MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Congratulations on joining the uOttawa Med family! You have accomplished so much to get to where you are, and you should be so proud of your achievements! As you embark on this journey to becoming a physician, you will be faced with numerous successes and challenges. We encourage you to remain true to yourself, to remind yourself that a balanced lifestyle is necessary, to not compare yourself with your peers but rather collaborate together to uphold one another. We are all here for one another, so feel free to reach out to your MedBuddy or anyone else if you have any questions. To help navigate your transition to uOttawa Medicine, we have prepared this Survival Guide. It contains everything you need to make it through the whirlwind that is your first weeks at uOttawa. We hope that you will find it useful as you embark on your new journey. Wishing you all the best in your first year!

Justin Lalonde, Moiz Hassan  MD2025 Co-Presidents

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE AESCULAPIAN SOCIETY

Dear incoming class of MD2026,

On behalf of the undergraduate medical student body, I would like to congratulate you on your acceptance to University of Ottawa’s MD Program and welcome you to the Faculty of Medicine! We are so excited to welcome you to our uOttawa medical family and support you during this exciting new chapter of your lives. You are now first-year medical students! As exhilarating as this must be, it is also understandable that the fear of the unknown might leave you feeling overwhelmed or anxious (just as it did for all of us!). Hopefully this Survival Guide will help ease some of your worries and allow you to familiarize yourself with life as a uOttawa medical student.

Over the last 10 years, this guide has been created and edited by several executive members of the Aesculapian Society, your medical student council. It was created to provide you with valuable information on medical school, answer your questions and concerns, and prepare you for what is to come over the next four years. As you read through the Survival Guide, you will be introduced to your Aesculapian Society representatives for 2022-2023, and you will learn more about academics, research opportunities, extracurricular activities, and student interest groups at uOttawa. It also goes over some do’s and don’ts, the acronyms that will become part of your daily life (CMA, OMA, CFMS, OMSA, OMSW, etc), and tips on how to enjoy living in the nation’s capital! Student mental health is incredibly important, and we have specific sections of this guide dedicated to resources and tips for your wellbeing in medical school.

The Survival Guide was created for students by students, with topics we thought would be most important as you begin your medical career. We encourage you to use this guide as a resource throughout your time at uOttawa. You also have many other resources available to help you, such as the Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) office, the Student Affairs Office (SAO), the Aesculapian Society executives, mentors, upper-year students, and MedBuddies!

At the University of Ottawa, we pride ourselves on our tight-knit community and sense of family. You are never alone; we are all here for you! Please feel free to reach out to myself, or any society representative, at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

Once again, congratulations and welcome to the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa! I am excited to see you begin your medical careers, and I wish you nothing but success throughout your journey in medicine and in all your future endeavors.

Zafrin Islam
President, Aesculapian Society
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Welcome to the Aesculapian Society!

As you are now officially a student in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa, you have been automatically granted a lifetime membership into our medical student society, known as the Aesculapian Society. Founded more than 50 years ago, it is named after Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. Among its members are the Faculty’s teaching staff, current students, and several generations of prestigious alumni. The executive team of the Aesculapian Society is made up of 38 members (28 voting members and 10 non-voting members) and our aim is to ensure that you have the most rewarding student experience over the next four years. Not only do we advocate for you at the level of the Faculty, we also organize annual social and philanthropic events, represent you at provincial and national organizations, and manage interest groups, allowing you to deepen your knowledge of medicine.

We are a friendly bunch and can’t wait to meet you all! If you can’t find an answer to your questions in this guide, please do not hesitate to ask one of your Aesculapian Society council members! We will all do our best to make sure you feel at home here in Ottawa.

Aesculapian Society Council Members

Below, you will find a brief description of each of the Aesculapian Society’s council members’ roles. Note that some positions have a junior (second-year) member and a senior (third-year) member. If you would like to receive more information, please consult the Aesculapian Society’s constitution.

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Zafrin Islam</td>
<td>Acts as an agent of all medical students collectively</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Convenes and presides over council meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Represents the interests and rights of the society, in its relationship with the Faculty, university authorities, student organizations and CFMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP Executive</td>
<td>Anit Bhattacharyya</td>
<td>Assists the President in their duties</td>
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<td>Ensures the operation of all committees and working bodies of the Society not supervised by active council members</td>
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<td>Works with VP Administration to maintain and update all files and records of the Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP Administration</td>
<td>VP Athletic Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Dann</td>
<td>Kevin Min</td>
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- Secretary at council meetings
- Manages the Society’s correspondences
- Ensures that documents are available in both English and French
- Coordinates elections, locker distributions and ASoc meetings
- Supervises the organization of all athletic events and activities, including intramural sports, MedGames, and Med/Law Games
- Manages ASoc sports equipment

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<th>VP Community Health</th>
<th>VP Philanthropy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jenny Huynh</td>
<td>Bita Azad</td>
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- Promotes health among ASoc members
- Acts as a link between ASoc and various faculty members
- Manages the charitable fundraising activities of ASoc
### VP Academic Affairs Sr.
Janani Ramamurthy

- Supervise the academic affairs of the Society
- Act as a liaison between students and various faculty members

### VP Academic Affairs Jr.
Tara Tabatabaei

### VP Finance Sr.
Donovan Makus

- Manage ASoC finances and authorize expenses
- Prepare annual reports

### VP Finance Jr.
Ramtin Ghasemi
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VP External Affairs Sr.</td>
<td>Abby Ross</td>
<td>• Represent ASoc at provincial and national organizations (OMSA, CFMS)</td>
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<td>• Protect students’ interest with respect to the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP External Affairs Jr.</td>
<td>Hussein Said</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VP Global Health</td>
<td>Khadeeja Tariq</td>
<td>• Promote international health issues among students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Act as a liaison between students and various faculty members</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Act as a liaison between ASoc and other organizations involved with global health at the provincial and national level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity</td>
<td>Patricia Burhunduli</td>
<td>• Ensure that equity-seeking groups/communities have an appropriate platform to raise their concerns pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Collaborate with council members on equity, diversity and inclusivity-related initiatives in the areas of curriculum development, student life, mentorship opportunities, educational events, and more</td>
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### VP Information Technology
**Isabelle Lefebvre**
- Manage ASoc’s website and social media presence
- Assist with online elections
- Support the IT needs of other ASoc members and interest groups

### VP MD/PhD
**Samuel Papernick**
- Represent and advocate for MD/PhD students
- Ensure effective representation of MD/PhD students within ASoc, uOttawa, and the pan-Canadian Clinician Investigator Trainee Association

### VP Social Affairs
**Dourra Assani**
- Organizes social events throughout the school year including Frosh, Medball and Mont tremblant trip

### VP BMSA
**Julia Kemzang**
- Act as student representative on ASoc’s EDI and Anti-racism committee
### Senate Representative
**Alex Lee**

- Work with other Student Senate Members as well as the Deans of the Faculties to enact and review policy.

### Past President
**Gabrielle Di Lorenzo**

- Guide the incoming President during the transition period and serve as an advisor during the academic year.

### Class Co-Presidents
- Represent the interest of their class in academic and non-academic affairs

#### Justin Lalonde: MD2025 (French)

#### Moiz Hassan: MD2025 (English)
WHAT DOES THE AESCULAPIAN SOCIETY DO FOR YOU?

WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

To succeed in medicine, you will need to keep a balanced and healthy lifestyle! We encourage you to keep on doing the things you need to maintain your physical and mental well-being. Whether that’s intramural sports or playing your favorite instrument, it is important to take some time for yourself. It is not necessary to study 24/7, and it will never be! In fact, here is a list of hobbies that you may like to take up in Ottawa: ice skating, skiing, hiking, swimming,
rock climbing, painting, music, calligraphy, learning French (or any other languages), or anything your heart desires! Already have an interesting hobby? Share it with your classmates, make it a group activity, and have fun!

The Wellness Committee, VP Community Health, and the VP of Social Affairs will organize events throughout the year allowing you to wind-down, socialize with your classmates, and have fun! On top of this, the Student Wellness Committee (SWC) holds the program “Our Stories”, where students have the opportunity to share struggles with mental health in a safe environment with the goal of supporting each other and de-stigmatizing mental illness. The Faculty also has multiple support programs at your disposition. Among these programs, the Student Affairs Office (SAO) constitutes one of the most important. Whether you are seeking resources for mental health and wellness, career advising, financial guidance, or accommodations, the SAO is responsible for directing you to the proper services. Details will follow under the Student Affairs Office section of this Survival Guide.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

• Wellness Apps: HealthyMinds, Calm, and Headspace
• Good2Talk – 24/7 Helpline (Bilingual): 1-866-925-5454 (or connect through 2-1-1)
• Mental Health Crisis Line – 24/7 (Bilingual): 613-722-6914 (within Ottawa), 1-866-996-0991 (outside Ottawa)
• Distress Center Ottawa and Region – 24/7 Helpline (English): 613-238-3311
• For a complete list of our mental health resources, please consult the ASoc page here

If you ever need anyone to talk to, do not hesitate to reach out to your classmates, use SAO counselling services, try the Side by Side program, or contact a member of the Aesculapian Society. We are always here to support you!

