



2025/2026

Academic Digital Toolkit

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Welcome!

Much of the information in this toolkit is explored in greater depth online, as well as in our DeGroote DeClassified Student Guide. This resource provides an in-depth overview to support students in navigating key areas, including general information for all Commerce and IBH students, course planning strategies, exam preparation, available academic supports, and tailored guidance for the Integrated Business and Humanities (IBH) Program.

General Information & Support

Networking Opportunities

MacConnect

At McMaster, we believe that connections have the power to unlock potential, spark inspiration, and transform careers at every stage of life. MacConnect is a platform designed to bring together students, alumni, and professionals to build meaningful relationships and a stronger community.

 DeGroote General Info & FAQ https://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/future-degroote-student/

Internship Program

- DeGroote offers Ontario's largest undergraduate business internship program (12–16 months, paid).
- Open to Commerce and IBH students after third year.
- Work full-time with top employers (e.g., RBC, Deloitte, Ford).
- Many interns receive full-time job offers before graduating.
- Requirements: Commerce 2IN0, 7.0 GPA, and second-year application via OSCARplus.
- Includes career coaching, interview prep, and networking support.
- For More Information: https://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/internship/

BCom with Co-Op Program

DeGroote will be introducing the **BCom with Co-op** in September 2026. This **new flexible work-integrated learning model** will provide access to 4, 8 and 12-month paid work terms. Level 1 Commerce and IBH students will be able to apply to this new pathway in April 2026. More details regarding the new degree and application process will be shared throughout 2025-26. Watch for announcements in The Bulletin and in COMMERCE 1GR0 and IBH 1LD0.

Exchange Program

- McMaster offers 100+ global study-abroad programs for academic credit and cultural immersion.
- Most popular: **McMaster Exchange Program** (semester, year-long, or summer options).
- Open to students with a 7.0 GPA; tuition continuity and credit transfer included.
- Apply in 2nd year (4-year program) or 3rd year (5-year program) to go abroad the following year.



- Partner universities available worldwide.
- You must watch the mandatory info-session recordings on Microsoft Teams (updated each October)
- A \$100 application fee applies to submitted exchange applications.
- Some programs (e.g., OBW, ORA) may require a language assessment or extra documents
- For those seeking more flexibility, the Letter of Permission (LOP) route lets students attend accredited institutions, domestic or international, for approved courses.
 - o For More Information: https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/global/study-abroad/

Areas of Focus

After completing your **first two foundational years** within the Commerce program, you will have the opportunity to choose an area of focus. By choosing an area of focus, you may begin to align your course selection towards a specific subdiscipline within the area of business or continue learning about business broadly.

• https://uq.degroote.mcmaster.ca/programs/commerce/

The Areas of Focus at DeGroote Commerce include:

- Accounting
- Finance
- Human Resource Management
- Information Systems
- Marketing
- Operations Management
- Strategic Management

Key Note: Selecting an area of focus is optional; it's designed to help students explore subjects they're passionate about in greater depth. It can also support those aiming to pursue specific professional designations after graduation, such as the CPA, CFA, CHRP, and others.

Find key information and insights about the CPA, CFP, and CHRP designations on Page 29-33 of our DeGroote: DeClassified Student Guide, found in degrootecommerce.ca/resources



Commerce Course Support & Advice

Please note that this guide is intended for **first- and second-year commerce courses**. For inquiries regarding upper-year courses, we encourage you to connect with our faculty members, upper-year students, mentors, or your assigned TAs for those courses to gain more tailored insights!

