

The Graduate Student Survival Guide

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS
YORK UNIVERSITY

2020–2021 edition

[Graduate Program in Mathematics and Statistics Info](#)

N520B Ross — Monday to Friday

from 8:30a.m. to 1:00p.m. and 2:00p.m. to 4:30p.m.

Key People in the Department

Professor Seyed Moghadas: Graduate Program Director

N518 Ross ext. 66085 moghadas@yorku.ca

Anne Marie Ridley: Graduate Program Assistant

N520B Ross ext. 33974 aridley@yorku.ca

Professor Stephen Watson: Chair of the Department

N522 Ross ext. 22555 swatson@yorku.ca

Professor Hyejin Ku: Undergraduate Program Director

N505 Ross ext. 66087 hku@mathstat.yorku.ca

Madeline Salzarulo: Undergraduate Program Assistance

N519 Ross ext.33969 msalzaru@yorku.ca

Ann-Marie Carless: Administrative Assistant

N520A Ross ext. 33966 acarless@yorku.ca

Steven Chen: Systems Administrator

N525 Ross ext. 66236 steven@mathstat.yorku.ca

Ashifa Damji, Receptionist and Faculty Secretary

N520 Ross ext. 33967 adamji@yorku.ca

Susan Rainey: Administrative Secretary, Chair's Office

N522 Ross

ext. 22555

srainey@yorku.ca

Please be respectful of the posted administrative staff office hours.

From June 1st to Labour Day of each year, all offices close one hour early on Fridays. Thank you.

Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at York University. In this handbook you will find useful information about the department, the university and the surrounding area.

The idea for such a handbook originated with Camille Mittermeier, who was also responsible for writing the first edition, 1999–2000. The authors of consecutive editions have received generous support from many people in the department.

We hope you will find this latest edition helpful in making your stay here pleasant and productive.

Things You Should Do When You Arrive at York

- › Make sure that all your admission conditions are met.
- › International students who have been offered a teaching assignment must apply for a SIN (Social Insurance Number) before the start of employment.
- › The closest Service Canada office is at Lawrence Square, Suite 103-105, 700 Lawrence Avenue West, North York.
- › Open a bank account.
- › **Extended health benefits for Teaching Assistants:** CUPE 3903 (Canadian Union of Public Employees) members visit the website for details, [CUPE 3903](#)
- › Get a YU-card. Go to the YU-card Office in Room 200, William Small Centre on Campus Walk (close to the Parking Office where you can also buy TTC monthly passes). The office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. You must present one piece of valid government-issued photo ID to obtain your YU-card. Acceptable photo ID includes passports, driver's license, etc.
- › Get a library card. Your YU-card also serves as your library card once it has been encoded at the Scott Library circulation desk. Mathematics books and journals are housed in the Steacie Science Library. Information about the library system at York can be found online at [York University Libraries](#). York also has an interlibrary system, i.e., if York doesn't have your book, you can ask for it from another university and they will get it for you.
- › Register. Read the Graduate Mathematics Program Calendar carefully, meet with Professor Seyed Moghadas before Fall/Winter and Summer terms and register and enroll in courses by

following the instructions at the FGS (Faculty of Graduate Studies). [FGS website](#). The registration deadline was August 20, 2020 after which time a \$200 late registration fee will be charged. You can add or drop courses after you register, but you must get Professor S. Moghadas' approval, and be sure to observe important dates and deadlines on the [Faculty of Graduate Studies webpage](#), under "Important Dates".

- Get a Passport York account (which gives you access to York's computer network)
 - Ensure you have a yorku, e-mail address. This is especially important if you will be doing TA work since that is the way Professors and Lab Coordinators will contact you.
- Find out when your classes start. Graduate classes start on **September 4**. Contact the instructors for whom you will be working as a TA. The TA assignments will be sent out to the 'grads' listserv. The list of undergraduate courses and instructors will be posted on the bulletin board next to the Undergraduate Office, N519.