SIDE BY SIDE PROGRAM

What is Side by Side? Side by Side is a peer support program that complements current mental health services available for medical students at the Faculty of Medicine by building on the relationships between medical students and their expertise in understanding medical school’s challenges. The objectives are to improve help-seeking behaviors, reduce stigma and provide non-judgmental, accessible and confidential support to students from peers who have undergone training.

What is a Peer Supporter? Peer Supporters are medical students that were chosen after a thorough selection process to provide a listening ear, support and refer classmates in need. Up to 40 volunteer Peer Supporters will take proactive action by checking in on classmates who may need help.

How can I become a Peer Supporter? Online applications for first-year students will be available at the beginning of September 2022. Selected candidates will be invited to an interview. Peer Supporters must attend mandatory training that will be held near the end of September/beginning of October (official dates TBD).

A complete list of the Side by Side Peer Support Group members can be found on the ASoc website here. You can also consult their Facebook page.
SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION COMMITTEE

The Suicide Awareness & Prevention Committee is a committee of the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Medicine's Aesculapian Society. The committee was formed in January 2019 in response to the high rate of suicides among medical students, residents, and physicians, with the goal of raising awareness of this issue and promoting suicide prevention initiatives and training at the medical student level.

The committee meets with experts in the field of suicide prevention, organizes awareness events, and works with medical students to promote suicide awareness and prevention. To get involved, please contact the committee at uomedsuicide@gmail.com.

Note: The committee is not a suicide helpline. If you or someone requires immediate help, please call 911 or use one of the following services: https://www.uottawa.ca/wellness/emergency-contacts

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (GAAC)

Medical students at the University of Ottawa (uOttawa) are members of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS), which includes a group to determine political and social issues important to medical students: the CFMS Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC).

The CFMS GAAC branch is passionate about supporting medical student advocacy at the federal, provincial, and local level. Supporting an effective and sustainable health care system is our shared goal. As we advocate for the interests of Canadian medical students and patients in discussions with the federal government, we invite you to connect with us to ensure we provide excellent representation.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Anti-Racism Committee is a student-led committee of the Aesculapian Society. This group serves as a platform for our students to collaborate and advocate for ways in which we can develop anti-racist and equity-centered concrete initiatives within our curriculum, campus life, and the broader Aesculapian Society.

The EDI and Anti-Racism Committee also exists to amplify the voices of students from various equity-seeking groups within the medical field. The following groups of medical students are currently represented on the committee:

- uOttawa Black Medical Students’ Association
- uOttawa MD students in the Indigenous Program
- Asian Association of Medical Students
- Students with disabilities and/or chronic condition
- 2SLGBTQIA+

- Multifaith Groups:
  - Jewish Medical Students’ Association
  - Muslim Medical Association
  - Christian Medical and Dental Association

This committee meets on a monthly basis and the meetings are open to all uOttawa medical students. If you have any ideas/initiatives that you’d like to bring forth or are simply interested in listening in during the meetings, don’t hesitate to reach out to the Vice-President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity of the Aesculapian Society for more information on how you can get involved.
**SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE**

The Sustainability and Climate Change (SACC) Committee was formed in Fall 2019 and became an Aesculapian Society committee in March 2020. The committee was founded to raise awareness about planetary health and coordinate local advocacy initiatives within the University of Ottawa’s MD program. The committee’s objectives are summarized by their four program pillars: (1) Aesculapian Society initiatives, (2) Faculty of Medicine initiatives, (3) Student body initiatives, and (4) Curriculum development.

If you have any questions related to these initiatives or want to get involved with the SACC Committee, you can contact us through any of the following:

- Email: uottawasacc@gmail.com
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com)

While SACC advocates for initiatives at a local level (within uOttawa Medicine), the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) includes a group that coordinates national advocacy efforts regarding current issues in environmental health and climate: the CFMS Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force (HEART). Medical students may join HEART’s network to receive emails and attend meetings or apply in the Fall to join their committee. You can contact CFMS HEART through any of the following:

- Email: heart.cfms@gmail.com
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com), [Twitter](https://twitter.com)

There are many ways to be involved in advocacy relating to planetary health and as future physicians, we have an important role to play by advocating for preventative strategies while being able to understand the health effects of climate change for our patients.

**INTEREST GROUPS**

We have the most student-run interest groups of all the Faculties of Medicine in the country! Participation in interest groups is not mandatory but allows you to discover many facets of medicine. Talks and workshops are often held during your lunch hour, with some longer sessions held on evenings or weekends.

To stay up-to-date on all the activities organized by interest groups, use the [calendar](https://www.assoc.ca) on the Aesculapian Society website. **Tip**: export the ASoc calendar to your Google Calendar or iCal, so you can quickly check at any time whether an interest group is running an event that you’re interested in.

To give you an idea of which interest groups you can join, here is the list of approved groups from the previous year. There is truly something for everyone!

*Please note that this list is subject to change from one year to another*
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<td>Asian Medical Students’ Association</td>
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<td>Arts in Medicine (AIM)</td>
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<td>Black Medical Students Association (BMSA)</td>
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<td>Canadian Health Policy and Advocacy Interest Group</td>
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<td>CHEO Buddies</td>
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<td>Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA)</td>
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<td>Clinical Skills Enrichment Program (Physician Skills Enrichment Group and Bedside Teaching Program)</td>
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<td>Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG)</td>
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<td>Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)</td>
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<td>Finance in Medicine (FIM)</td>
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<td>French Learning Interest Group</td>
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<td>Geriatrics Interest Group</td>
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<td>Groupe d’intérêt de médecine francophone</td>
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<td>Global Health Interest Group (GHIG)</td>
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<td>Heart 2 Heart Interest Group</td>
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<td>Homeless Health Initiative</td>
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<td>Indigenous Health Interest Group</td>
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<td>Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Interest Group (IDDIG)</td>
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<td>Medical Education Interest Group (MEIG)</td>
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<td>Medical Ethics Interest Group</td>
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<td>MedReal</td>
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<td>Medical School Exposed Program (MedExpo)</td>
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<td>Sports Medicine Interest Group</td>
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<td>Student Interest Group in Neurology (SIGN)</td>
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ANNUAL EVENTS

ORIENTATION WEEK (O-WEEK)
Every year, we are proud to host the LONGEST orientation week in the country! That’s right – 9 days of fun-filled awesomeness, organized by ASoc’s VP Social! From the traditional Med-Olympics to frosh formal, you are guaranteed to have the time of your life! There will be “wet” and “dry” events throughout the week. All the information you need will be sent out in your O-Week guidebook later this summer. Take this opportunity to get to know your classmates, make some great friends, and tour the city.

ONTARIO MEDICAL STUDENT WEEKEND (OMSW)
The Ontario Medical Student Weekend (OMSW) is the largest annual medical student conference in Canada. Each year, a medical school in Ontario welcomes students from across the province for a few days of workshops and festivities! Attendance is not mandatory, but we highly recommend it to meet future colleagues from all corners of the province and develop clinical skills! Stay tuned for more information on OMSW 2022 from your VP External later in the fall.

INTRAMURALS AND SPORTS
You may have played intramurals during undergrad, so why stop now? The University of Ottawa offers all types of sports, including hockey, basketball, dodgeball, flag football, ultimate frisbee, soccer, spikeball and volleyball (including open, mixed, and womens/trans/non-binary league options). Your VP Athletic Affairs will be coordinating your teams for the first semester. There are competitive and recreational leagues for all sports, so everyone is welcome to participate. The Fall leagues run from September to November, and the Winter leagues from January to March, except for hockey, which goes from September straight through to March. There are also drop-in badminton, basketball, martial arts, fitness and wellness classes (yoga, kickboxing), as well as aquatic activities (open swim, adult swimming lessons). The gym at the Rehabilitation Centre also offers hours (for free!), and there is a “hidden” GoodLife Fitness at The Ottawa Hospital - you’ll get access to a corporate rate through the Ontario Medical Association.
**MED/LAW GAMES**

Every year, medical students take on law students in the ultimate test of athleticism. Each faculty sends teams to compete in various sporting events. Previous years, we competed in volleyball, dodgeball, basketball, spikeball and soccer. ALL participants play ALL the sports. You might not be great at everything, but that’s what makes it fun! The Faculty of Medicine reclaimed the trophy last, so we are looking to go back-to-back. Your VP Athletic Affairs will send you more information when it becomes available.