First-Year Advice

COMMERCE 1AA3: Introductory Financial Accounting	This course is a challenging , fast-paced accounting course with a heavy workload. Staying consistent, completing practice problems, and understanding key terms are essential. Attend classes and TA office hours! Be prepared for mandatory Top Hat quizzes, and be sure to review tutorial questions, as they often reflect the exam content.
COMMERCE 1BA3: Organizational Behaviour	This course is content-heavy and relies on memorization. Take detailed notes on important concepts, as exams are multiple-choice and definition-based. Grades come from two exams and three group assignments; working with reliable teammates helps! Success comes from mastering the key terms and practicing with multiple-choice questions.
COMMERCE 1DA3: Business Data Analytics	This course introduces data analytics with a focus on formulas and problem-solving. Attend lectures, complete practice problems, and stay on top of the material, as all of the work is individual. The grades come from quizzes, an Excel assignment, and two exams. Success depends on mastering formulas, practicing consistently, and using the exam reference sheet effectively.
COMMERCE 1E03: Business Environment & Organization	This course is a memorization-heavy general business course covering various sectors. Grades come from two exams, weekly activities, and a group CAPSIM project, choose reliable teammates. Exams are multiple-choice, so focus on learning key terms from lectures and the textbook and practice extensively.
COMMERCE 1GR0: Student Experience and Development 1	This course is a mandatory pass-or-fail course designed to help you develop the foundational skills needed to succeed in the business world. It is a 2-term course in the fall and winter. You will be graded based on weekly assignments and participation, alongside a case competition with your fellow DeGroote students. The assignments are practical and aim to build confidence in written and verbal business communication.
COMMERCE 1MA3: Introduction to Marketing	This introductory marketing course is memorization-heavy, focusing on key concepts and terminology. Grades come from weekly assignments, group reports, and two exams. Be sure to choose reliable teammates, as group work is crucial! Exams are



	multiple-choice, so attend lectures, take notes, and review terms consistently to succeed.
ECON 1B03: Introductory Microeconomics	This course is an introductory microeconomics course focused on memorization, graphing, and calculations. You will learn how certain variables affect economic graphs and attend lectures or watch videos to strengthen understanding. Assessment includes midterms and a final. Be sure to practice textbook and tutorial questions and review videos to succeed.
ECON 1BB3: Introductory Macroeconomics	This course is an introductory macroeconomics course focused on memorization, graphing, and calculations. It is often more challenging than microeconomics. Attend lectures and watch videos to understand terminology and graph changes. Assessments include midterms and a final, and success comes from practicing textbook and tutorial questions to apply theory and application.
MATH 1MM3: Applied Calculus (ALTERNATE MATH COURSES: MATH 1A03, MATH 1LS3)	MATH 1MM3 is an applied calculus course available for first-year business students. It is content-heavy but manageable if you stay on top of lectures and practice regularly. Grades include midterms, a final, weekly assignments, and a bonus assignment. It is important to consistently do practice questions from the textbook and from lectures and tutorials. Attend the tutorials to get the best understanding of certain concepts.



Popular Electives

In your first-year of Commerce at McMaster, you will receive 2 electives. This contains a list of recommended electives that are quite popular amongst first-year commerce students!

ANTHROP 1AA3: Introduction to Anthropology	This course introduces students to social and cultural anthropology, focusing on how people live, interact, and make meaning in diverse societies around the world.
	The course emphasizes critical thinking about culture and society using readings, lectures, and case studies to connect theory to real-world issues. It is a popular first-year elective that requires more reading and reflection than memorization.
INNOVATE 1X03: The World of Entrepreneurship	This course teaches the basics of innovation and entrepreneurship through lectures, guest speakers, activities, and projects. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help students learn how to spot business opportunities and create strategies to grow a successful business.
	Grading is entirely group-based. It is important to find a good team, as you need to work with your team to create a product and complete various assignments related to it. It is crucial to choose a group you are comfortable working with, as collaboration is key to success in this course!
LINGUIST 1A03: Introduction to Linguistics	This course is an introduction to the scientific study of language. The course covers the structure of language, including sounds (phonetics/phonology), word formation (morphology), sentence structure (syntax), and meaning (semantics). You will also explore how languages vary and change over time, as well as the cognitive and social aspects of language use. This course is designed for beginners and does not require any prior knowledge, making it a popular elective for students outside of linguistics.
PSYCH 1X03: Introduction to Psychology, Neuroscience, & Behaviour	This course to introductory psychology is a memorization-heavy course with engaging lectures and videos that are key to understanding the material. Grading is based on weekly quizzes, tutorials, and two exams, with the option to transfer the midterm weight to the final. Focus on learning key terms early and practice consistently to succeed.
SUSTAIN 1S03: Introduction to Sustainability	This course looks at sustainability from different social and historical viewpoints . Students will learn key terms and ideas and think of new ways to solve real-world sustainability problems. The course includes hands-on activities and helps students connect what they learn to real life.