Who Do You See

- if you have questions that are union related?
 - CUPE Local 3903, Atkinson College, Room 143, [CUPE 3903](#)
- if you have questions about your TA assignment?
 - Professor H. Ku, N505 Ross
- to get the key to your office?
 - Graduate Program Office, 520B Ross
 - A \$20.00 deposit is required. Offices will be assigned in October
- to get the access code to N526 Ross (the grad mail room)
 - any staff member in N520 Ross
- if you have computer problems?
 - Steven Chen, N525 Ross
- about maintenance and repairs to your room?
 - Reception, N520 Ross
- about getting a Unit I teaching assistantship application?
 - [CUPE 3903](#)
- questions regarding the completion of a Unit I teaching assistantship application?
 - CUPE Office, x55154

Student Positions in Our Department

Students in this department receive funding in various forms. The most common are two types of Assistantships—Research and Teaching. A Teaching Assistantship involves working in one of the following capacities: marker/grader, problem session/tutorial leader, Math/Stat Lab tutor or coordinator, invigilator.

Descriptions of the various positions follow.

Marker /Grader

Marking and grading is the most common work a TA will do. Here are some tips:

Ask the course director:

- › When and where should papers be returned?
- › How many hours should you spend on a particular assignment/test?
- › Who will devise the marking scheme, you or the instructor? (If it's you, look through a few papers before deciding on a marking scheme.)
- › Should you write comments on papers? How detailed?
- › Should you record and keep a list of grades?
- › Will you have office hours to discuss grievances with students?
- › Inform the instructor about common errors or difficulties and apparent cheating. (Ask about the instructor's policy on group work.)
- › Keep a record of hours spent marking and inform the instructor.
- › You may find it quicker and easier to:
 - Mark only one question at a time.
 - Cross through empty spaces to prevent students from cheating by adding material later.
 - Make notes on how much you awarded for various partial answers.

Problem Session /Tutorial Leader

As a problem session/tutorial leader you will help students from a particular course with their questions. Here are some guidelines:

- › Be on time, do not leave early.
- › If you cannot come to a problem session:
 - If possible, inform the instructor, so an announcement can be made in class.
 - Otherwise, inform the UPD, H. Ku, or the math office, x55250.
- › Ask the instructor for a copy of the textbook and periodically ask which sections have been covered.
- › Review relevant material prior to a session.
- › Help students do problems, do not do problems for students (in particular, find out which problems are on assignments, and do not give complete answers to these).
- › When asked a question, ask if other students have the same question, then use the blackboard to help all the students at the same time.
- › If there are a lot of students, do not spend too much time with any particular student.

Math /Stats Lab Tutor

The Math/Stat Lab is a drop-in help room for a number of mathematics and statistics courses. It is located in S525 Ross.

As a Math Lab tutor you will be helping students with their math courses. As a Stats Lab tutor you will be helping students from first and second year statistics courses. The Math/Stats Lab coordinators will tell you exactly which courses you will be dealing with. If students from other courses ask you questions you are not obligated to help.

The Math Lab operates five days a week, while the Stats Lab is open fewer hours only in the summer. During Fall and winter, the Stats Lab is also open from 10:30a.m. to 3:30p.m.

You will never be working alone in the Lab. If you can't answer a question, don't hesitate to ask another tutor for help.

The guidelines for problem session leaders also apply to Lab tutors. The only exception is that you should inform the Lab coordinator if you cannot work your shift and can not find a replacement. If you can not work your shift, the usual "rule" is that you must try to find another TA to take your shift and inform the Lab Coordinator before your shift.

Math /Stat Lab Coordinators

Working as a Lab tutor, involves the following duties:

- › Scheduling Lab tutors' hours.
- › Liaising with instructors, e.g. asking whether solution manuals should be available to students and when midterms and tests are scheduled in their courses.
- › Liaising with Lab tutors via meetings and/or an e-mail list.
- › Lab maintenance, e.g. ensuring sufficient copies of manuals, reporting damages.
- › Updating Lab bulletin boards, e.g. hours of operation and announcements for closures during holidays.
- › Producing an end-of-year report.

The number of tutors and hours of operation are decided in consultation with Professor Ku. Further guidance and details are available from the Faculty Lab coordinator and any of your predecessors.

Invigilator

As an invigilator you will assist course instructors when they give tests or final examinations.

Duties may include:

- › Distributing and collecting tests.
- › Having students sign an attendance sheet.
- › Checking students' identification.
- › Watching students while they write the test and reporting suspicions of cheating to the instructor.

