

The

ULTIMATE

MEDICAL SCHOOL ROADMAP

THE 13 STEPS YOU NEED TO GET ACCEPTED TO YOUR
DREAM MEDICAL SCHOOL IN NORTH AMERICA



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MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR



Congratulations!!!

I want to dedicate this book to all of my amazing mentors, teachers, friends and patients who helped me navigate the pre-medical and medical process and those who continue to inspire me and other students to become the best we can be.

If you've even entertained the idea of pursuing a career in medicine, then hats off to you! Becoming a physician is one of the most exciting and rewarding careers the world has to offer! What can be more rewarding than using your knowledge and bedside manner to help relieve your fellow human beings of their pain and suffering?

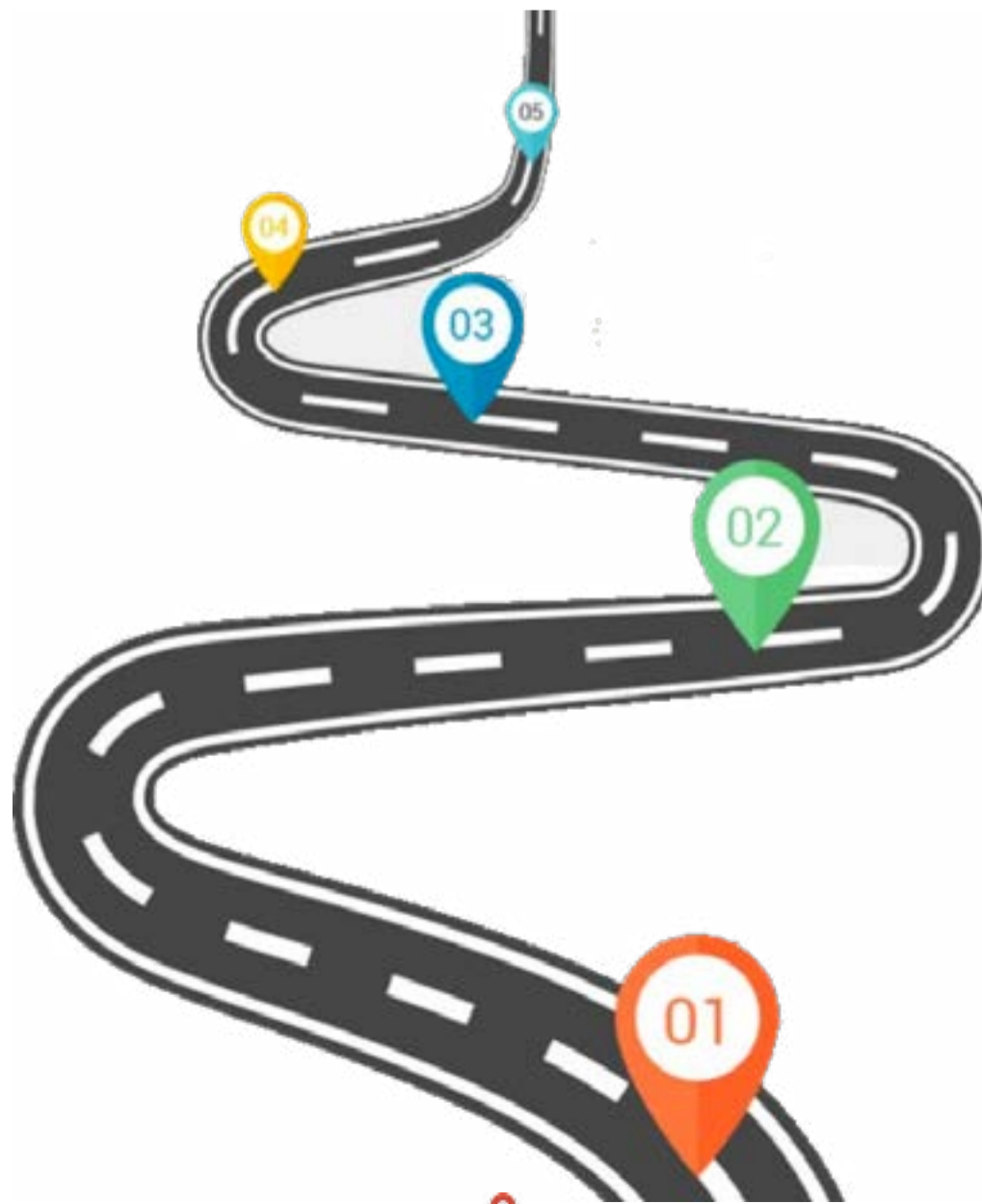
Welcome to Student2Pro!

Dr. Suleiman Furmli

Founder of FurmliMD

13 STEPS

YOU NEED TO GET ACCEPTED
TO YOUR DREAM
MEDICAL SCHOOL



My Story



I always knew I wanted to become a doctor one day because of my own personal health encounters as a child and then realizing my love for biology and science throughout elementary school. Most importantly, I loved being around people and found the thought of being able to help others super rewarding. After many years of hard work, I discovered successful strategies in reserach, awards, MCAT, extracurriculars, employment, reference letters, the medical school application and finally the interviews. After having mastered these areas myself, I started to then coach and mentor other students and started seeing the same results. Read more [here](#).

One of the things I'm sure you must have already heard about pursuing a career in medicine is the long and complicated journey that you must undertake and the many challenges you will face along the way before you can be addressed as "Doctor ...".

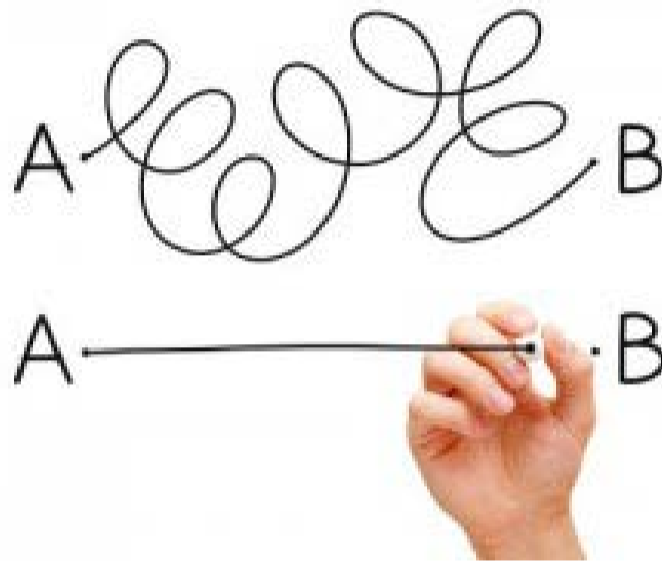
There are many approaches to becoming a doctor! All that flexibility is exciting, but it can also make this process confusing and daunting. The number of steps and decisions you have to make along the way can be overwhelming! This guide will highlight 13 major decision points that occur in the process and give you a roadmap on how to navigate these major milestones.

Having a good GPS at your side like Google Maps or Waze is essential before you head off to any destination nowadays. That includes the road to medical school! I really wish I had a roadmap to guide me along the complicated route I had to take to get into medical school.



Wouldn't it be nice to have a resource to show you the way, someone who has been through it and travelled all the different avenues?

Now, years after finishing this process myself and helping to mentor hundreds of other pre-medical students, I am grateful to be able to offer just that!



[Student2Pro](#) is your compass and guide to ensure that you have an enjoyable, seamless and rewarding journey to medical school and becoming a phenomenal physician. This e-book aims to give you a bird's eye view of the entire process and all the important concerns and issues at each juncture. The best part of this guide is that it is completely practical and interactive – outlining the most important things to consider and challenging you to think ahead and answer crucial questions in order to prepare you to make those important decisions that are coming your way.