Grading is through experiential learning projects , online quizzes, biophilia assignment, and tutorial participation. To do well, choose activities you are passionate about learning and write clear reflections in alignment with the rubrics provided. Keep up with weekly content to prepare for quizzes, and understand key ideas from lectures and readings.
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General Course Structuring Advice

- Aim to balance your course load across both semesters.
- You will take 5 courses per term, plus 1GR0 (runs all year).
- Separate heavy application courses such as Accounting (1AA3) and Calculus (1MM3).
- We recommend taking Microeconomics (1B03) in the first semester and Macroeconomics (1BB3) in the second semester, however this is not mandatory!
- Include one elective per term to help manage workload.

Second-Year Advice

COMMERCE 2FB3:	concepts makes the numbers way easier. This course builds right off 2FA3 , so a lot of the strategies carry
COMMERCE 2FA3: Introduction to Finance	This course is your basic introduction to corporate finance . Some of the concepts cover time value of money, risk and return, and valuing stocks and bonds. It is math-heavy, so lots of practice is needed. Stay on top of problem sets, and be sure to learn your calculator and Excel shortcuts, and don't cram, understanding the
COMMERCE 2DA3: Decision Making with Analytics	This course introduces using data to make business decisions through tools such as Excel and PowerBI. The course is very hands-on, so practice is key. Be sure to keep up with assignments, learn all the functions step-by-step, and don't fall behind, once you get the basics down, everything else builds smoothly.
COMMERCE 2BC3: Human Resources and Labour Relations	This course dives into how organizations manage people, covering recruitment, training, performance, and workplace rights. It is less math-heavy, and more about concepts, cases, and real-world examples. Stay on top of readings , connect theories to workplace issues, and be prepared to apply ideas in class discussions, tests, and assignments rather than just memorizing definitions .
COMMERCE 2AB3: Managerial Accounting	This course is all about how managers use accounting information for planning and decision-making. Keep up with practice problems, do not just memorize formulas, focus on understanding how to apply them to real concepts. Staying consistent week-to-week makes exams way easier.



Managerial Finance	over. Creating your own formula sheets again is super useful. The textbook questions might feel repetitive, but they really help you understand the bigger picture. No matter how a question is worded, if you understand the concepts, you will be fine!
COMMERCE 2KA3: Information Systems in Management	This course looks at how businesses use technology and information systems to improve decision-making and efficiency. It's less about coding and more about understanding systems, data, and strategy. Focus on the big-picture concepts, connect them to real business examples, and stay engaged in group projects since they make the material much easier to understand. There is an assignment that uses Microsoft Access that is very instruction-heavy, it is important to utilize your resources online and ask questions!
COMMERCE 2NG3: Negotiations	This course introduces the fundamentals of negotiations and its different outlooks . There are in-class activities and attendance checks, so be sure to attend every class! For the live negotiation assignment, do not hesitate to re-record until you feel confident with how it flows. Be wise when selecting your group for this course, as it carries a decent amount of your final mark. Be sure to study both the textbook material and what's discussed in class, both show up on tests!
COMMERCE 20C3: Operations Management	This course is about how businesses design and manage processes , covering topics like supply chains, inventory, quality, and efficiency. Course concepts have lots of problem-solving, so expect many calculations and case questions. Be sure to practice the quantitative problems regularly, but also understand the real-world applications, as they both show up on tests.



IBH Course Advice & Support

Please note that this guide is intended for **first- and second-year IBH courses.** For inquiries regarding upper-year courses, we encourage you to connect with our faculty members, upper-year students, mentors, or the assigned TAs for those courses to gain more tailored insights!