The instructor will tell you exactly what your duties will be, the location of the test, and the time you should arrive there.

It is also important that you do not make travel plans for the end of any term until you know how late you will be required to invigilate.

Applying For These Positions

If you fill out a 'blanket' application between November 15 and January 31 you will be considered for ALL Teaching Assistantship positions offered during the following winter, summer and fall terms. On this application you may request specific positions or courses. Read the instructions on the application for detailed information.

Academic Matters

Seminars and Colloquia

Various seminars are presented in the department. You are encouraged to attend talks in your specific area, as well as colloquia (talks intended for a general audience).

If you are giving a talk for the Mathematics Seminar, book a room and the projector/LCD. You can do this by logging into the online booking system at rbs.math.yorku.ca. Once you have that done, give your information to Karishma together with your talk title and short abstract at least one week in advance. Anne Marie will announce it through email.

Degree Requirements

For detailed information see the Graduate Mathematics Calendar. If you still have questions ask Anne Marie.

Funding

You may apply for various grants and scholarships such as NSERC, OGS, and bursaries for students in need (see [FGS website](#)).

Departmental Facilities

Computer Labs

The department's main computer lab is N604 Ross (ask in N520 Ross or the Graduate Program Office, N520B Ross for the access code).

Information regarding remote connection to York's servers can be found at [UIT](#).

Take note that no food or drink is allowed in any of the labs.

Office Supplies And Room Bookings

To book an overhead projector for the seminar room, go to the online booking service at rbs.math.yorku.ca.

Kitchens

N526 has a fridge and microwave. Recycling and garbage bins are outside the room.

Please respect others when using these facilities—clean up after yourself and don't take anything that doesn't belong to you. If the microwave and fridge are not kept clean the privilege of having the appliances may be lost.

Cleaning Services

The cleaning staff for this department comes between 4:00p.m. and 5:00p.m. each day. It is necessary to empty your garbage and recycling in the appropriate bins each day before then.

Life On Campus—Helpful Hints

Pay

Payday is the 25th of each month, but your first month's pay may be delayed.

Student Account Statement

You can access the statement through Passport York, which states how much you still owe for tuition (and rent, if you live on campus) as well as health insurance (UHIP, if you are an international student).

Photocopying

Photocopying facilities exist in the York libraries, Printing Services, 163A, in Central Square and the Graduate Student Association (Student Union Centre).

Libraries

York's five libraries contain more than six and a half million items including more than two million books and subscriptions to over 13,000 electronic journals.

Scott Library is the largest of these and houses collections in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts. Science-related items are at the Steacie Science Library, while the Osgoode Hall Law School houses the largest law library in the Commonwealth. The Leslie Frost Library is located at Glendon College and houses collections in all disciplines with a significant proportion of research materials in the French language. The Peter F. Bronfman Business Library, in addition to print materials, gives access to dozens of e-resources such as the Bloomberg Terminal. More information about the libraries can be found on [York University Libraries](#).

The library liaison for our department is William Denton (wdenton@yorku.ca).

Councils

The following university councils include student representatives:

Department Council

This council deals with matters such as curriculum and program reviews, and hiring. It meets regularly during the fall and winter terms.

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Council

The GSA represents graduate student interests within the university as well as at the provincial and national levels. We are allowed one representative on the GSA Council. If our representative attends enough meetings, the GSA will provide funding to our department's graduate student association. That's a good thing.

Faculty of Graduate Studies Council

This council deals with issues of importance to graduate students at York, including tuition increases and changes to graduate programs. It meets once a month during the fall and winter terms.

CUPE Union Steward's Council

As a TA you are automatically a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 3903. Our department is entitled to elect an unlimited number of stewards who can provide information and advice to TAs, act as their advocate in labour disputes, and attend meetings of the Steward's Council.

Please consider becoming a CUPE Union Steward.

Housing

For information about housing on campus, contact the York Student Housing Services at studenthousing.info.yorku.ca.

Telephones

The cheapest way to phone overseas is by buying phone cards. They are available on campus at Gateway Cigar Stores (located between the Student Centre and York Lanes).

Security

Unfortunately, the Jane-Finch area is not considered one of the safest in Toronto, so you should take reasonable precautions. You can take advantage of programs which

York Security offers including:

The Student Security Escort Service

A minivan service is provided on request to take you anywhere on campus. Phone x55454 for information.