As you read this, you might be at any point on this map, from point #1 all the way to point #13. Feel free to start at whatever point you find most applicable to you and follow along from there.

Who this guide is meant for:

This guide is meant for any student or their family member or loved one who would like to know the important steps needed to gain acceptance to a Canadian or US Medical school.

Although there are many different routes to becoming a physician, this e-book addresses the main areas needed for Canadian or American premedical students to be successful in gaining acceptance to a Canadian or US Medical school. If you are a mature student, are a foreign or international medical graduate (IMG) OR you are mainly interested in applying to a foreign medical school outside the US or Canada - then stay tuned for additional guides to come @ [Student2Pro](#).

How to make the most of this roadmap

1. Write in it – It'll be helpful to keep a hard copy of this road map handy for you to be able to write in and use as a reference as you read along and plot your course.

2. Have a clear overview. – Whether you are at step 1 or step 13, familiarize yourself with the entire journey, as each step of the pathway usually overlaps and links with another. For example, if you are at the interview stage (step 13), you will have to reflect back on your mindset (step 1), as that will undoubtedly relate to what you say in your interview.

3. Act! - Challenge yourself with completing the “Practical Exercises” under each section. Also make use of additional helpful resources at the end of this book.



List of Abbreviations/Acronyms:

THESE ARE SOME OF THE ABBREVIATIONS YOU WILL FIND IN THIS BOOK
IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER:

AAMC - AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL COLLEGES

AMCAS - AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGE APPLICATION SERVICE

ABS - AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - THIS YOUR SUMMARY OF ALL OF YOUR EXPERIENCES

THAT IS ASKED OF YOU TO SUBMIT ON ALL OF YOUR MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

AFMC - THE ASSOCIATION OF FACULTIES OF MEDICINE OF CANADA

GPA - GRADE POINT AVERAGE

MCAT - MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST

OMSAS - ONTARIO MEDICAL APPLICATION SERVICE

1 – MINDSET - Your Raison D'Être



Let's face it; the endeavor to become a physician is a major one. I'm not going to lie. It comes with many sacrifices, and it's a long road! In order to stick it out through the challenging times, so you can get to the good times, you need a **STRONG** and compelling story that outlines your motivations for becoming a physician. This story is what you can always draw on to help you through. Whether it's pulling an all-nighter for your exam, juggling ten extracurricular activities, making it through a busy 48-hour on-call shift during medical school, or having to cancel another social outing; a powerful overlying ultimate purpose and narrative is vital to keep you going. I had at least three strong motivations in my back pocket that I pulled out whenever I faced a challenge to help pull me through. Think of this as mental and emotional fuel for your tank. If you have strong and compelling reasons, your tank will never run empty! Your motivations can be specific or general. They can be personal/private or public. Some examples of potential reasons include helping others, gaining status, achieving financial security, experiencing self-fulfillment, earning parental approval, or something else, and your motivations may change over time.



The key is to make sure that whatever is driving you is something that is enduring and will keep you going. Also, please make sure your goal is a positive one; I don't want to be encouraging any [Doc Vaders](#). Finally, always feel free to come back to your narrative and tweak it, as you feel necessary!





Practical Exercise

Take some time to think about what your story is. Why do you feel that you MUST become a physician?

List 3 STRONG, COMPELLING and ENDURING reasons why you HAVE TO BECOME A PHYSICIAN.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2 - CHOOSING THE RIGHT UNDERGRADUATE/ PRE-MEDICAL UNIVERSITY FOR YOU



After having your Raison D'être down, you need to walk through the motions of meeting the pre-requisites for medical school. One of the main pre-requisites is having an undergraduate university degree (or at least 3 years of it).

Chances are you might have already chosen a university, and that's totally fine. If you are still a high school student and haven't, or maybe were even thinking of transferring, then this next section may be useful.

Choosing your university is a super important decision. Don't take it lightly. Whichever university you end up opting for, just remember what a huge investment this is from your end. You are investing at least three years of your life here – that's A LOT of time. You will also be investing A LOT of money – in the tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands! You will carry that degree wherever you go for the rest of your life, and it will be your stepping stone to your future medical career.



Ultimately, you have SO MANY universities to choose from, so it's important to give this decision very careful consideration. This is a choice that can play a huge role in your happiness, your finances, as well as your chances of getting into Medical school.

In Canada, except for a few universities that have specialized pre-medical programs (ex. [Queens](#) and [McMaster](#)), it really doesn't matter what the "name" and "reputation" of that school is. All schools are publicly funded and there are no private Universities and they are generally accepted by medical schools at being roughly at par. This is contrary to the common myth that the brand of the school will make a huge difference. The main reason for this is that most medical don't usually include the "name" of your school in their selection criteria algorithm. Therefore, don't get misled by "prestige" per se.

In the United States, this is different because of the large existing discrepancy in standards between private and Ivy League universities compared with some state schools and community colleges. Therefore, this is an important consideration if this applies to you as medical schools in the United States might favour a slightly lower GPA from a high-tier school over their counterpart from a lower-tier school. Given the high cost of high-tier schools however, you may be better off going to a state school and simply working harder to get a higher GPA.



After reputation, what should you consider?

One of the most important factors in determining your eligibility for medical school is your ability to demonstrate your academic potential in the form of your grade point average (GPA). That being said, it's extremely important that you choose a university that will be able to support you with the right tools to help you clinch those top grades. In addition, there are a few other important considerations:

1) Location – Location can make a huge difference to how things go for you academically. For example, are you looking for a school close to where you live now or one further away? One issue to consider is the interruption to your social and personal life if you choose to move away. Transitioning from high school to university can be fairly challenging for most, but having the home court advantage can make this transition much smoother. On the other hand, for those who want more independence or who wish to escape a negative home environment, moving away can also be a plus.

Another important consideration is a university's proximity to hospitals and other relevant institutions that can offer the extracurricular, clinical and research opportunities you need to enhance your pre-medical experiences and build yourself a strong repertoire of skills and accomplishments.

Finally, you want to choose a location where you will be happy both on and off campus. Think about what type of environment is important for you to be happy.



Do you prefer urban vs rural? What about your social life? Granted, you may not have much of one, but still, for the odd day off, does the school's location offer what you need? Are you a social animal or more of a loner? Are you a patron of the arts or a sports junkie? What about the plain old weather. If that's important to you, the climate of the school's location might be the tie breaker.

Ultimately, all these environmental factors may play a pivotal role in ensuring your academic success.



2) Finances – There is HUGE variability in university tuition costs across North America. Remember that in most cases, it's your grade and GPA that matters, so if you can go to a less expensive school and still have a great experience, why not save all that extra money?

Another huge cost-saver is rent - if you can attend a school within commuting distance from your folks, you can save about \$25-50K per year!

3) School culture – You will be committing yourself to the place you choose for at least three years, so make sure it's a place where you are valued, welcomed and will be happy.

4) Availability of opportunities – Ideally, you want the university to offer access to opportunities that interest you in the other domains discussed in this guide, including research, employment, volunteerism, extracurriculars and awards.

These are some of the issues that I felt were important when choosing the right university. What are some concerns that are important to you?





Practical Exercise

List your top 3 concerns/criteria for choosing a school below in order of importance to you. If there are more than 3 criteria, feel free to add those as well.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Others: _____

Now generate a list of Universities that fit your criteria. Make the list as exhaustive as possible. Now rank all the schools that you've considered below favour in order of their ability to match your values. Feel free to extend this list well above 5 as you see fit.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

3 - CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROGRAM



Once you've narrowed down your pre-medical University, the next step is to choose your program or your “majors and minors”. The diversity of university programs to choose from is endless. They can vary based on so many factors which include: co-op programs, program/class sizes, subject matter, number of mandatory courses, and general difficulty level. Because it would be hard to cover all the different nuances of university programs here, I will instead list what I believe are the most important considerations when choosing a university program, based on YOUR personality and needs.