First-Year Advice

IBH 1LD0: Leadership Development - Self Awareness	This mandatory, pass/fail course builds foundational leadership skills. You will complete an initial quiz with personalized feedback and a leadership development plan reviewed one-on-one with the professor. The course involves many reflections, be sure to use the methods taught in class for all of them.
IBH 1AA3: Financial Accounting	This course is one of the more challenging first-year IBH courses that covers the introduction to financial accounting . This class requires consistent attendance and lots of practice, whether you have studied accounting before. Be sure to closely pay attention to key terms early on, and use lecture videos to reinforce concepts. You will complete a major group project with third-year IBH students at the end of the term, which can also be a great mark booster!
IBH 1AB3: Perspectives on Canadian Business	This content-heavy course introduces business principles within Canada and global context. Reading the textbook thoroughly is important, as the professor highly recommends it, though don't stress too much over memorizing figures. You will complete a group business simulation through CAPSIM, and it is a major component of this course. Consistent teamwork and engagement give you the best chance of success.
IBH 1AC3: Introduction to Language & Society	This course covers basic linguistic concepts , including variation. It includes two exams and several simple group assignments that involve reflection on your own language use. The professor is fair, and taking notes during lectures will help you succeed. Exams are unique to each student and include multiple-choice and short-answer questions; you'll also need to read <i>1984</i> for potential questions.
IBH 1AD3: IBH in the Community	Community Engagement, one of IBH's four pillars, introduces students to how communities function and how to engage effectively. The course involves a lot of reflective writing, which is graded like essays, so pay attention to structure and incorporate readings. Building relationships with TAs and performing well on the large group assignment can also help boost your grade.
IBH 1BB3: Questions to Change the World	This unique course teaches students how to ask meaningful questions , analyze information, and apply insights in different



	contexts. It can be challenging at first, but it encourages critical thinking about your perspectives and identities. A highlight of the course is a group project involving the McMaster archives, where you work directly with historical documents to support your analysis.
IBH 1BC3: Fundamentals of Ethics	This course covers ethical theories like utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue ethics, and how to apply them to real-world moral problems. Grades depend heavily on effort, with opportunities to go above and beyond. The professor uses a token system instead of traditional percentages for weekly journals and assignments, so it's important to understand how tokens work.
IBH 1BD3: Introduction to Peace Studies for IBH	This Peace Studies course explores active peace-making and conflict transformation in daily life and business. Attendance counts for 40% of your grade, so showing up consistently is key. Expect lots of group work and assignments that let you creatively engage with the McMaster and Hamilton communities.

General Course Structuring Advice

- Aim to balance your course load across both semesters.
- You'll take 5 courses per term, plus 1LD0.
- Both Commerce and IBH students will take Microeconomics (1B03) and Macroeconomics (1BB3).
 - We recommend taking Microeconomics in the first semester and macroeconomics in the second semester.
- IBH Students do not get an elective in their first two years of studies.

Second-Year Advice

IBH 2AA3: Introduction to Marketing	This course covers core introductory marketing concepts such as consumer behaviour, segmentation, branding, and the 4 Ps. Success comes from staying on top of readings and lectures, focusing on applying concepts to real-world cases rather than memorizing. Group projects and discussions are key in this course, so collaboration and participation matter! Connect theories to familiar brands and trends to prepare for assignments and exams, which will help apply your critical thinking and application.
IBH 2AB3: Information Systems in Management	Information Systems is an introductory course covering software basics, Excel, and organizing business data. Assessment includes a midterm, quiz, and participation in the Integrated Project. While the class focuses on fundamentals, reviewing the textbook helps prepare for test material not fully covered in lectures.
IBH 2AC3: Talent Management	Talent Management is an introductory HR course covering basics like laws and regulations. Class participation is a large part of your grade, so stay engaged and attentive. The final includes