**MEDGAMES**

This is THE event of the year! Medical students from across the country are invited to a host school located in “la belle” province of Quebec for what promises to be one of the best and most memorable weekends of your life. From swimming and basketball, to quidditch, dance and trivia, there’s something for everyone! uOttawa has the reputation of being the best school in Ontario! Now, we are looking to challenge the Quebec schools for the national title! Don’t feel like competing? Come and cheer your classmates on! And, by the way, the parties are insane! Your VP Athletic Affairs will be sending you more information in October. Don’t miss this amazing event!

**SMILES FOR AMANDA**

“sMiles for Amanda” is a campaign initiated by the MD2016 Class at uOttawa in memory of classmate Amanda Kelsall – a student who was tragically killed in a car accident. The annual run gives students/faculty an opportunity to support various causes to remember and celebrate Amanda’s life. This initiative inspired an extension of the run in Amanda’s hometown (Horseshoe Valley). To date, over $40,000 has been raised. An MD2023 student ran 135.72 km with his kids riding alongside on their bikes.
**Post-Exam Celebrations**

WORK HARD, PLAY HARD are definitely words to live by in medical school! You put in countless hours studying slides and objectives, going to the anatomy lab with your study group, what should you do when it’s all over? Grab a drink with friends, go out for lunch with your classmates, or let off some steam at a post-exam party. In previous years, we organized a class ski trip to Mont Tremblant at the end of the Fall semester! If you have a post-exam activity in mind, please let your VP Social know!

![Post-exam celebrations](image1)

**MedShow**

Every spring, medical students present a theater production, featuring dozens of students singing, dancing and struggling to make the crowd laugh and cry. At the beginning of the year, a meeting will take place with the MedShow team of the previous year to form your MedShow team! Whether you have prior experience or not, if you have any interest in screenwriting, acting, singing, dancing, or creating a set, be sure to get involved in this once in a lifetime production! All students and faculty members are looking forward to seeing what you come up with!

*Note:* At the beginning of the year, your class will choose a charity to support over the next four years, which will be known as the MD2026 Class Charity. MedShow is by far the biggest fundraiser of the year, raising over $12,000.

**Mini-Cours de Médecine**

This activity, organized by Francophone Affairs, offers you the opportunity to share your clinical skills (suturing, casting, intubation) with high school and/or university students! Do not worry, these skills will be taught to you beforehand during a training session (accompanied by a pizza dinner). In addition to inspiring these students and teaching valuable information, the Mini-Cours de Médecine allows you to promote medicine in French! The first session is organized in the winter and another one in the spring.
MedBall
To celebrate the end of the school year, put on your best clothes to enjoy a great meal and break a sweat on the dance floor! It may be difficult to recognize your colleagues without their sweatpants, jeans, glasses, or dark circles under their eyes! Your first year will go by so fast, and MedBall is a perfect opportunity to get those awesome pictures for the ‘gram. Your VP Social will provide you with more details in the Winter semester.

STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE (SAO)
At the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ottawa, we are fortunate to have an extremely supportive Student Affairs Office (SAO). Their mandate is to support all medical students in terms of their mental health, academic, and professional journeys, while promoting health and wellness. The five program pillars of the SAO are: A) Health & Wellness, B) Career Advising, C) Financial Guidance, D) Advocacy, and E) Mentorship Programs. Please consult their website, and follow their Facebook page for more information.

A. Health and Wellness
- The SAO provides a number of services and programs that focus on medical student wellness. Friendly and professional bilingual counselors are available to provide you with guidance and support in the areas of wellness, accommodations, personal and couples counseling, career counseling and financial counseling. This counseling service is FREE for our students. They can help you develop techniques that will allow you to reach your goals as well as build resilience.
- If you’re having trouble adjusting to medical school, need someone to talk to, or have any sort of concerns, book an appointment with the SAO, or simply drop by their office in Room 2024, located near the main entrance of RGN, to the left at the top of the stairs. The SAO’s business hours are 8:00 to 16:30 on Mondays to Fridays, but evening hours operate on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 19:00.
- Due to COVID-19 restrictions, counselling sessions are currently being offered online. To book an appointment, use the online booking system here. Select the Faculty of Medicine to book an appointment via telephone or Microsoft Teams

  Faculty of Medicine

  Web Kiosk | Address
  --- | ---
  Student Affairs Office - Undergraduate Medical Education | Virtual service through Teams or by phone

- Feel at ease knowing that all discussions with the counselors are strictly confidential and do not show up on your portfolio. The SAO can also provide crisis intervention during regular business hours. However, if ever you are in crisis and require immediate attention, contact the Mental Health Crisis Line at 613-722-6914 (available 24/7).
B. Career Advising
The SAO organizes **two Career Planning Workshops (CPW) in your first-, second- and third-year of medical school**, allowing you to set goals as you go along your medical journey. We HIGHLY recommend attending these workshops! The office has seen countless students go through medical school and onto residency. They understand what we are going through and know what they are talking about! The SAO also offers individual career counseling to help you find a specialty in line with your interests.

C. Financial Guidance
SAO counselors are able to provide guidance in the areas of gaining control of spending habits, resolving feelings of anxiety about money, separating self-worth from material wealth, and identifying feelings of loss, shame, anger, sadness, and anxiety regarding past financial decisions.

D. Advocacy
The SAO is responsible for handling accommodation requests to provide an equal opportunity to all qualifying students. The accommodation procedures are published on the Facebook page.

E. Mentorship Programs
The SAO oversees both the Vertical Mentorship program and the Student Mentoring Centre, which are both described below in greater detail.

The SAO will be appointing **two SAO advisors from the MD2026 class** (one Anglophone and one Francophone) for a full four-year run. This classmate will be available to answer any questions you may have regarding the SAO, forwarding any suggestions to the SAO in terms of novel extracurricular activities and resources and can advocate for the MD2026 class’ needs required to enhance your student experience.
OVERVIEW OF SAO PILLARS AND SERVICES

Book appointments at the SAO using the HYPERLINK "https://www.uottawa.ca/en/virtual-line" Online Booking System

To book, click on the link and the select the following: Available Locations Faculty of Medicine SAO Web Kiosk

Book a time that works for you, with the counsellor of your choice!

Email: medsao@uottawa.ca
Phone: (613) 562-5800 x8136

SAO Team 2021-2022
Assistant Dean of Student Affairs
Dr. Kay-Anne Haykal
Program Coordinator
Debra Dufresne Counsellors
Elisabeth Adam Kendra Grant SAO Advisors
Dana Tabet & Kevin Min (MD2025) Sapir Fellus & Isabella Churchill (MD2024) Emily Seale & Kristina Yau (MD2023) MD-PhD Advisors: Alex Lee (MD2024) & Zacharie Saint-Georges (MD2023)
We are very lucky at the University of Ottawa to have a great mentorship program that allows students to interact with physicians and their peers outside of hospitals, clinics and classrooms.

At the beginning of the year, each first-year student is assigned to a mentorship group that they will stay with throughout their 4 years of medical school. Each group has students from each year and a mentor, who is a practicing physician, and has volunteered to mentor medical students.

The mentors are hand-picked by our mentorship committee. Also, each group has an assigned second-year coordinator who facilitates the organization of events, taking place every 4-8 weeks. It’s not unusual for the mentor to take the entire group out for dinner or dessert. Other fun activities that have been planned in the past include cross-country skiing, axe throwing, go-karting, zip lining, pottery painting, and many other creative ideas! Last year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual activities included online games, trivia, virtual escape rooms and cooking nights!

This program offers a unique opportunity for students to explore a side of medicine that is not taught in the classroom while having fun! The mentors share invaluable experiences, ideas and knowledge with students about their careers, their families, their struggles and how they've made it to where they are today. Students benefit from mentorship from practicing physicians and colleagues, while fostering a sense of community. Being thrown into the medical community as a first-year student might be a bit overwhelming, but the Vertical Mentorship Program allows first-year students to talk to upper-years who have been through it all.

Come support the program and get to know your group at Dessert Night; the kickoff event for Vertical Mentorship that you will not want to miss! Also, stay tuned for more information about future events sent to your email and on the Facebook group.
THE MENTORING CENTER

The Mentoring Center holds tutorials for the previous week’s contents every Monday and Thursdays from 4:30-5:30pm on campus. On Mondays, a tutorial is facilitated by a Francophone second-year student, and on Thursdays, it is held by an Anglophone student. During this time, mentors will cover the salient concepts seen during the previous week of class and answer questions about particularly tricky concepts. This tutorial is not a didactic teaching session. Rather, it encourages students to use their problem-solving and collaboration skills to enhance their educational experience and apply their learning. We highly recommend attending these sessions; mentors are an extremely helpful resource and will truly ease your transition to medical school. To find out more about the Student Mentorship Program and to receive their weekly updates, please follow their Facebook page. You will find the topics of tutorial sessions, when and where sessions are held, and if there are any last-minute changes. The mentoring center also answers questions through Facebook messenger, especially during the online office hours every Sunday from 8-9pm. Mentors can provide insight on many aspects of your life as a first-year, including study or time management strategies, questions concerning the curriculum or the most “high-yield” textbooks, or even just chatting about how things are going! Mentors can also answer questions regarding career development or financial assistance (e.g. applying for scholarships and bursaries). For any further questions, the Student Affairs Office is also available to help.