1) The type of undergraduate program itself doesn't matter. – the biggest mistake I see most students make is to fall into the trap of thinking that they must take a life-sciences or “pre-medical” program to get into medical school. Except for the few direct-route pre-medical programs, there really is not such thing as a “pre-medical program”, in fact, medical schools now see the value accepting students with diverse backgrounds of undergraduate studies. For example, medical schools value students who may think from an engineering or humanities point of view as they may bring added perspective to solving medical issues. Therefore, I was pleasantly surprised when I saw so many of my medical school classmates being graduate



of engineering programs and even had a classmate who majored in Piano! All you really need is the specific pre-requisite courses which will be discussed in the next section.

2) It's your interest level that counts! – The most important factor I would advise you to focus on is to choose programs based on what you're most interested in. If you love music, do a music program. If you love history, do a history program. If you love business, go for business! The more interested you are in your program, the more likely that you will be engaged in it, and do well academically! That's what medical schools are looking for – students who can demonstrate that they can thrive academically. If you choose cell and molecular biology and are stuck having to memorize the names and structures of molecules you can't even see and don't give a darn about, your four years of university will be absolute torture. How much more difficult is it for you to do your best and excel in a program if you hate what you're doing?



3) Be sure to choose what you are good at. – Before you choose a program you're interested in, also try to align your own personal academic strengths as well. For example, if you can't conceptualize a physics problem for the life of you, make sure you avoid a physics-heavy program. Similarly, if you love to write and are an absolute ace producing persuasive essays or crafting creative pieces, don't choose a program that will force you to simply memorize information and write multiple-choice exams –

instead, find a program like biomedical ethics or another humanities option that will encourage you to use your persuasive or creative writing talents. Note that this is different from point #2 - what you might be interested in and what you are good at might be two different things. Try to find a combination that align harmoniously!

4) Flexibility - A flexible program will give you a chance to broaden your horizon. The final very important piece of advice I can give you is to be sure that whatever program you end up choosing allows you the flexibility to be able to diversify your course selections. There are different structures to programs including minors, majors, and specialist programs, but the bottom line is to aim for programs within these structures that will give you the largest number of choices for the individual courses that you take. For example, choose a program that will not force you to take 30 specific course titles out of the 40 you need to graduate (only 25% flexibility). Instead, opt for a program that gives you a more favorable ratio of optional course titles to choose from (the higher the ratio, the better).



Practical Exercise



Take a look at point 2 above and outline the different subjects that interest you. Some examples course include: 1) Biology and Health , 2) History 3) Mathematics, 4) Music, 5) Sociology, 6) History, 7) Cinema Studies, etc.

1) What subjects interest you? (The more the better!)

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

Here refer to point 3 and include your areas of personal strength. Examples include: 1) reading, 2) writing, 3) mathematics, 4) memorizing and understanding facts, 5) hands-on areas (ie. arts, design, engineering) , 6) Computers and Technology etc, 7) Business.

2) What are your academic strengths?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

Now try and generate a list of specific University Programs that can harmoniously combine points 1 & 2. For example, if you chose history as a topic of interest, and reading and writing as your personal strong suites - look for programs and courses that will utilize both. You can see lists of programs and their courses lists on the University Calendars.

Here is a list of some sample Program and Course Calendars:

Harvard - <https://courses.harvard.edu/index.html>

UofT - <https://fas.calendar.utoronto.ca/listing-program-subject-areas>

4 - CHOOSING THE RIGHT COURSES



There are thousands of courses offered in university and choosing the right ones for you can make or break your GPA and make the difference between an enjoyable semester and a stressful one. Here are the most important considerations when choosing your courses:

1) Medical School Prerequisites - Make sure you know the specific prerequisite courses required by the medical schools you are aiming for, as this can vary greatly all across North America. Also, be aware that prerequisite courses can change from year to year for each university. You can easily check for these on the [AMCAS](#) and [AFMC](#) websites. Sometimes knowing the prerequisites for schools will determine whether you choose to apply to those schools or not. For example, I chose not to apply to medical schools that wanted university physics because that subject was a particular weak-point for me. However, before I made that decision, I took a good look at those schools to be sure that I could afford to check them off the list. I can't emphasize how important it is to intimately familiarize yourself with all the pre-requisite courses needed by the specific medical schools you intent to apply to. This is vital for 3 key reasons:

a) Each individual school makes their own pre-requisites so there is no one-size fits all. For example, even if you take strictly a biology or life-sciences program, you may be shocked to find out that a lot of schools also require humanities courses OR that the life sciences courses you took did not happen to satisfy their specific requirements (ie. they may not count 'zoology' as a biology pre-requisite). b) Therefore there is large variability with respect to prerequisite courses

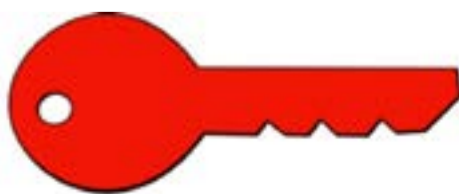


and this may be an important consideration for you when you plan short-list the medical schools you want to apply for (ie. you only want to target medical schools that don't require physics for example) and

c) The pre-requisites can change from year to year by each individual school. The prerequisite courses can change for each individual school each year

2) Program Prerequisites – The next consideration is that you will also HAVE to fulfill the requirements for your specific undergraduate “major” or program and that will mean that you must take some specific courses to meet their requirement from the wide menu of courses they offer. Make sure you fulfill these requirements by choosing courses that also align with your strengths and interests.

3) Interest – Again, I cannot stress this enough, try to choose courses that interest you the most. Look at the title and course description; this usually will be enough for you to get the gist of the content. Also feel free to ask other students for courses they recommend (and make sure you also ask why and ensure it's for reasons that would apply to you as well). The more that the course material interests you, the more likely you'll enjoy going to class and spending time studying for it, and that will lead to doing better in it overall. You will also be happier overall, which is KEY!



4) Strengths – The goal of choosing a program that caters to your strengths is that the program offers an abundance of courses that are also geared to your strengths. How do you know a specific course is one that caters to your strengths? Just like the previous point; familiarize yourself with the course description, the course syllabus, speak to other students. The course syllabus will help inform you how you are evaluated and graded in the course and where your marks will be given. If you are a good multiple-choice test-taker and 80% of the course is based on multiple choice exams, you know you've got a good fit. If you can't write an essay if you're life depended on it and the course has 90% of your mark from 2 essays - then look for a different course.



5) Professor – Who is teaching the course may also be an important factor. Some courses may have multiple professors. You already know from your schooling up to now that teaching abilities can vary greatly. So can the evaluations used by different professors teaching the same course. Find out which professors are a hit with the students and try to take the courses they teach so that you can ensure that you will have a good relationship and getting the best quality education for your particular needs! For many of my courses, it was the professor alone that made the difference - both in terms of my GPA and my personal happiness.



6) Balance – Choose a balanced course load for each semester in terms of number of courses, interest level, difficulty, evaluation methods and time requirements. For example, try to mix your difficult courses with easier ones, multiple-choice style and straight memorization courses with more writing and less structured courses, courses with multiple exams with courses that might not have any exams. The more you are able to strategically diversify your course load, the more variety you'll have, the more manageable it will be, the better you will perform, and once again, the happier you'll be.