	multiple-choice and written questions, and the course moves quickly, so reviewing content beforehand and taking notes during class is highly recommended.
IBH 2AD3: Statistical Data Management	This course covers probability and data analysis , building weekly on previous topics. Success depends on understanding the foundations and practicing consistently, definitely redo lecture questions and use mock tests! Exams include multiple-choice and math-based questions, so practice is key.
IBH 2AE3: Critical Thinking	This course teaches you to analyze arguments, structure ideas, and articulate thoughts clearly. Practice is essential, with most classes focused on group problem-solving and breaking down sentences. Reading the textbook beforehand helps you follow class discussions and strengthens understanding.
IBH 2AF3: Global Business Experience	This course provides context on the current business environment and economic system . It involves weekly case study readings and discussions on topics like poverty and privilege. An example of a main project that was done by some students was a non-profit assessment in collaboration with University of Cape Town! Due to time differences, be sure to schedule meetings early, and identify information needs from the non-profit promptly to avoid delays!
IBH 2BA3: Managerial Accounting	Similarly to the commerce program, Managerial Accounting introduces cost accounting for planning, control, and decision-making, including ethical considerations. The course includes a midterm and practice-focused assignments. The assignments provided are also great opportunities to practice. If you're not a fan of numbers, try not to stress! The calculations are pretty straightforward and the content is also very theory based.
IBH 2BB3: Introduction to Finance	This course combines a community project with fundamental finance concepts and tools. Calculations are straightforward with practice, and both the midterm and final allow a crib sheet. While a new professor may bring changes, the course is generally easy to follow and highly applicable to real-world situations.
IBH 2BD3: Moral Issues	This course explores moral philosophy through professional ethics, building on many first-year concepts. Most class time is spent on discussion and questions, with assignments focused on persuasive and descriptive writing based on weekly readings. The final exam covers key philosophical concepts and lets you expand on course discussions with your own perspective!
IBH 2BF3: History of Capitalism	This course examines the development of capitalism through key events and figures. Weekly readings are essential, as tutorials and assignments rely on them. Assignments are essay-based, reflecting on historical events, and the final exam tests knowledge of events, dates, figures, and major advancements.



IBH 2LD0: Leadership Development - Leadership Emergence

Leadership Development is a **workshop- and reflection-based course** focused on business leadership, personal growth, and self-learning. The value of the course depends on your engagement, completing reflections promptly and participating in workshops and speaker sessions maximizes benefits. Assignments are quick to complete but most effective when done right after class.





Integrated Business & Humanities Guide

The 4 Pillars of IBH

How can you maximize your participation and knowledge of the four pillars of IBH?

Leadership

- What does it mean to be a leader?
- What leadership roles can you take on as a student?
 - DeGroote Accounting Association (DAA)
 - DeGroote Analytical Insights (DAI)
 - DeGroote Asian Students Association (DASA)
 - DeGroote Black in Business (DBIB)
 - DeGroote Commerce Society (DCS)
 - DeGroote Consulting Association (DCA)
 - DeGroote Finance & Investment Council (DFIC)
 - DeGroote Impact
 - DeGroote Law Association (DLA)
 - DeGroote Marketing Association (DMA)
 - DeGroote Pride Association (DPA)
 - DeGroote Women in Business (DWIB)
 - First Year Orientation Program (FYOP)
 - Greensuits
 - Jeux de Commerce Central (JDCC)

Tips on Becoming a Better Leader

- Practical Steps to Develop Your Leadership Potential
- Effective Leadership: What Makes a Good Leader

Community Engagement

- Hamilton is a new city for many, so how can you engage with the community?
- Provide different volunteer opportunities within the city of Hamilton
- 1. How does **engaging in the community** impact you as a leader?
 - Volunteer Opportunities at the City of Hamilton
 - Volunteering at Hamilton
 - Engaging within the McMaster Community
 - Learn about Volunteering & Volunteer at school events such as the Fall Fair or May @ Mac
 - McMaster Peer Leader Program: This program helps develop leadership and professional skills, where you will be a part of McMaster University Student Success Centre's community.



Global Mindedness

Most of our generation **does not watch or read the news**. Nonetheless, we should still be aware and informed on different global issues. Getting our information from social media is not always reliable, meaning a bit more effort is required in order to be well informed from reliable sources.

Social Enterprise

1. What is social enterprise?

 "Social enterprises are businesses that seek to deliver societal benefits while returning economic profits."

2. Purpose of Social Enterprise

- One of the biggest parts of social enterprise is "profit with purpose"
- These organizations have a goal of addressing social, ethical, environmental and cultural issues, while ALSO applying commercial strategies to generate the business' revenue.
- Traditional businesses are focused mainly on their success and shareholder value
 - Social enterprises, however, maximize profit while reinvesting most of it into their mission and environmental or social goals, rather than distributing it solely to investors and owners.

3. How does this connect to you as an IBH Student?

- As an IBH student, social enterprise connects directly to your courses by blending business skills with purpose.
- Leadership Development (1LD0) builds the self-awareness and ethics needed to lead with impact, while Financial Accounting (1AA3) provides the discipline to balance social goals with financial sustainability. Perspectives on Canadian Business (1AB3) highlights how organizations navigate social and economic systems, and IBH in the Community (1AD3) offers hands-on experience working with real social enterprises. Even courses such as Fundamentals of Ethics (1BC3) tie in by giving you frameworks to make values-based decisions where profit and purpose meet.

