your time to explore the different researchers because you might like something you never realized.

The BDC thesis is a 15 unit course, so a bulk of your final year will be spent embarking on this research project. I think it is important to recognize where your interests lie (even if you have no experience in the field) and commit to reaching out to professors in that field or department.

Finding a research position can be quite stressful. It's better to start early and send out emails to different professors by showing your interests to their specific projects.

Do your best to meet a couple potential supervisors and their lab members before you make a final decision. During your thesis you will not only be working on research, you will also be working with your lab members, so make sure to get along!

You should take the time to talk to students that are currently or have been in the lab that you are interested in. Students provide great insight on the working environment of the lab, the supervisor, and the work that they do.