Practical Exercise

- 1) Find your course calendar or the list of all the courses offered at your university and look at the courses that fall under your program(s) or intended program. Come up with a shortlist of the courses that are most appealing to you, keeping in mind the advice from above.**
- 2) Arrange these courses on a chart or map, starting from first year, moving up through to fourth year.**
- 3) Find the syllabi for these courses to ensure that they fit with your goals and, again, follow the advice above.**
- 4) Find a group of students in years above you who have taken those courses and have a conversation with them about their experiences so you can better determine if the courses will fit with your learning and academic goals.**

5 - ENSURING A STRONG GPA



One of the most important factors in determining your eligibility for medical school is your ability to demonstrate your academic potential in the form of your grade point average (GPA). The GPA is easily one of the MAIN reasons why pre-medical students don't make the short-list for medical school. Attaining a high GPA was definitely one of the biggest challenges I struggled with but was able to master over time.



Mastering the art of scoring high in university is a HUGE topic on its own and it involves many different areas of expertise from the science of memory, to behavioural psychology to productivity and organizational skills management, to strategic research and choosing of courses. I have compiled the best strategies across all these domains and built an entire course called “Four Point 0” where I outline and layout all the best strategies to help you score those 90+s - but for the sake of brevity in this guide, I will present just an overview [here](#).

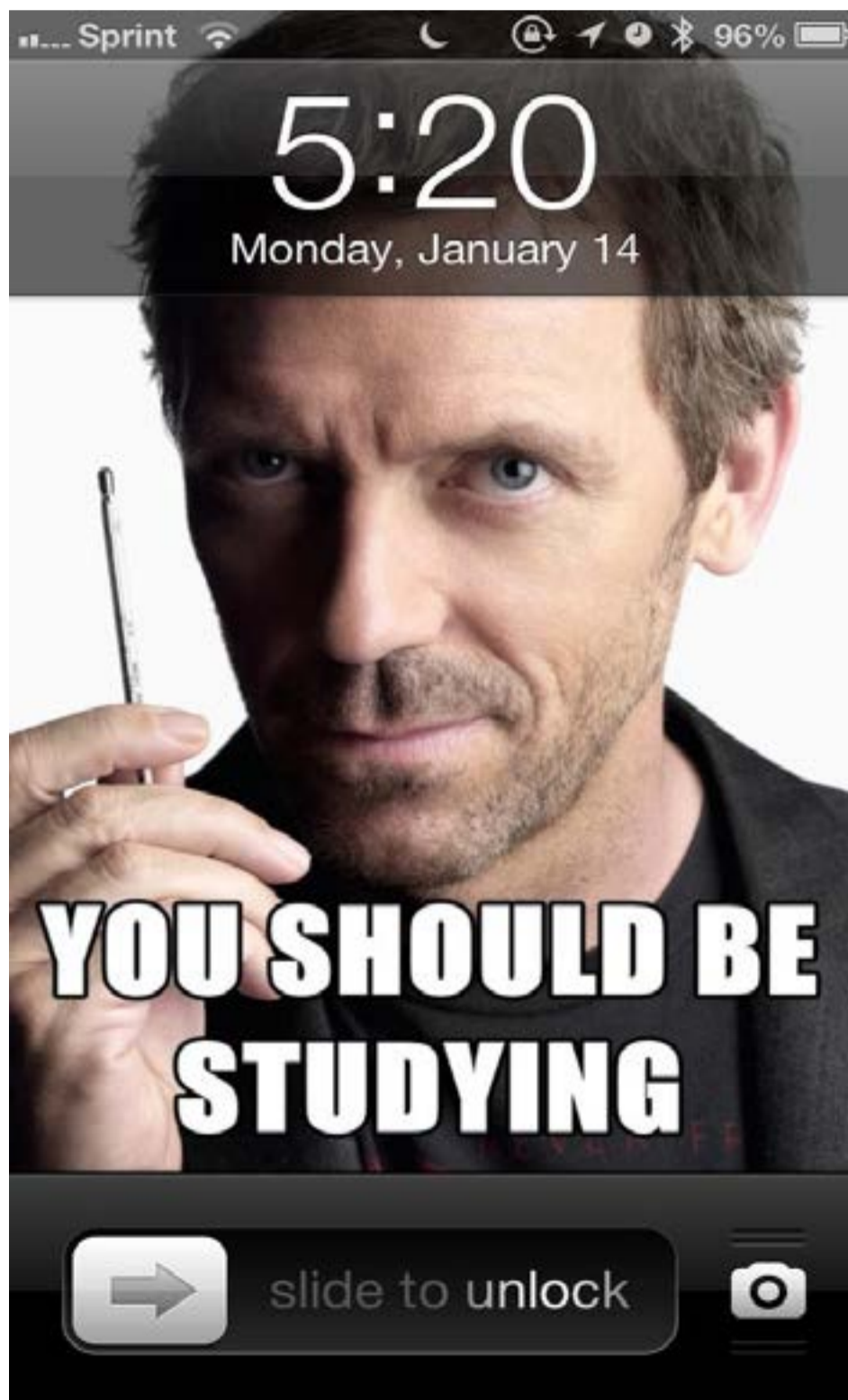


1) Program and course selection – The tips mentioned above in terms of being strategic about program and course selection play a huge role in supporting a high GPA by leveraging your strengths and ensuring you have an enjoyable and manageable course load. I would say that alone is about 25% of the battle of having a strong GPA.



2) Time management – Managing time in university is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, you have much more “free” time than you did in high school because you have only half the class time. What is hard to realize though, is that you have 2-4X times the course material! With the huge emphasis on self-learning in university – I would say I taught myself at least 90% of what I learned – self-discipline in managing time, and everything else, is essential. On the other hand, having so much unstructured time and being in a new environment with SO MANY things to do makes it super easy to get lost in the fun aspects of university life and culture, and forget about dedicating your time to what matters most - which is to learn and set the stage for yourself to gain acceptance to medical school and enter your profession of choice. One solution that I would strongly recommend is to carve out specific blocks of your “free” time to dedicate solely to studying! The golden rule of thumb is three hours of studying outside of class for each hour in class. Making sure you have enough time to study is another 25% of the GPA algorithm.

3) Quality studying – After you block off time to study, the next step is to ensure that your time is of high quality and that you are actually productive during these study times. This entails a few things. Firstly, ensure that you block these times during your most productive times of the day.



If you are a night owl, then schedule study time at night. If you're a morning person, schedule it in the morning. Next, study when you know you'll have minimal distractions, including self-inflicted ones, like social media, for example. Keep that Facebook minimized, your app notifications off, and your phone on silent during these times. The study environment is also important; it should be a place where you will be comfortable and focused. That could be the library, or the nearest coffee shop. If you need silence, use earplugs or if you need music, play your favorite instrumental. You know yourself; use it to your advantage.

4) Study! – Nike said it best “Just Do it!”. Put in the time and effort, and make sure you learn the study techniques that work best for you. This could involve different formats of studying including: individual, group, repetition, visual, written, or even kinesthetic (ie. hands-on). Take advantage of any and all learning methods that will help you succeed.

5) Practice, practice, practice! – Another important realization that saved me was never taking anything I had learned for granted. I thought, after all the hours of studying I put in, I knew everything. Then I got my first set of exam marks back and learned that I had totally fooled myself. So after that, I decided to fool myself well before the exam: I had my colleagues test my knowledge, I completed any practice exams I could get hold of, and then I worked on filling any knowledge gaps before writing the actual exam. My grades skyrocketed, and yours will sure too as well!