Why work alone?

When working at night let Security know where you are and they will periodically send an officer to check on you. Phone x33333 for more information.

goSAFE

goSAFE is a complimentary service, providing a safe and secure means of transporting York community members on campus and selected campus locations. At the Keele campus, goSAFE has a north route and a south route with hubs as pick-up and drop-off locations. Additionally, York Student Safety Officers will walk you, by request, from non-hub locations to the routes or to other non-hub locations. goSAFE schedules and maps can be found at [Community Safety](#).

Childcare

There are two daycare organizations on campus: the [York University Co-op Daycare Centre](#), and the Lee Wiggins Childcare, 416-736-5959 or [Child Care Services](#).

Fitness

York offers many athletic and recreational facilities. Your YU-card gives you access to the Tait McKenzie Fitness Centre. For the Fitness Centre at Tait McKenzie, you must pay a \$15 annual membership. To find out more, [York University Athletics](#).

York Lanes

This shopping mall on campus contains a bank, credit union, bookstore, restaurants, medical and dental offices, a pharmacy and many other stores. There is a postal outlet in Ink Blotz which also sells PRESTO, GO and TTC tickets.

Medical Centre

AppleTree at York Lanes is a walk-in clinic in case of emergency, however, they will charge \$15 per visit. You can do a quick search for other walk-in clinics in the area that do not charge a fee. Walk-in clinics are a convenient way to see a doctor during an “emergency” when you don’t have an appointment with your regular doctor. They are covered by OHIP and usually covered by UHIP.

International Students

Be sure to visit the [York International website](#), for information in immigration, healthcare, insurance, etc.

Campus Map

A campus map has been included at the back of this booklet. However, because of the construction of new buildings on the campus, you should check the York website for updates of buildings—changes in name, address, etc.—at [York Maps](#).

Life Outside Campus

TTC

The Toronto Transit Commission is the most heavily used public transportation system for this area. Check the website for more information: [TTC](#).

The subway is here!

You can pay the driver of a bus or street car (exact change only) or buy tokens in a subway station, the YFS office at the Student Centre on campus, for a discounted price for at least 5

tokens. Transfers allow you to switch from one line to another without paying a second fare. They can be obtained from drivers of vehicles or dispensers in subway stations.

You can also buy a monthly, weekly or day pass. Metro passes are available at a discounted rate for York University students. Visit [Transportation Services](#) for more information.

VIVA/YRT

Check the [VIVA and YRT website](#) for more information.

GO Transit

GO Transit is an interregional public transit system, established to link Toronto with the surrounding regions of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). GO buses and trains are easily identifiable by their green and white colour scheme. GO Transit is generally for those who would like to travel way out-of-town. For information regarding schedules, fares and routes visit [Go transit](#). A shuttle bus provided by York will take you to and from the GO train found on Canartic Drive. For shuttle bus times, visit [Transportation Services](#).

Grocery Stores

The following are the closest grocery stores:

Walmart Keele and Finch

Food Cents Four Winds Drive, north of Finch, off Sentinel

No Frills Jane and Finch, northwest corner; Jane and Shoreham, northwest corner

Super Store Dufferin and Steeles, southeast corner

T&T..... Steeles West and Centre Street, Promenade Shopping Centre

Information About Toronto

To find out more about life in Toronto, visit the following web pages and explore their numerous links:

[Visit Toronto](#)

[Toronto's Life](#)

[blogTO](#)

[Toronto Craigslist](#)