Your 2022-2023 mentors are Julia Kemzang, Olivia Marcotte, Vanessa Viltakis, Abigail Carpentier, Aleksandra Stojanova, Siddiq Mirza, Liam Quatermain, and Sean Ying Hon Hui (shown left to right).

OVERVIEW OF YOUR FIRST YEAR

Trust us, we remember how confusing the first a few weeks of medical school can be, particularly concerning the acronyms and locations of the lecture halls. This section will provide you with a fundamental outline of the curriculum here at the University of Ottawa as well as tips from upper-year students. In combination with your Introductory Case-Based Learning (CBL) session, which is held during your first week of class, you will have all the tools that you will need to start your semester off on the right foot. Please keep in mind that changes in the delivery of the curriculum may happen due to COVID-19. The current situation is constantly evolving, and you will be informed accordingly.

Acronyms:

- **ASoc**: Aesculapian Society
- **CBL**: Case-Based Learning
- **PSD**: Professional Skills Development
- **P=MD**: Pass (60%) = Obtaining your MD degree
- **SIM**: Society, Individual and Medicine
- **SLM**: Self-Learning Module
- **TBL**: Team-Based Learning
AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

● To guarantee consistency across both streams, a set of shared learning objectives have been developed by the Faculty of Medicine.

● Each learning activity (i.e. lectures) is linked to one or more learning objectives that provide the framework for teachers and tutors to teach, and you to learn. Access them by following this link and then selecting the Objectives tab.

● They are a great tool for you to streamline your learning. Note: You can only be evaluated on material that is linked to a learning objective!

● If a professor teaches you something that does not fit within your learning objectives, don’t completely ignore it. It might be relevant in clerkship, or it may be necessary to allow you to understand the bigger picture. Rest-assured, this concept won’t appear on the exam.

● Certain students use these objectives to make notes, others look them over when reviewing lecture slides. There are plenty of studying approaches, but keep in mind that this is an adjustment period. Feel free to ask questions to upper-year students and your MedBuddy. You will surely feel that the information differs based on the source, so take these tips with a grain of salt; everyone is different and so are you!

● Don’t forget that every academic session has objectives, which means that information learnt in CBL and from SLMs are also fair game!

● After an exam, you will receive a list of objectives corresponding to the questions that were not correctly answered on the exam, allowing you to review these topics with particular emphasis for the final.

LECTURES

● Lectures are held mostly on Mondays and Wednesdays, although they may occasionally be held on other days as well. Most lectures are not mandatory and are recorded. Note that all mandatory lectures, select non-mandatory lectures, and workshops are not recorded. We highly recommend that you attend lectures out of respect for your professors, plus it allows you to ask questions and remain on top of the material.

● The PowerPoint presentation should be available on Elentra before class. If the professor has recently updated it and Elentra is displaying an outdated version, check DocZone for the most up-to-date version.

● Each lecture will cover a set of learning objectives. Certain professors will even tell you which slides cover which objectives, but most of the time this will not be provided. If an objective is not covered in class, we encourage you to mention it in your evaluation to improve the material for the next year. That being said, remember that you are responsible for learning that information on your own for the exam.
**CASE-BASED LEARNING (CBL)**

- CBL sessions happen on Tuesdays (2 hours) and Friday (3 hours).
- **CBL cases** will only become available on the morning of the session on Brightspace.
- Your group of 8 students will “meet” your patient(s) and then discuss the clinical scenario.
- CBLs are directed but meant to be interactive! You may discuss the presenting signs and symptoms, underlying pathophysiology, laboratory and imaging results, as well as approaches to treatment.
- A faculty member acts as a facilitator for each group. They will not necessarily be physicians, but they are extremely knowledgeable in the corresponding field of study and are a great learning resource.
- **Tips:**
  - Be prepared! You are responsible to keep the sessions going and engage in group discussions.
  - Review the concepts and make notes on the objectives ahead of time. Certain groups prefer to split the objectives to prepare them for the day before the session, allowing everyone to review.
  - Share your resources with other members of your group. You will all be working together during your CBL sessions; collaborate, help everyone participate, and share leading the discussions.
  - The CBL will reflect the theme of the week. Therefore, it is a good idea to review Monday’s lectures before the Tuesday session and Wednesday’s lectures before the Friday session.
  - Remember, you may be an expert in one topic, but your classmate is an expert in another. Share your knowledge and learn from each other!
  - The CBL tutor’s guide, a set of notes written by the Faculty including topics of discussion and important information concerning the session, will be available after Friday’s integrative lecture. These tutor guides highlight important concepts from CBLs to provide consistency between different CBL groups.

**SOCIETY, INDIVIDUAL AND MEDICINE (SIM)**

- SIM is an integral part of the curriculum, running throughout pre-clerkship, with mandatory weekly two-hour sessions.
- SIM covers a wide range of subjects, ranging from research methods to Indigenous health.
- Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) sessions are also part of SIM. During these small group sessions, you will develop your research skills and learn how to interpret scientific articles.
- As part of SIM, the Community Service Learning (CSL) program allows each student to spend 30 hours volunteering with a community health agency in the Winter semester of first-year. You will either rank a list of volunteer posts based on a list provided by uOttawa in January, or organize your own volunteering program.
- **Tips:**
  - Certain professors will be accompanied by guest speakers, which may be past or current patients that are sharing their story with you. Out of respect, stop checking your social media notifications and answer your emails after class. Listen and appreciate their journey; it’s amazing what you can learn from these stories.
PHYSICIAN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (PSD)

- You’ve finally got your white coat, a new stethoscope and perhaps even a reflex hammer. You look the part, and now it’s time to act the part too!
- During your PSD sessions, you are taught important clinical skills that you will be using throughout your career in medicine.
- Every PSD session reflects what you are currently learning in the unit.
- Your PSD sessions typically run from 13:30 to 16:30 on Thursday afternoons with:
  - A lecture giving an overview of the skills to be learned that day
  - A small group session with a tutor and standardized patient
- In the Winter semester, students are matched with community family preceptors and work with them multiple times throughout their two years of pre-clerkship.
- **Tips:**
  - Come to these sessions prepared by reviewing the PSD Handbook and other recommended resources before class, which can be found on Elentra and the PSD website
  - Bring your stethoscope, a wristwatch, something to write with and a clipboard.
  - **External Resources:** Bates’ Guide to Physical Examination and History Taking and [https://geekymedics.com](https://geekymedics.com)

SELF-LEARNING MODULES (SLM)

- Self-Learning Modules are online modules (available at any time on Brightspace), which should be completed at the beginning of the designated week.
- These modules take anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour to complete.
- SLMs also have learning objectives and can be examined on the midterm and final.
- A typical SLM begins with a pre-test and ends with a post-test where you can make sure you learned everything you were supposed to.

PRACTICAL THURSDAYS (HISTOLOGY, PATHOLOGY, ANATOMY, RADIOLOGY)

- Thursdays are certainly the longest days during your first year! Unlike other days, you start at 8:00 and finish at around 16:30. Make sure to set an earlier alarm!
- On Thursday mornings, you will rotate through three sessions in an order based on your assigned group: Histology/Pathology, Anatomy, and Radiology/Lecture.
- Material covered on Thursdays may be tested on EITHER/BOTH the Practical Exams or Written Exams
- **Tip:** Before anatomy, study for the iTest, a short 2-question quiz, by reviewing the anatomy slides for the week. At the end of the semester, iTest scores are combined and count for a total of 1.5% of your final grade. This is negligible, and while you should definitely not beat yourself up for failing an iTest (trust us, it happens), they certainly provide accountability. iTests may be rescheduled, if needed.
E-PORTFOLIO

- Writing short essays and letters of intent become a common occurrence when preparing for residency applications, described in the CaRMS section of this Survival Guide. The ePortfolio program was developed to ease this writing process.
- Throughout the year, each student will be required to write and post a short essay on e-Portfolio website to reflect on one of the eight topics: Clinician, Professional, Communicator, Collaborator, Scholar, Person, Manager and Health Advocate.
- You will be assigned to an ePortfolio group, composed of the same group of students throughout medical school. Each group will consist of approximately 8 students and a physician, meeting two to three times a year, to discuss a post from each student of the group to learn from each other’s experiences.