Practical Exercise

- 1) How do you feel about your current program and course selection? Are there any changes that you can make to optimize this area?**
- 2) How much time can you comfortably block off per week for dedicated study time outside of class? Take out a calendar and block off these dates and times, and stay dedicated.**
- 3) What study environment do you need to be most effective and productive? How can you maximize your environment to maximize your productivity?**
- 4) What study techniques work for you? How can you maximize on these techniques and learn new ones?**
- 5) How can you maximize on practice? Find other students and colleagues to create study groups for each course so that you can quiz and test each other's knowledge. Make it fun and engaging! Also, try to find more experienced students for advice and find avenues to obtain as many practice exams or questions as you can.**

6 - VOLUNTEER/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Another crucial aspect in the pre-medical experience is volunteering and extracurricular activities. These help show the medical schools what your interests and passions are outside of your academics and give them a sense of who you are as a person and what you can accomplish. From a personal standpoint, these experiences are important because first and foremost, they can be extremely transformative for you as a person, but they can also be transformative for those in your community.

I've lumped volunteer and extracurricular activities here together but there is a significant distinction between them.

First of all, on your medical school application, it usually differentiates between these two categories of entries. Therefore you should try to share or balance your endeavors in each category so that you can demonstrate a strong portfolio in both categories.

The best way to conceptualize the difference between the two categories are the following:

Volunteer Activities - these mainly include service to OTHERS . An example of this would be volunteering at a local hospital or seniors home and feeding patients.



Extracurricular Activities - these include activities that you enjoy and love doing for yourself. An example of this would include travelling the world or being the captain of your rugby team. These experiences are important because they also help keep you going and strong amidst the challenges of being a student and for your future practice as a physician and everything in between.

Both of these are important because they help to define you AND offer you opportunities to grow yourself as an individual, gain leadership skills and make an impact. There are many instances where you can easily combine both categories of experiences together and there can be significant overlap, which is a great thing in fact. For example, you love playing the Violin (Extracurricular) and you volunteer to play the violin at your local hospital for children (Volunteer).



When you are looking at securing a good experience, here are some points to keep in mind:

1) Choose what you like. – Find something that you're passionate about. This is key, as already mentioned several times, because you'll be most motivated spending your precious time doing what you enjoy.

Remember that medical schools prefer to have a diverse class with diverse interests, so whatever interests you have are valued. Just make sure they are legal and have a positive impact. This could range from sports, for example, to the environment, music, or politics.



2) Get out of your comfort zone. – Although this kind of contradicts the previous point, remember that you also want to look for opportunities for growth. These experiences are a great way to broaden your horizons and discover yourself. There's usually not a lot at stake here, so feel free to venture out of your comfort zone and use these experiences to expand your horizons in areas you've that you've always wanted to explore. For example, if you've always wanted to learn how to give public speeches, run for a volunteer position in your student government and learn how to campaign, persuade people and make important decisions. On the other hand, if you feel you want more exposure to the hospital environment, then go and volunteer at your local hospital. Or maybe you've wanted to travel the world and see other places? The opportunities are endless!

3) Do something that has a measurable impact. – Ultimately, you want to be able to contribute something meaningful and tangible, knowing that you actually made an impact. One common mistake I see many students make is to volunteer their time without really getting, or even hoping to get, anything more out of it than simply giving away their precious time with the hopes that it will be just something they can add to their resume. Aim higher! Approach the experience with goals in mind that are measurable and will make an impact! This will lead to pride in your accomplishments and will also impress other people, thus, leading to more opportunities. For example, which would you rank higher on a medical school application if you were on the committee?:

“President of the Biological Students Association for 4 years straight who volunteered 1000 hours to running the organization” OR



“Project coordinate for Helping Haiti who helped raise \$50,000 USD in a two-month campaign that helped feed 300 families for a year, build 50 new homes, and rebuild 4 damaged schools”? You may not see this opportunity early on when you join an organization, but you can always suggest and set goals this way once you’ve occupied a role.



4) Don't overextend yourself. – Another common mistake, which I made myself and have seen many other students make is to go overboard with their extra activities. Because they are so easy to come by, and make you feel a part of something bigger, and because there is usually no end to the amount of work you can do within these kinds of organizations, it's easy to get sucked in and end up sinking way too much time in the work. My rule of thumb is to first ensure that your academics are under control and you've mastered all the steps up to Step 6. Then you can use your remaining free time to volunteer and get involved in extracurricular activities. Your time in university will be more rewarding and the extra experience will help build your character and personal skills!

5) Clinical Exposure - If you are applying to US medical schools, there is a HUGE emphasis on clinical exposure. This includes things such as shadowing physicians, working as a medical scribe, etc. This is not so much the case for Canadian medical schools. However, regardless of where you will be applying, it always looks good to have a good understanding of the clinical side of medicine since that is ultimately what you are aiming for. There are some barriers to getting this type of experience, however, one of the easiest ways is to apply as a volunteer at your local hospital. While I was in highschool, I spent my summers concurrently volunteering at two hospitals back to back.

Another opportunity I had was to work with clinician researchers. Landing these opportunities and others does take some work and I will go into this much more in-depth in the Project Pre-Med Course and MedSchool Mastermind program.





Practical Exercise

What are your key interests outside of school? What are your hobbies? What activities do you usually gravitate towards in your free time? What would you like to contribute to in your community or society?

1) Write your top three passions here.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

2) What character traits and aspects of your personality would you like to build on in future volunteer and extracurricular activities?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

3) How much time do you have to dedicate and carve out for these interests? How much time are you spending per week currently? Do you have more time to commit or do you feel you are doing too much and should cut back? Reflect on these and develop a plan.

7 - EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Employment is another category of experiences that are included in the autobiographical sketch (ABS) for application to medical school.

Being paid for your work demonstrates that someone trusts you to be responsible and capable enough to deserve to be paid real material money. After all, people don't usually part with their money easily. This is what differentiates a job from volunteer work and extracurricular experiences. Paid work demonstrates your ability to be professional, and your interpersonal and customer service skills, all of which are important in the medical field. Also, being able to finance your education and cover your living expenses is another reason why getting a job is essential. The key features of how to find meaningful employment are the same as for finding volunteer and extracurricular experiences in step 6, with the addition of a few more.

1) You have to start somewhere – Remember that it's not the title of the position that people care about. Rather, it's the process of applying, successfully gaining, and maintaining a paid employment position that are important. Working as a cook at McDonald's might reveal more about your perseverance, customer service skills and personal traits than many other jobs because it is so demanding and high-paced. Actually, does this remind you of any other job? (Hint: a packed emergency room at 3 am in the morning). Remember, you have to start somewhere, so don't feel like you have to exclude any kind of paid position.



- 2)** Don't become complacent – Once you've worked at your job for a while, look for opportunities for growth to continue to build your skills and, along with that, to rise to a higher rate of pay. Always look to improving yourself! Any new skills you learn will be translatable in the future to you becoming a physician whether you realize it or not!

- 3)** Be creative – If you think you have enough skills to offer, venture out and challenge yourself to creating your own business. Learning how to manage resources, offer service, and create value for your customers are essential skills in any industry, including medicine.



Practical Exercise

- 1) Where do you feel you are in terms of employment currently? Underemployed? Overemployed?**
- 2) Are you happy in your current employment situation or do you feel you need to grow and move on?**
- 3) How important is having a paid employment position to you?**

Use these questions to help assess whether you feel you need take any actions with respect to your employment situation.

8 - RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES



The research world is important in the context of continual life-long learning and evidence-based medicine, which is encouraged in the medical field. As such, having research experience is valued by medical schools and is also a very useful skill to have as a future health-care provider. It is also another category of experiences that are asked for in your ABS.