Quick reference guide to computing in mathematics & statistics

by Steven Chen

Passport York account is managed by UIT,

****PASSPORT YORK (PPY)****

****You can use your PPY account to access the workstations in the Ross N604 computer lab.**

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E-mail Notes

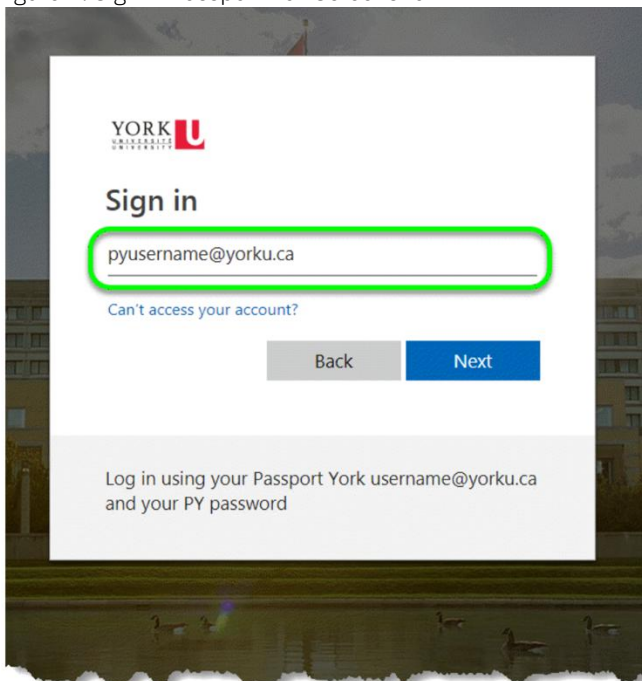
All currently active employees of York University have a centrally supported yorku.ca email account as a requirement from HR to view pay stubs and other HR documents.

When you leave the University, the email account will be disabled.

To access Outlook Online:

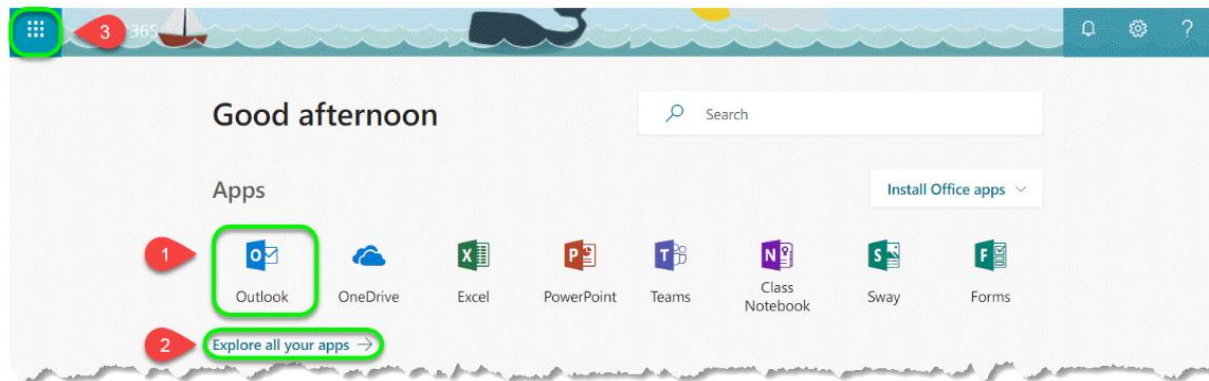
- Go to: [Portal](#)
- Sign using your **Passport York Username (username@yorku.ca)** and Passport York password.

Figure 1: Sign in Passport York Screenshot



- › Typically, you will see Outlook displayed under your suggested apps
- › If you don't, you can select Explore all your apps to locate it
- › Or, you can click the tile icon in the top-left corner to find it

Figure 2: Outlook displayed under your suggested apps



Unix computing

All UNIX computing should be carried out on isaac.math.yorku.ca. You can connect to the machine via SSH/telnet. If you need X-display capabilities, please install [CYWIN](#) on your local machine with the following optional components:

- › The ENTIRE X11 TREE
- › OpenSSH (along with all automatically selected dependencies). When CYGWIN is installed you can start a CYGWIN shell and type: startx at the CYWIN prompt. X-server will start up on your local machine and you will be presented with a white xterm window. In that window you can type: ssh -X your_username@isaac.math.yorku.ca -p 228 and enter your MATHSTAT password when prompted. On our computational server newton.math.yorku.ca you can use a VARIETY of applications, including MAPLE, MATLAB, SAS, etc.

Laptops/Personal Computers

You can have your PC or laptop setup in your office PROVIDED that there is a spare drop and a spare IP number available otherwise students can use the wireless internet via AirYork Plus or EduRoam.

AirYork Plus is available in all buildings on York's Keele Campus.

AirYork Plus

- › Select AirYork Plus from the wireless list on your device
- › Sign in using your Passport York account

More information can be found here: [AirYorkPlus](#)