EXAMS

- Exam questions cover the learning objectives of the unit and meet LMCC standards, allowing students to feel at ease with answering multiple choice questions (MCQs) and clinical decision-making questions (CDMQs).
- Midterms consist of a written and a practical exam. Final exams are spread throughout the week, with the practical exam on Tuesday (including a SIM exam in the Fall) and a written exam on Friday.
- The written exam consists mostly of MCQs plus a few CDMQs. Practical exams are bell ringers, allowing students to rotate through a series of stations, answering MCQs with approximately one minute per question.
- These exams may seem intimidating. Yes, there is a lot of material to cover, but you will be fine! You stayed focused and are on top of your material. You will be amazed by how much you learnt in a short period of time!

BREAKDOWN OF FIRST-YEAR

INTRODUCTION UNIT (2 WEEKS)

Introduction to the MD Program, the Faculty and Resources
Wellness and Mindfulness
Professionalism and Interprofessionalism
Health Advocacy and Leadership
Health Systems
Indigenous Health
Ethics and Humanities

FOUNDATIONS UNIT (13 WEEKS)

Development, Genetics and Embryology
Hematology
Thrombosis
Microbiology and Infectious Diseases
Allergy and Immunology
Musculoskeletal and Rheumatology
UNIT I (19 WEEKS)

Cardiology
Oncology
Respirology/ENT
Lymphoma/Leukemia
Nephrology
Hypertension

MD2026 CALENDAR (2022-2023)

The picture below is the calendar for your class, MD2026. You can access the calendar [here](#), or by going to the Pre-clerkship section of StudentZone, under the section “Calendars”.

[Calendar Image]

-N: Holiday  e: Mid Term Examination  E: Final Examination  OSCE
## WEBSITES (PRO-TIP: BOOKMARK THESE FOR EASY ACCESS!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Clerkship Page</td>
<td><a href="https://med.uottawa.ca/undergraduate/students/student-zone/pre-clerkship">https://med.uottawa.ca/undergraduate/students/student-zone/pre-clerkship</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Course schedule, PowerPoints/presentations, and lecturer and tutor evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brightspace</td>
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<td>Access the following course materials: CBL cases and tutor guides, SLMs, select resources for SIM Health and Safety Training Access your exam grades</td>
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<td>Updated PowerPoints for lectures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Access PSD booklets, videos, required readings, and other resources</td>
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### Student Portal
http://app.med.uottawa.ca/StudentPortal/

Register electives and provide/receive multi-source feedback

### uOttawa Main Page
http://www.uottawa.ca/en/students

Access a number of student tools, including Scholarships and Bursary applications, Finances, Tuition, etc.

### uOttawa Health Sciences Library
https://biblio.uottawa.ca/en/health-sciences-library

Access library material (e.g. PubMed, Cochrane, etc.), book a study room in the library, or use the free 3D printing services!

### MS Teams
Login with your uOttawa credentials

Access CBL room bookings
Join meetings and interest group talks and make groups/chats with classmates

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### ELECTIVES

Pre-clerkship electives, also known as observerships, are a great way to refine your clinical skills. They may also help steer you towards or away from certain specialties. Electives are not mandatory. However, we strongly recommend registering for a few in your first year. Each pre-clerkship elective must total at least **10 hours** to register. Feel free to approach your professors and CBL tutors after class to ask if they accept medical students for pre-clerkship electives; most of them will be happy to have you join them.

**Note:** You will have a presentation on scheduling electives at the end of September or early October. **You are not permitted to book any electives before that.**
Procedure for scheduling electives:

- Reference the uOttawa Student Guidelines for schedule pre-clerkship electives.
- Contact the person responsible for scheduling electives in that department (reference the contact list), or ask a physician directly about the process to organize an elective with them.
- You cannot organize electives during scheduled course hours, including lectures.
- Canceling electives is strongly discouraged. If you cannot attend a scheduled activity (e.g. due to sickness), try to provide as much notice as you can. Doctors are taking time out of their busy schedules to teach you!
- Your supervisor must be an attending physician, not a resident.
- You must register your elective on the Student Portal and receive approval prior to the start of the elective. Note: elective approval may require at least two business days.
- During your elective, ask questions, be professional, learn and have fun!
- At the end of your elective, thank your supervisor and remind them that they will need to complete an evaluation of you for the elective. Following, complete your supervisor’s evaluation and the elective evaluation on the Student Portal. All these steps must be done for the elective to be considered “Complete.”

Tips:

- Certain students will decide to start with electives to rule out certain specialties (i.e. deciding whether surgery or medicine is preferred), others will choose to book electives based on the order of systems learnt in class to complement learning, but you may also book electives based on pure interest!
- Explore and find what’s best for you; do not compare yourself with classmates in terms of how many or how little electives you are doing! The goal of electives is simply to allow you to be exposed early to medical specialties.
- Have an open mind; it will be equally useful to rule specialties in as rule the out through electives.
- Occasionally, it might help to book multiple electives in the same discipline as a single good or bad experience may not reflect the specialty as a whole.

Medical Associations

These associations represent the medical profession at the provincial and national levels. Your VP Externals attend various meetings and activities as representatives of our student body. Your VP External Jr. will be sending you email newsletters with updates about what these organizations are doing for you. They are also a great resource for textbooks, bursaries, student discounts, and more. Take a few minutes to check out their websites!

Membership Fees:

- Canadian Medical Association: Free
- Ontario Medical Association: $10
- Canadian Federation of Medical Students: $80, paid in tuition already as part of Aesculapian Society fees
- Ontario Medical Students Association: Free
The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is the national, voluntary association of physicians that advocates on behalf of its members and the public for access to high quality care. The CMA represents physicians, residents, and medical students! The CMA offers a number of resources to medical students, such as free online textbooks and other clinical resources, financial planning, and some great discounts on things like mobile services, travel, and leisure. Visit the website.

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) represents the political, clinical, and economic interests of Ontario’s medical professionals. Just as with the CMA, you can join the OMA as a medical student. OMA also offers benefits, resources and provides bursaries. Visit the website.

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) is the representative voice of Canadian medical students to the federal government, public, and national medical organizations. It represents over 7500 medical students at 14 Canadian medical schools from coast to coast. National and Global Health Advocacy is a major aspect of the CFMS mandate, putting together the Federal Lobby Day at Parliament Hill and organizing international health exchanges. The CFMS also provides many discounted services (Lasik, textbooks). Finally, the CFMS offers Leadership Awards and Innovator Grants. Visit the website.

The Ontario Medical Students’ Association (OMSA) is the dedicated students’ voice of the OMA. The organization represents the views and concerns of over 3000 Ontario medical students on issues such as medical school accessibility, residency positions, and social issues affecting all Canadians. OMSA facilitates many great events for its medical students, including Ontario Medical Students’ Weekend (OMSW), Provincial Lobby Day at Queen’s Park, and a Wellness Weekend Retreat. It also offers Innovator Grants and Conference Grants to facilitate student initiatives and involvement in the medical community. Visit the website.
HOW TO BECOME A DOCTOR IN FOUR STEPS

Getting into medical school is only the first step of many to becoming a practicing physician. We have some good news though; follow these steps and you’ll be golden!

Step 1: Get your MD

Attend lectures, study hard, hang out with fellow classmates, participate in MedShow, participate in interest groups, write a few exams and tadah! You’ll be walking across the stage in front of proud friends and family to pick up that very expensive piece of paper.

Step 2: Get Licensure

Across Canada, all 13 provincial colleges in the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC) contracts the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) to administer exams for them. Since 2021, there is one part (previously two) to the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam (MCCQE, commonly referred to as the “LMCC”). Part I (MCCQEI) is written before the start of residency, at the end of fourth year.

Step 3: Get Certified

So, after the MD, and LMCC, now what? Residency of course! You will need to complete an accredited residency program and write the appropriate licensing exam. Want to be a family physician? You will have to complete a two-year residency and then write the exam set by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC). All other medical specialties (with residencies typically ranging from five to seven years) are set by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). These two colleges are our national bodies that oversee physician training and evaluation.

Step 4: Get a Billing Number

You will have to apply to a provincial Health Ministry and meet their requirements to get your license.

That’s it folks!

CANADIAN RESIDENCY MATCHING SERVICE (CARMS)

CaRMS is a big black box when you first enter medical school. The term will be thrown around by various faculty members and upper-year students, and you’ll probably ask yourself “what exactly is this CaRMS thing anyway?!” This is just a basic overview of how the CaRMS process works. For more information, including statistics, program descriptions and the application process, please visit the CaRMS website. CaRMS utilizes an algorithm for the match. This process is explained in this short video.
FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR

- These are the years where you figure out what you like and what you don’t like. It’s sometimes easier, and just as important, to rule out potential specialties as it is to rule them in. Join an interest group, attend talks by various specialists, do electives that interest you, and talk to other medical students.
- Keep track of all your extracurriculars, volunteering, research by keeping your CV updated. Here is an example of a CV template that may be used for CaRMS.
- Use your summers to do electives, research and/or volunteer, but make sure to take some time off! Don’t burn out before you start clerkship. Some students take both summers off to travel, while others love doing research. Do what you enjoy.
- At the end of second-year, you will choose which “group” you’d like to be in for your third-year. Each group rotates through the same medical specialties, but in a different order. Many strategies exist to help you pick your group order. You will rank a list of preferred orders and get placed in a specific group during your second-year. Talk to upper year students to see what is best for you!