Finding research experience at a pre-medical school can be challenging. Here are some practical tips for landing a meaningful research position:

1) Process – Just as in employment, what is important is having experienced the **PROCESS**. Generally speaking, medical schools don't give a lot of weight to the type of research or subject matter that you are researching. For example, they won't care whether or not you did a study on mating behaviors in the black-widow spider or the outcomes of a new cardiac transplant protocol. What is important is that you were able to learn the research process, from coming up with a question (hypothesis) and going through the painstaking methods and steps needed to figure out how to answer the question, then actually, answering it, and then going through the motions of publishing your findings.



2) Start somewhere – The key, just as with employment, is starting from some base and getting your foot in the door. In my first research job I simply worked as a brainless technician doing administrative tasks. From there, once I proved my worth and once they knew and trusted me, I was able to quickly move up and expand my skills, and essentially, get any research position I wanted.



3) Cast a wide net – One of the difficulties of finding your first research position is the lack of opportunities out there as well as your barrier of experience. One way to mitigate both these barriers is to cast as wide net as possible. Have an open-mind in terms of what TYPE of research you would be interested in. This includes wet-lab, clinical, quality improvement, literature reviews, etc. Secondly, cast a wide net in terms of potential researchers. Find multiple areas of research that interest you and then search all the universities, hospitals and other research institutions in your area that do that type of research. Reach out to these researchers and introduce yourself, express interest in their research and ask if they have any positions available or would be willing to meet with you to give you advice on other ways you might be able to get involved in their research. If you send out 100 emails and expressions of interest, you are bound to get at least 10 replies, one of which will hopefully materialize into a meaningful opportunity!

Practical Exercise



1) What areas of research might interest you most? (ex. Cancer, Socioeconomic Status, Global Health, Diabetes, Mental Health, etc.)?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

2) What institutions are within your vicinity that have researchers that conduct research in the above areas?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

Then create an excel spreadsheet with the names and contact information of each researcher and have another column for if you have contacted them or not and what their response was. Use this as a way to organize your efforts and come up with a plan of contacting these researchers whenever you have spare time.

9 – AWARDS



Winning awards is a symbol of accomplishment and yet another proof that you are someone that delivers. It is also another section of the Autobiographical Sketch (ABS). There are tons of different award categories that you may be eligible for, depending on a whole host of factors including the following: your GPA, your university institution, your geographic location, your ethnic background, leadership or extracurricular experiences, research work, being from a military family and contest awards (ie. prizes given for a specific essay or idea contest).



The great thing about awards is the large variety and number of awards. If you look hard enough you will likely be able to find one that is appropriate for you! And even if you don't feel you are eligible now, at least by looking at the eligibility criteria for a handful of them, you will know what areas to work on so you can improve yourself and make yourself an award winner in the future! The reality is, if you've been able to capitalize on steps #1-8 and put them into practice, you'll have tons of awards coming your way!

Awards can be a huge boost to your future medical career by giving you recognition and “street cred”, as well as significant financial benefits.

Check out [these](#) students who won a whopping \$1 million for a research idea of using insects to battle hunger.



Practical Tips

- a)** Do a quick search on Google for student awards within your geographical area, university or institution that are related to any of the areas you've worked on in steps #1-8.
- b)** Identify any unique features about you that might make you eligible for these awards.
- c)** Write down a list of 20 awards that you are currently eligible for or might be eligible for in the coming years.
- d)** Create a plan for applying for these grants, noting their deadlines and pre-requisites.



10 - REFERENCE LETTERS



Reference letters are another “social proof” to back up your worthiness for medical school. A reference letter shows that someone in a position of authority and respect has objectively evaluated you and is vouching that you have the requisite character and performance attributes needed for a demanding and rewarding career in medicine. Most medical schools ask for around three letters of reference so try to aim to have at least three strong authority figures who will be able to write a strong letter for you.



Also remember that having strong references is key to anything else you would like to do along your journey, from applying for awards, to applying for jobs or for graduate school.

The two most important things to keep in mind with getting winning reference letters for your medical school application are 1) Diversity and 2) Quality.

1) Diversity – Each university has its own specifications for a) how many reference letters they prefer and b) who these letters should come from. Schools can specify they want a certain number of letters (eg., exactly 3) or they may give a range (eg., up to 5 letters). It’s wise to have a good sense of this ahead of time. Secondly, they may have a broad range of who should write the letters – from having no restrictions, to being very specific. For example, they may say we want one letter from a humanities professor, one letter from an employer and one letter from a volunteer supervisor who has known you for the past 4 years.



2) Quality – You want to make sure that regardless of who writes your letter, the content of the letter is superb and powerful. For example, if you could choose between a mediocre letter from the top brain surgeon in the country who doesn't really know you that well or a letter from a less well-known professor who absolutely raves about you because he knows you and your accomplishments extremely well – which do you think will be more powerful? Also remember that if you were able to follow all the advice from the previous 9 steps, you would already be in a strong position to have many accomplishments lined up which will make this step much easier and more automatic.





Practical Exercise

1) Do you already have anyone whom you consider a strong referee?

2) Are there any particular domains of your pre-medical school journey where you feel you might need to reach out and network more to find a suitable referee?

11 - THE MCAT EXAM



The final hurdle to jump through before putting your application together is the Medical College Admissions Test or infamously known as the MCAT. This is a computerized standardized exam that the vast majority of schools require as part of your application and overall scoring. It is administered by the AAMC (Association of American Colleges). For more information on the MCAT exam, please visit [here](#). The MCAT exam is a challenging exam for two reasons:

1) It's unlike any other exam you will ever write – The MCAT exam is not focused on knowledge. You can know all the 'material' tested on the MCAT exam inside and out and still do very poorly on the exam. That's because this exam is focused much more on critical thinking and the application of knowledge. For this reason, most pre-medical students struggle greatly with this exam. You will almost never write another exam like this in your life – it's truly one of a kind.

2) It's a very long exam. – It takes 7 hours and 30 minutes of writing time to be exact. Given that, it will also probably be the longest exam you will ever write. Consequently, building exam endurance is the next biggest challenge for most students.



So how can you conquer the MCAT?

- 1) Knowledge** - Although the MCAT is not focused on knowledge - you should still have the prerequisite knowledge down as the fundamentals. The majority of the material is based on high school or first year university level courses including biology, chemistry, physics and psychology. Chances are you've covered the material at least once because most of these courses also happen to be prerequisites to either get into university or for medical school itself. It doesn't hurt to do a quick refresher of all this material as you are studying for the MCAT. Try to find a thinner MCAT textbook that you can quickly review to learn or relearn all the essential background material.

- 2) Application** - This will determine 90% of your success. I can't stress how important practice is for this exam. Practice will help you with three things a) Review the knowledge, b) Understanding how to apply the knowledge to the MCAT style questions and c) solidify your endurance due to the long length of the exam. In order to capitalize on practice, invest as much of your time and resources into finding practice questions. Finding online practice questions is best so you can emulate the real exam which will be online.

- 3) Divide and Conquer** - The MCAT is divided into 4 individual sections: (Try not to get impressed by their names) 1) Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems, 2) Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems, 3) Psychological, Social and Biological Foundations of Behaviour and 4) Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills Section. I strongly suggest choosing one or two areas of focus at a time and to first master the knowledge component.

Start with the areas you are already most familiar and comfortable with to help you build momentum. As soon as you check off all the knowledge for one component, start doing application and practice questions for that component and start learning the knowledge for another section. I call this “the staggered approach”. Once you have completed all the knowledge sections, you should already be well on your way to having practiced most of the remaining sections.

