

Neuroscience Graduate Program

2026-27 Seminar Milestone

All MSc and PhD students are required to attend Neuroscience seminar classes during each funding eligible year of their studies. Starting in the second year of their studies, and each year afterwards, all MSc and PhD students present a scientific talk based on their graduate research. Students who are beyond their funding eligible period (Year X) are not required to complete the annual seminar milestone.

The seminar milestone is central to the scientific development of graduate students in our program. A key pedagogical component of the milestone is that in classes, students are exposed to and learn from scientific talks across a broad range of topics and methods that are represented by neuroscience research labs across Western. Students learn from scientific talks across almost every subfield of Neuroscience, from cellular/molecular work to animal work to human experiments, and techniques ranging from single-cell patch clamping to circuit-level electrophysiology, neuroimaging, and human behaviour, to computational neuroscience modeling approaches. In addition, students benefit from the experience of designing, preparing, rehearsing, and delivering focused scientific talks based on their thesis research projects. MSc students deliver a talk in their second year, and PhD students deliver a talk in years 2, 3 and 4. Direct-entry or PhD transfer students deliver a talk in years 2, 3, 4 and 5.

- The seminar is an in-person class
- Classes take place on Tuesday mornings from 9:00am to 10:00am starting on September 15th, 2026 and ending on April 27th, 2027 (30 weeks total)
- Completion of the seminar milestone each year is a progression requirement of the Neuroscience Graduate Program

Attendance Requirement

Attendance is mandatory for all seminar classes. This includes attendance when guest lecturers present talks in class as part of the [Perspectives in Neuroscience Speaker Series](#). Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Classes begin promptly at 9:00 am.

We recognize that occasional absences may occur due to a range of legitimate reasons, including but not limited to illness, family emergency, attending an academic conference, etc. If a student becomes aware of the need to miss one or more seminar classes in the future, for example due to upcoming research scheduling, they may, together with their supervisor,

approach the [Director](#) to request academic consideration. However, this request must occur in advance of the absence(s), and the Director has the discretion to approve or deny these requests.

- In recognition of legitimate occasional absences, the seminar attendance requirement has built-in flexibility. Use of the online absence reporting tool is no longer required.
- For the 2026-27 academic year, attending a minimum of 22 seminar classes will be required to complete the milestone and satisfy the progression requirement of the Neuroscience Graduate Program.
- Failure to attend at least 22 seminar classes in a given academic year will result in failure to complete the seminar milestone. In these cases, to complete the seminar milestone, students may be required to register for an additional term and attend additional seminar classes.
- Each student is responsible for ensuring that they fulfil the attendance requirement annually. Attendance can be viewed in the OWL Brightspace classroom (2026-27 Neuroscience Seminar).