THIRD-YEAR

- Your first-year of clerkship will be a steep learning curve. Use the first few weeks to get settled, and then have fun, be keen and learn lots!
- Each student in clerkship will complete eight blocks that are each six weeks long, including rotations in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Anesthesia, Pediatrics, Mandatory Selectives, Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Psychiatry, and Family Medicine.
- The English and French Streams are separated in clerkship, as French students will complete clerkship mainly at Montfort Hospital, with the exception of Pediatrics, which will be completed at CHEO. French stream students may also opt to complete Mandatory Selectives in an Anglophone setting. English students are assigned to various sites, including TOH General or Civic Campus, the Queensway Carleton Hospital, the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, the Bruyère Hospital, and many more!
- After the holidays, you will be registering for your fourth-year electives. This process is too complicated to discuss here, but just know that you will get ample information about this at a later time.

FOURTH-YEAR

- You will do 14 weeks of “pre-CaRMS” electives where you’ll be getting a feel for various programs locally or across the country and making yourself known. During this time, you will also prepare your CaRMS application.
- The submission process can be complicated and varies depending on the schools you’re applying to. It usually includes around three reference letters, a letter of intent, your Medical Student Performance Record (MSPR), and a CV.
- After the holidays, interview season will begin. Since 2021, residency interviews have been conducted virtually. The plan is to continue to do so for the 2023 cohort, so keep an eye out for yours! While you do not necessarily
need to have done an elective at a school to receive an interview, this is largely program-specific and school-specific. Sometimes, doing an elective in a region (e.g. east coast, west coast, prairies, Quebec) is sufficient to receive an interview for multiple schools.

- After interviewing, students then rank their preferred programs in order. The various schools rank the applicants in a similar fashion. All of this information is submitted to CaRMS and through their algorithm, a computer determines your residency position!
- On Match Day, students will receive notice of where and what they will be doing for the next two to five years. If a student is unmatched, they may enter a second iteration application cycle, and will be thoroughly supported by the Student Affairs Office.

### Matching to the United States for Residency

To apply for residency in the United States, you must write the USMLEs examinations, which are the US equivalent to the MCCQE. Usually, USMLE Step 1 is written after second-year and USMLE Step 2 is written after third-year. Step 3 is usually written during first-year of residency. The USMLE Step 1 is reported as a pass/fail outcome. A numeric score is reported for Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Step 3.

While you may register with Canadian (CaRMS) and US (National Resident Matching Program (NRMP), you can only match to **ONE system**. If you choose to participate and are matched through CaRMS first, you are automatically withdrawn from the NRMP. You may hear upper-year students discuss writing the USMLE Step 1 after their second-year to apply for fellowship positions in the US. It is important to know that **not every state requires USMLE examinations to be written** to become a fellow.

Note that it is also **extremely costly to simply register for these tests**. USMLE Step 1 and Step 2CK each cost $645 USD (~$815 CAD), while Step 3 costs $895 USD (~1130 CAD). Please visit the Student Affairs Office if you require additional information.

### Research

One of the most frequently asked questions among first- and second-year medical students is whether or not they should get involved in research. This varies based on your interest, and there is no right answer! Generally, for smaller and more competitive programs, research may be encouraged as it allows you to demonstrate interest in the specialty while networking with physicians from your institution. However, for primary care programs, such as family medicine, research is not nearly as emphasized, although it may also be useful depending on your career
interests. The perspectives on research vary significantly within the medical community and the benefits/barriers to research are unique to each individual.

That being said, the first step in deciding whether to pursue research is to determine whether or not it would be something that you would enjoy. If you are interested in pursuing research, we recommend finding a supervisor that you not only get along with, but that has worked with medical students in the past. Your time is limited and should be well spent! Remember that getting involved in research too early on in your first-year may not necessarily be advantageous. You may not have any idea what you wish to specialize in, and who wants to pursue a long-term research project in a specialty that they do not enjoy after all?

However, it is also critical to pursue your passions, whether it is research, global health, community service, leadership, etc. If research is an experience that you choose to pursue, it is important to know that there are several opportunities, resources, and support systems set in place as part of the MD undergraduate program. An excellent starting point to identify potential fields of interest in research is to drop by the Faculty of Medicine Research Office located at RGN 2033.

SUMMER STUDENTSHIP PROGRAM

The Faculty of Medicine offers a multitude of Summer Studentships, which are essentially structured funding opportunities for first- and second-year medical students to undertake research with various faculty members.

If you are already involved in a research project and want to apply alongside your supervisor, the deadline for supervisor applications is around February 1st of each year. Please note, your supervisor must be a faculty member to apply. If you do not currently have a supervisor, a list of potential supervisors/projects will be sent to all 1st & 2nd year students in early February. Apply quickly, as these projects tend to fill rapidly with students, which is why it may be preferable to apply with your own supervisor. All the details and application deadlines for this program are listed on their website.

FACULTY OF MEDICINE RESEARCH DAY

The main goal of this event is to promote multi-disciplinary interactions between basic science and clinical research trainees and to promote integration of clinical and basic science research teams. This event is an excellent opportunity for trainees to showcase their outstanding research, hone their presentation skills, and network with colleagues and faculty. This event is open to all faculty members and trainees. We will have prizes to recognize the Poster Presentations & Oral Presentations; trainees have the option of publishing their peer-reviewed abstracts in a Special Edition of the University of Ottawa Journal of Medicine.
MD/PhD Program

The senior mentors of the MD/PhD program have created a handbook survival guide for incoming students to navigate the intricacies of a dual degree program where the critical steps and milestones of the program are highlighted. All MD/PhD students will be provided with access to this handbook, outlining the program timeline throughout the course of their training from the perspective of upper year students.

In the first year of the program, Year 1 MD, students will begin to search for their PhD supervisors and enter their first summer of research after completing first year of medical school. During this summer semester, students will begin their research training and begin PhD funding applications.

After which, students then begin Year 2 (MD). The summer following this year, students will then integrate into graduate studies to complete their PhD for the next 3 years. During these 3 years, students will fulfill program-specific graduate studies requirements, including a comprehensive exam.

After completion of their doctoral studies, students will then reintegrate into clerkship and complete the 3rd and 4th year of the MD program (year 6 & 7 of the MD/PhD Program).

The Ottawa Hospital Department of Medicine Research Plus Program

If you are interested in clinical research or are looking at improving your research skills, The Ottawa Hospital’s Department of Medicine (DOM) developed the Research Plus Program to support MD students in discovering their interests in clinical research, learning the nuances of the processes involved and developing the skills needed to become successful clinician-scientists. In addition, the program provides the opportunity to foster lasting relationships through mentorship which can continue to develop after medical school and into students’ future careers.

For the first 18 months, members of the program will be paired with a clinician scientist and attend a series of workshops/sessions focused on a variety of research related topics. Following this, members will have the option to continue working with their mentors and develop research under their supervision. New members are recruited on a yearly basis. Applications open in late fall, and the program officially starts in the winter. While there are only a limited number of spots available, all interested in clinical research are encouraged to apply. Previous research experience is not necessary, but the willingness to commit is a must! An information session will be held in October, so keep an eye out for more information on how to get involved! If you are interested in the DOM Research Plus Program and have any questions, please contact resmed@uottawa.ca.

Global Health Program

The Global Health Program at uOttawa aims to educate students about issues pertaining to local and global health, empowering, and inspiring them to become advocates, and facilitate change in both their own communities and abroad.

Meet the Team: The team includes the Office of Global Health, the Aesculapian Society (Vice-President Global Health Junior & Senior), and the AGHN (Action Global Health Network). In addition, the team collaborates with the Global
Global Health Simulation: In the 2020-21 school year, the global health team created a brand new one-of-a-kind event where students of all years can attain a practical and immersive global health experience without having to board an airplane. These simulations are run in collaboration with Humanitarian Partners, a team of award-winning global health professionals and humanitarians with decades of experience in the field. Students are placed into teams where they represent a prominent global health organization in a global context. The students must collaborate with other organizations, as well as real-world professionals to confront simulated tasks and challenges that a medical professional would face in the field. Depending on public health guidelines, we aim to provide this event in-person or online in 2022-23 in an expanded, interdisciplinary format, spanning over multiple days. Stay tuned for more information!