4) Accuracy, then Volume - When you get to the practice section, first focus on accuracy of answering the questions correctly. Accuracy means out of 10 questions, you can get as close to 10 of them correct as possible. Don't bother yourself with timing, or with doing large volumes of questions. Once you have mastered the accuracy of answering questions correctly, then move on to endurance. This means to time yourself doing more and more questions - while not sacrificing your accuracy. Keep up increasing your endurance gradually until you are able to comfortably handle a complete full-length practice exam on a daily basis.



Practical Tips

- 1)** Critical thinking – The best way to prepare for the MCAT is from the moment you enter university (or even before). Get as much experience as you can with critical thinking. Humanities, philosophy and creative writing courses are great for this.
- 2)** Practice – The next important key is to NOT waste time trying to memorize information for this exam. The money is in practicing how to apply the knowledge you know because most of the actual content knowledge you will need materials are high school or first year university level. Invest your time and money in doing as many practice tests and exams as you can to build your endurance and accuracy in answering MCAT-style questions. There are plenty of online practice tests and preparatory companies out there that can help, including the AAMC website itself.



12 - PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR APPLICATIONS



Now that you've put in your sweat and tears and changed the world – you have to write it all down and compile it in a way that will impress! It will be this culminated application that will be checked and reviewed to determine if you've got what it takes to make it to the interview.

Here are some practical tips on what's important to keep in mind when doing this:

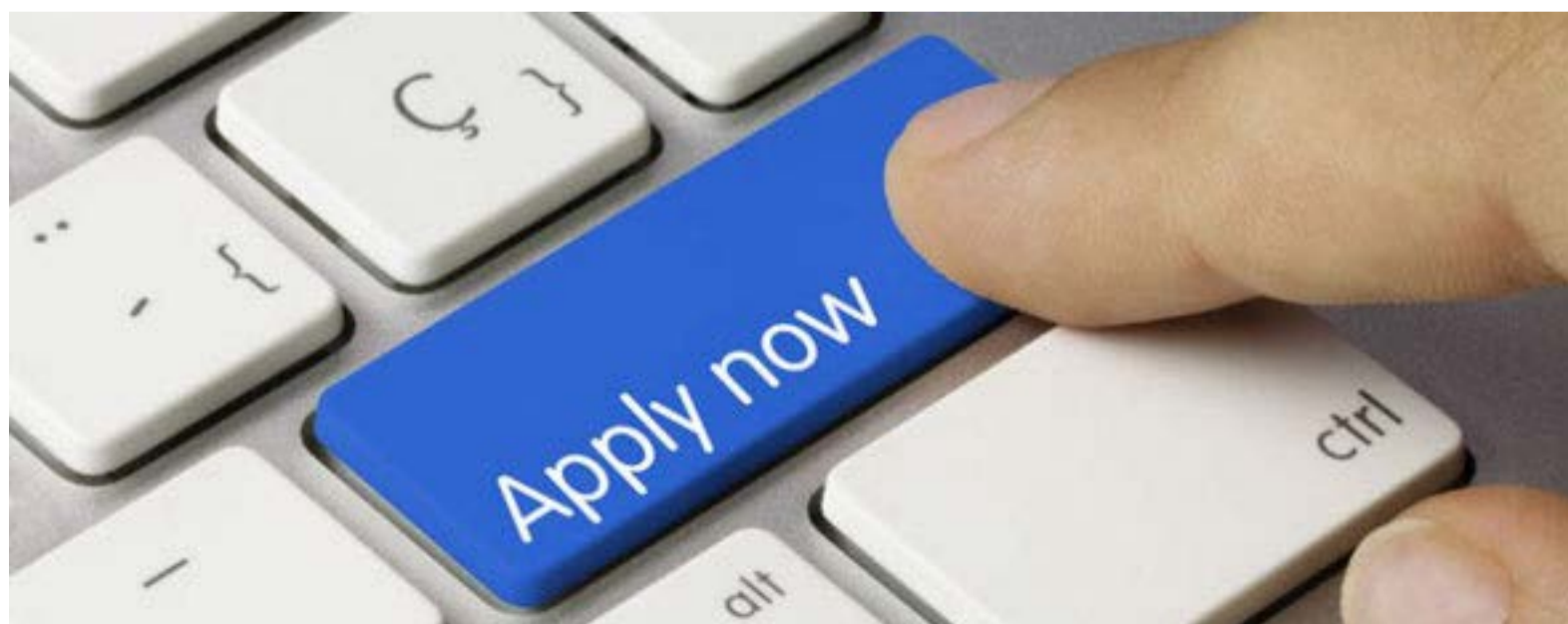
1) Have an application strategy. – There are hundreds of medical schools across north America and around the world that cater to students from North America. Applications can cost you tons of money! Make sure you do a search to first find out which schools you are eligible for (i.e. Meet their criteria). Then create a list of which schools you'll be most competitive for. Finally, make a shortlist from these schools including only those you would actually be able and willing to attend if you were accepted. In reality, as the old saying goes “beggars can't be choosers”, so it might be that these two lists are exactly the same, which is totally fine. The two largest centralized application services for applying to medical school in the United States are the [AMCAS](#) or the American Medical College Admission System and the [AACOMAS](#) or the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service.



In Canada, the largest application service is the [OMSAS](#) or the Ontario Medical Schools Application Service. Feel free to familiarize yourself with these web-sites as potential options.

2) Start early! – As you have seen from all the previous steps up to now, there is a LOT of information that you will need to process from your side and then a lot of extra information you may need to provide to each school – so make sure you start early and give yourself as much time as possible to arrange items such as: I) getting transcripts ordered, ii) giving a heads up to your referees for writing and submitting your reference letters, iii) answering and submitting supplementary applications and questions. Take a look at all the admissions web-sites to ensure you are aware of the relevant timelines.

3) Logistics – Ensure that you read each section of the application process thoroughly. Be as concise as possible. Ensure you answer supplementary questions appropriately. Ensure to get others look over your application. Ensure it is well written and clearly highlights the best of your previous experiences.





Practical Exercise

- 1) How flexible are you regarding where you can apply for medical school? (eg., only in your city vs. anywhere in the world?)**
- 2) What financial limitations do you have for medical school options?**
- 3) How many medical schools within these restrictions are you eligible to apply for? (See AMCAS and OMSAS web-sites for requirements for most US and Canadian schools)**
- 4) What requirements do these schools have and how can you prepare best prepare ahead of time to meet those requirements?**

13 - ACING THE INTERVIEW



So you've completed all the steps from 1 to 12, and you've been invited to the final step: the interview! *Dum, Dum, Dum...*

This is actually the most exciting, and yet nerve-wracking, step. Have no fear, [Student2Pro](#) has you covered!

The key thing to remember for the interview is that the admissions committee already wants you. They liked what they saw on paper and they feel you have what it takes to become a physician. All they want to do now is to make sure that you are the person you said you are on paper and that you have the two most essential non-academic traits that you will need as a doctor – a) a sincere attitude towards becoming a physician and b) interpersonal skills.



You provide a sense of your interpersonal skills as you talk and interact with the interviewers. You will discuss different aspects of yourself and how you would handle different scenarios to resolve various problems. The format of medical school interviews has changed drastically in the past 10 years, from the traditional panel style “job interview” to more modern styles like the “Multiple Mini Interview” or “MMI”.

After going through several medical admissions interviews myself, and then helping to practice to bring out the best and brightest of hundreds of other students, I have created a complete and comprehensive course on this topic, which can be found [here](#).





Practical Exercise

- 1) How much interview experience do you have already? How comfortable do you feel talking about yourself and selling yourself?**
- 2) How familiar are you with the MMI format? [Learn more about it here.](#)**
- 3) After familiarizing yourself with the formats, try to get AS MUCH practice as you can.**



Now is an exciting time more than ever to embark on the rewarding journey to become a medical professional. Never in history has there been such an unprecedented explosion in medical advances that are being used to help humanity and change people's lives for the better.