General Information for First Years

- The IBH program fosters a close-knit community that emphasizes soft skill development within the classroom.
- A smaller cohort means students are recognized and engaged, rather than being just a number in a large lecture hall.
- This environment allows meaningful connections with both professors and peers that are difficult to achieve in a general business program.
- IBH is intentionally designed to build **socially conscious business leaders** working to address the evolving challenges of today's business landscape.



• Despite technological development, business always starts with people! This program focuses on teaching sustainable and ethical business practices that you can implement in your future careers and work environments.





Exam Preparation Guide

Schedule Regular Breaks

• Use a timer (e.g., Pomodoro: 25 minutes of work & 5 minutes of rest) to ensure you step away from your desk, stretch, and reset your focus.

Practice Quick Mindfulness Exercises

Even 5-10 minutes of deep-breathing, body scans, or a guided mini-meditation can lower stress. Attached are some links to get you started!

- Mindful Friday's, Guided Meditation by McMaster Alumni
- Beginner Meditation Playlist

Balance Rest and Productivity

Plan study blocks no longer than 90 minutes, followed by a 10–15 minute break. Then reward yourself with something you enjoy; a walk, a snack, or a call with a friend.

Stay Active

Aim for at least 10 minutes of light exercise every few hours! Walk around campus, do a short yoga flow, or dance to your favourite song to boost endorphins.

Prioritize Sleep and Hygiene

Keep a consistent sleep schedule, even on weekends! Create a wind-down routine where you dim lights, switch off screens 30 minutes before bed, and journal any lingering thoughts.

Fuel Properly

Choose balanced snacks (e.g., fruit + nuts, yogurt + berries, hummus + veggies) and stay hydrated. Avoid excessive caffeine; pair each cup with water to maintain energy without jitters.

Stay Connected

Carve out time for brief check-ins with friends and family. A quick chat or shared study break can alleviate feelings of isolation and keep motivation high.

Set Realistic Study Goals

Break large tasks into smaller, achievable steps. Celebrate each milestone—finishing a reading, solving a problem set—to keep momentum and reduce overwhelm.

Use McMaster Wellness Resources - Additional Wellness Resources

- Student Wellness Centre
- Wellness Management Resources



Academic Support

Personalized Academic Skills Support

- Peer mentors (upper-year students) guide you through realistic study plans, assignment structuring, and identifying key academic skill areas.
- Academic coaches (qualified staff) offer deeper, research-based support—helping you understand the learning cycle, craft action plans, and develop effective study routines
- Book 30-minute appointments via OSCARplus.
 https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/writing-and-academic-skills/appointments/

 (additional info here)

Academic Tips

- Use active learning tools such as mind maps, Cornell notes, flashcard apps such as Anki/Quizlet, peer teaching methods, etc.
- Build mind maps, charts, or tables to understand complex content into smaller chunks.
- Explain material in your own words (to yourself or others).
- Write and answer your own practice questions.
- Test yourself with flashcards and past exam questions.
- Use Spaced Repetition
 - Instead of cramming, review material in increasing intervals over time (e.g., 1 day, 3 days, 1 week). This method strengthens memory and improves long-term retention.
 - Study smarter with active study strategies

Time Management Tools

Using a Calendar/Planner

Use customizable daily or weekly planners to visually map out classes, study blocks, meals and breaks, helping you stay organized and accountable.

McMaster Weekly Schedule Template

Prioritization Frameworks for Students

Eisenhower Matrix: Helps you decide what to **do, schedule, delegate, or eliminate** by sorting tasks by urgency and importance!

The Eisenhower Matrix

MoSCoW Prioritization: A helpful tool for managing large assignments or group work by setting clear expectations!

What is MoSCoW Prioritization?

Pareto Principle (80/20 Rule): Focus on the 20% of efforts such as active recall or practice exams that generate 80% of results. Use this to work smarter, not longer.

Learn the Pareto Principle



Time Management Tips

See the following link for Time Management Tips recommended by the Student Success Centre at McMaster University!

• Time Management Tips