Refugee health initiative: A component of your first year of medical school includes completing community service learning (CSL) where you spend 30+ hours volunteering in the community. One of the unique learning experiences offered through this program is the refugee health initiative, where a student is paired with a newcomer family in the Ottawa area to help the family explore a new health and social system. This is one of few CSL placements where students can demonstrate advocacy for the social determinants of health directly with individuals who are facing many challenges upon arriving in Canada. It is a very rewarding experience and a great learning opportunity!

Other events: In addition to the simulation, the Global Health portfolio at uOttawa organizes many other events throughout the year, including our Annual Refugee Fundraiser, lecture series, humanitarian month, and workshops promoting health advocacy. We also host speakers who have worked with international agencies, including Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders, health ethicists, and humanitarians.

Get Involved! We encourage you to get involved with Global Health – whether it’s applying to be Global Health Assistant or a Local Officer, joining the Global Health Interest Group, or attending a lecture series and learning more about HIV/AIDS or maternal and child health. There are many ways to get involved! Feel free to contact the VP Global Health for more information.

Global Health Concentration: The Global Health Concentration is an optional curriculum aimed at undergraduate medical students who wish to pursue further education and training in global health. The curriculum features learning objectives that center on seven major themes in global health. Students complete these learning objectives through didactic teaching, academic self-study, and experiential learning. Students who would like to earn a Certificate of Achievement in Global Health by completing an academic project are encouraged to use their skills and experience to present their work by various means, including photo journals, video journals, and poster presentations. For more information on the Global Health Concentration, contact the Global Health Program Coordinator at globalhealth@uOttawa.ca.
INTERNATIONAL ELECTIVES

Interested in pursuing an elective abroad next summer? Luckily, there are plenty of options as a medical student! The International and Global Health Office has a list of instructions on how to organize your international placement. Please note that it is up to you to find and secure your own medical placement. That being said, the website provides plenty of resources to help you in your search.

To name a few, international electives may be organized through personal contacts, Humanities in Medicine Summer School in partnership with Shanghai and Lyon, IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students Associations), or an external organization, such as International Volunteer HQ. You have a lot of flexibility when it comes to international electives and can tailor your elective to fit your personal goals and interests! Once you have chosen your placement, be sure to complete your application and prepare for your trip as per the International and Global Health Office instructions!

MEDICINE AND THE HUMANITIES PROGRAM (MHP)

The Medicine, Ethics, and Humanities program (MEHP) in the undergraduate medical education curriculum at the Faculty of Medicine is a new and evolving program. It seeks to enhance students’ understanding of medicine by formally infusing the curricula of both our French and English streams with concepts and content derived from history, philosophy, the arts, and literature. Just as biology, chemistry, and statistics help inform our understanding of human health, so too can the humanities help us better understand who we are, who our patients are, and how we can best help them.

The program consists of both mandatory curricular components that all students receive, and extracurricular or elective components for students who wish to pursue the arts and humanities in further detail. Examples include a seminar lecture series, the art wall, Murmurs magazine, an artist-in-residence program, a fourth year clerkship elective, as well as other special events throughout the year. Students can earn special recognition for their interest in, and commitment to, the humanities in medicine, as well as a Certificate of Excellence in Medicine and the Humanities if they fulfill all requirements. For more information, please visit the program’s website.

There is also an Arts in Medicine Interest Group. Check out their Facebook page and website for more information.
SUMMER PROGRAMS

Once first year is over, you are temporarily free! What can you do with your time off? You can travel, do electives, research, or take some well-deserved R&R. Here are some other suggestions! Additional information concerning these summer programs will be shared during the winter semester.

HUMANITIES IN MEDICINE SUMMER SCHOOL

This program aims to expand students’ knowledge in the field of humanities in medicine (e.g. ethics, mindfulness, narrative medicine, etc.) through exchanges and intercultural collaboration. Organized jointly with Lyon University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The location of the summer school rotates amongst the various schools.

OPEP (OTTAWA PSYCHIATRY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM)

The Ottawa Psychiatry Enrichment Program (OPEP) is a one-week (40-hour) summer course for Canadian pre-clerkship medical students who are interested in exploring the specialty of Psychiatry. Organized by the Department of Psychiatry, this program offers educational seminars on current practices and research, as well as observership and mentorship opportunities for program participants. OPEP 2022 was run in-person last year. We hope to see you all in-person this upcoming summer as well!

IMED (INTERNAL MEDICINE SUMMER EXPLORATION PROGRAM)

The Internal Medicine Enrichment & Development (IMED) program is a condensed 2-week summer exploration program that exposes pre-clerkship students to a variety of internal medicine (IM) sub-specialties. The program includes morning observerships, staff-led lunchtime career discussions, and afternoon workshops at either the uOttawa Skills & Simulation Centre or TOH. Participants for the IMED program are selected based on a lottery system. As the program takes place in partnership with a number of departments at the Ottawa Hospital, the number of participants and program dates may vary each year. Given the rapidly evolving circumstances of the past year, updates about IMED 2023 will be provided as they are available.

SEADS (SURGICAL EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY)

The Surgical Exploration and Discovery (SEAD) Program is a two-week, 80-hour, summer program that seeks to provide first-year medical students with exposure to different surgical specialties. The program is organized by second year medical students and runs with the support of the Department of Surgery, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Skills and Simulation Centre. Over the course of the program, first year students will be exposed to all direct-entry surgical specialties through three core elements: observerships in clinics and operating rooms, hands-on simulations, and presentations from surgeons from each surgical specialty. Participation in the program will be open to first-year students.
**REACT (RADIOLOGY, EMERGENCY, ANESTHESIOLOGY, CRITICAL CARE AND TRAUMA)**

REACT is designed to introduce students to the areas related to critical care and emergency medicine. The program takes place in summer and combines interactive, hands-on skill sessions, lunchtime talks from physicians in each discipline, and short clinical placements in varying specialties. This includes emergency medicine, emergency radiology, anesthesiology, trauma surgery/acute care general surgery and ICU. Skills covered include bronchoscopy, emergency airway management, central lines, chest tube, POCUS and many more!

**PROFESSIONALISM**

You are now a future healthcare professional and represent one of the top medical institutions in the country. As a result, you are expected to demonstrate a high level of professionalism at all times. Needless to say, we expect professional behavior from the Faculty’s staff in return. **Student mistreatment is unacceptable and is not to be tolerated.** During the introductory weeks, you will be told how to report mistreatment and informed about the [Be in The Know] campaign.

As for your level of professionalism, there are a few things to keep in mind, one of which is your clothing and image. Specifically, avoid revealing clothing, open-toed shoes in the hospital, and strongly scented shampoos, soaps or fragrances. You are encouraged to show respect and empathy in all areas of education and demonstrate honesty at all times. Alcohol is discouraged when it may interfere with your professional conduct. Illicit drug use is prohibited.

You will participate in a variety of workshops and conferences during the year. Please do not register for a slot to eventually withdraw, especially if spaces are limited. When necessary, provide notice of your absence as early as possible. Be aware that it is also not acceptable to sign the attendance sheet for an event organized by an interest group and leave a few minutes later.

During your classes, you are expected to attend, arrive on time (if you are late, use the door at the back of the classroom), show respect to your professors, and avoid talking or checking social media during lessons. Your attendance at certain activities (e.g. CBL, PSD, SIM) is mandatory, which is specified on your Elentra schedule. You will also be asked to evaluate all learning activities in which you participate through feedback forms. This isn’t very fun, but it is important to understand that the information gathered is essential to ensuring that you, and future medical students in your position, are getting the best education possible.

In the anatomy lab, cadavers must be treated with the same respect as real patients. Our Faculty takes this extremely seriously and will provide you with detailed instructions regarding the use of the laboratory in September.

When using social media, what to say and what not to say isn’t always obvious. It is prudent to consider any social media platform as a public space. Use your common sense!
**Tips:**

- Use the appropriate title when speaking to a professional
- Send a thank you email after an elective
- Keep your language professional
- Use an official signature for your emails

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**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**PRE-CLERKSHIP**

Yes, you can take days off! The policies and procedures have specific requirements, so make sure you have read through them and at a minimum know where to find this information should you need it.

1. **Requesting an Absence Procedure in Pre-Clerkship**

2. **Important Details and Regulations about the Attendance Policy in Pre-Clerkship**
   [https://med.uottawa.ca/undergraduate/attendance-policy-pre-clerkship](https://med.uottawa.ca/undergraduate/attendance-policy-pre-clerkship)

It is the responsibility of the student to report (in writing) all absences from mandatory sessions to the coordinator: Medical Education Office Contacts.

Coordinator, Year 1: blocky1@uottawa.ca or in case of emergency by phone: 613-562-5800 x 8126
Coordinator, Year 2: blocky2@uottawa.ca or in case of emergency by phone: 613-562-5800 x 8125

The cumulative maximum number of days of excused absences allowed per year is **10**.