Because of these advances and the rewarding career that comes with becoming a physician, two things have happened:

- 1)** There has been an explosion in the desire to become a physician and the number of applications to medical school.
- 2)** Because of this explosion, it has become harder and harder for medical schools to differentiate amongst applicants, and so the process has become more and more challenging.

For the sake of brevity I have only briefly touched on the different crucial steps to consider along the way to getting into your dream medical school and becoming a phenomenal physician! If you've found the material in this book helpful and would like to get more in-depth coaching and help, then Student2Pro can help!

After years of experience in coaching and mentorship, I've compiled everything that I've learned, from experts and from my own experiences, into Student2Pro. After being able to accomplish my own dreams of becoming a physician at one of the most notable universities on earth, I've enjoyed helping hundreds of other students do the same!



In addition to this book, there are at least two other services that Student2Pro can offer you on your medical school journey:

1) **Medical School Mastermind**





Receiving quality mentorship is an on-going relationship. If you would like to benefit from exclusive live bi-weekly coaching sessions where you can interact with physicians and medical students and benefit to topics that matter to you most on your journey - then take advantage of Med school Mastermind. This program offers you 1-hour bi-weekly interactive online coaching sessions as well as an exclusive Facebook group where you can get continuous feedback and mentorship from physicians and medical students and from all parts of the country and with a wide variety of experiences.


2) **Complete Step-by-Step Online Courses**

This series of services focuses on delivering high quality complete packages to equip you for everything you will need in thorough detail to guide you along the different crucial aspects of the medical school journey. These courses feature step-by-step tutorials on how to master the journey and include in-depth strategies and sample materials and templates that have been tried and tested successfully to ensuring you become a highly qualified pre-medical student and future physician! These courses are super convenient as you can subscribe and get instant access from the comfort of your laptop to watch and listen at your leisure.


Here are some of the existing courses you can enjoy currently:

1)  This program offers a complete A-Z guide for all the steps needed from highschool, through university, and until you submit your medical school application. It goes into great depth and detail on each of the steps outlined in this book from Steps 1-12.

2)  This is an in-depth practical course on the 10-steps needed to turn grades into 4.0s. It uses a complete formula that transformed a 3.0 GPA to a 4.0 GPA. If you want to ensure you have the highest GPA possible, don't miss out on the strategies taught in this course!

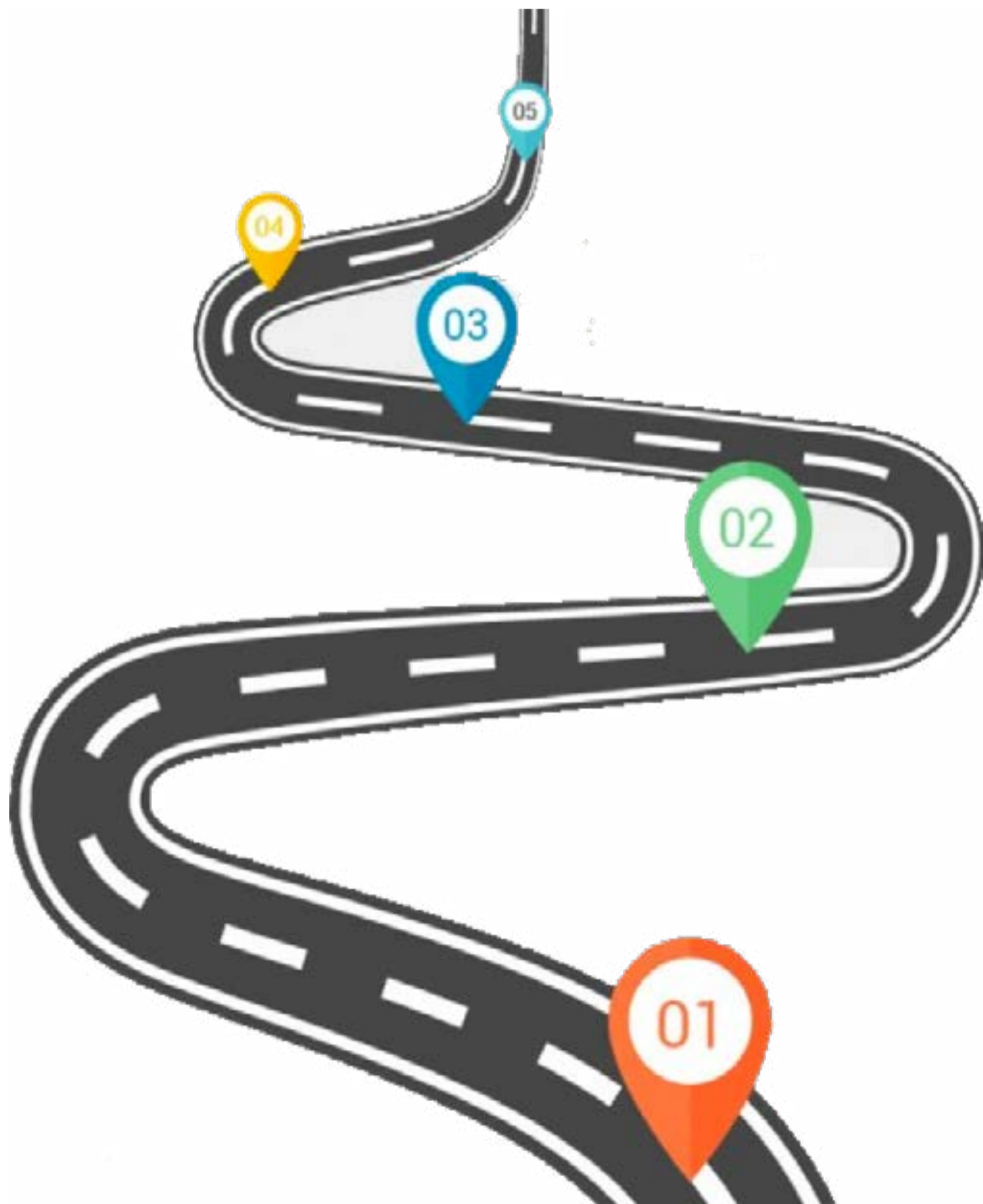
3)  An inside look at the best strategies to help finance your undergraduate education before professional school. The goal is to help you finish school with thousands of dollars in your pocket. It will include tips on how to increase your revenue through different income streams and how to massively cut down your costs.

4) **Casper Training Course** - A course dedicated to learning how to easily answer any casper question. Casper is a new online pre-interview tool being used by more and more medical schools.

5)  This course features a comprehensive overview of the different types of questions formats and how to learn the strategies you need to help you to comfortably impress your interviewers and gain acceptance.

There are two ways you can go about navigating this process and making yourself stand out. The first is the traditional way where you can figure things out as you go and do it piecemeal as I initially tried to do on my path to medical school.

The second way, (and the way that I eventually was able to master) is to find qualified and experienced mentors to give practical and proven advice to ensure success. This approach helped mold me and continues to influence me to become the best possible physician I can be.



Resources

Student2Pro

<https://www.student2pro.com/about>

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/applying-medical-school-amcas/>

Association of American Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

<http://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/applying>

Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada

<https://afmc.ca/publications/admission-requirements-canadian-faculties-medicine>

MCAT exam

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/register-mcat-exam/>

Guide to awards and scholarships

<http://www.scholarshipscanada.com/>

<https://www.scholarships.com/>



We hope that you found this book helpful. We are constantly striving to provide helpful and useful resources. We would love to get your feedback via email: contact@furmlimd.com.

Thank you for your time. We appreciate it!



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