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<th>Situation</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
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<td><strong>Absences for one or two days</strong></td>
<td>Students must notify in writing (by email) as soon as possible and give the reason for absence to the coordinator. Students may be required to submit documentation justifying the absence, at the discretion of the Faculty. Any excused absence of one or two days may be subject to make-up time or to additional work at the discretion of the pre-clerkship director.</td>
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<td><strong>Absences of three or more consecutive days</strong></td>
<td>Students must immediately notify the coordinator in writing, as well as provide supporting documentation and reason for absence. Upon return, students absent because of illness must submit to the coordinator a medical certificate from the treating physician. Any excused absence of three days or more will be subject to make-up work, at the discretion of the pre-clerkship director.</td>
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Please refer to the Absence Request Procedure for the following specific situations:
Request for an advanced approved absence (e.g., wedding, religious holidays, legal proceedings, acting as representative of the Faculty of Medicine, presenter at a scientific meeting), absence for attending a conference, short- and long-term leaves of absence (e.g., health, personal, maternity, paternity), absence from a midterm or final exam (written or OSCE), or any other important elements regarding attendance.

Clerkship

Please refer to the Clerkship Attendance Policy Website for more information.

Overview of Facebook Groups and Pages

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<th>Facebook Pages</th>
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<td>uOttawa</td>
<td>uOttawa Medicine Carpooling</td>
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<td>uOttawa Faculty of Medicine</td>
<td>uOttawa Rideshare</td>
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<td>uOttawa Aesculapian Society</td>
<td>uOttawa Academic Group</td>
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<td>uOttawa Future Students</td>
<td>uOttawa Choosing Wisely</td>
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<td>uOttawa Medicine Student Mentoring Centre</td>
<td>uOttawa MD2026 Facebook Group</td>
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<td>uOttawa Health Services</td>
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<td>Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) – Volet uOttawa</td>
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<td>uOttawa Affaires francophones</td>
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<td>UOMed Speaks Up</td>
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Living in Ottawa

Are you new to Ottawa? Here are some suggestions as to where to spend your spare time, fun places to study, and great restaurants to eat! Medical school is all about maintaining work-life balance after all!

Exercise

There are two gyms on uOttawa’s main campus: Montpetit (includes a pool), and the Minto Sports Complex (includes the arenas). The weight/cardio room at Montpetit is a lot smaller than the one at the Minto Sports Complex, but it houses three large gyms where all indoor intramurals take place. There are also squash courts in both buildings. Your membership is included in your student fees.
Hours:
- **Montpetit**: Weekdays from 7:30 to 23:00 and weekends from 9:30 to 20:30
  - Note that Monpetit also offers Women’s Only Hours from 7:30 to 8:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- **Minto Sports Complex**: Weekdays from 6:30 to 23:00 and weekends from 8:00 to 20:00

Want to work out at RGN? You can purchase a gym membership for the **Goodlife** at the TOH Cancer Center. It is on the smaller-end, but it has everything you need for a great workout. It is a 5-minute (indoor) walk from RGN and is open to medical students until 23:00. Membership costs $399 for the year or $15.35 bi-weekly (excluding taxes).

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**WHAT’S A “GEE-GEE”??**

According to [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gee-Gee), the term "Gee-Gee" was inspired by horse racing, where a “Gee-Gee” is defined as the first horse to come off the starting grid. The name Gee-Gee (GG) also describes the colors of the University (garnet and gray). For many years the team was known as Garnet and Gray. The name Gee-Gees was chosen to appeal to both English and French speaking admirers of our bilingual university.

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**STAYING ACTIVE**

Ottawa is recognized as one of the most physically active cities in Canada! You will not have much difficulty finding something that interests you! The Ottawa Triathlon Club has a [calendar](https://www.victoriatri.org/) of triathlons held in the area. For all the fellow runners out there, there is a great [timeline](https://www.ottawaraceweekend.com/) of runs that will be held throughout the year. The list is long, but here are the main ones: the **Ottawa Race Weekend** takes place at the end of May, the **Canadian Army Race** in mid-September, the **Ottawa Fall Colors Runs** in October and the **Winterman** in February. Don’t forget our very own **sMiles for Amanda 5K Run/Walk** that happens early May. More information will be sent out from ASoc Execs this year.
**FOOD**

In Byward Market:

- **Chez Lucien @ 137 Murray St.** (great burgers, but this is a very busy little restaurant)
- **Play Food and Wine @ 1 York St.** (a classic for those who like small plates)
- **Vittoria Trattoria @ 35 William St.** (another classic, especially for vegetarians)
- **La Bottega @ 64 George St.** (an Italian grocery store, but they have an open sandwich counter for lunch)
- **Sidedoor @ 18b York St.** (another very good restaurant)
- **Zak’s Diner @ 14 Byward Market Sq.** (another classic, for those who love diners that are open 24 hours a day)
- **Beaver Tails** are a classic Ottawa dish and you’ll find their original kiosk in the Byward Market.
- **Burgers n’ Fries Forever @ 278 Dalhousie St.** (best burgers in town)
- **El Furniture Warehouse @ 77 Clarence St.** (everything is $5)

In Centretown (South of downtown):

- **Town @ 296 Elgin St.** (another great small restaurant)
- **Riviera @ 62 Sparks St.** (upscale, and you might have the chance of meeting an MP or senator)
- **El Camino @ 380 Elgin St.** (among the best tacos in town; there is also a pop-up in the market for the summer)
- **Burgers n’ Fries Forever @ 329 Bank St.** (best burgers in town)

For Brunch:

- **Father and Son’s @ 112 Osgood St.** (no frills, but probably the cheapest in town)
- **Baker Street Café @ 385 Richmond Rd.** (in Westboro, a nice neighborhood to discover)
- **Wilf and Ada’s @ 510 Bank St.** (very small, but well worth it)
- **Lieutenant’s Pump @ 361 Elgin St.** (makes a great brunch!)
- **Allô! Mon Coco @ 2277 Riverside Dr.** (great variety of brunch options)

Other:

- **Suzy Q Donuts @ 969 Wellington St. West** (bring these for your CBL group!)
- **The Green Door @ 198 Main St.** (full vegetarian buffet near RGN!)
- **Shawarma Palace @ 464 Rideau St.** (shawarma is very popular in Ottawa, be sure to try every restaurant!)
- **Nacho Cartel @ 200 Wilbrod St.** (food truck 2 minutes away from Main Campus with great tacos/nachos)
STUDY SPOTS

It’s great to exercise and eat amazing food, but you will probably need a quieter place to study! For those who live near the Main Campus, make use of the Morisset Library. The third and fifth floors are perfect for group work. The fourth and sixth floors are ideal for studying alone, as complete silence reigns there. Need a boost? You’ll find a Second Cup on the first floor! There is also the option to study at one of the newest buildings on main campus: Learning Crossroads (CRX). It offers modern individual study space and group study rooms. There are also power USB outlets everywhere! It even has a Tim Hortons, a Thai Express and a Paramount. However, beware that it can be quite busy during the academic year. Tip: The Law Library, located in the Fauteux Building on Main Campus, is also generally very calm and peaceful!

For those who live near RGN, enjoy the Health Sciences Library located on the first floor of RGN. It is a quiet place and is rarely crowded. You can also study in the cafeteria on the first floor, which is quite quiet outside of mealtimes. The Graduate Student Lounge on the third floor (just above the RGN atrium) is also a great place to study but try to avoid taking up the space at lunch time! CBL rooms are a great option, although they are busy during exam season. The Medical Student Lounge is available to us through keycard access, and is located on the second floor of RGN, near the CBL rooms! This lounge has lots of tables and seating, a small group study room, and two large flat screen TVs to study, or to host TV show or sport viewing parties throughout the year!

If you like to settle into a café to study, the Starbucks at Trainyards and Elmvale are not far away. Figaro Coffee House is another medical student hot spot at Trainyards. If you prefer downtown, the Bridgehead, Ministry of Coffee, Planet Coffee and Arlington Five are Ottawa classics!

RESPECTING OTTAWA AND OUR PLANET

If you are new to Ottawa, or are moving out for the first time, it is a great idea to inform yourself about ways to reduce our impact on our environment, allowing us and future generations to come (including our own kids) to enjoy our wonderful planet! Tip: Download Ottawa’s “Collection” app for information on when the bins will be collected, and easy access to the Waste Explorer.

  - Upon your arrival to Ottawa, you should possess a black bin, green bin, and blue bin. If you do not, you may request for a new bin to be delivered or utilize your own bin, if accepted.
  - Get to know which items go in the black (paper, cardboard), green (compost, food soiled pizza boxes, tissues and paper towels) and blue (glass jars, metal cans, plastic water bottles) bins. Most of your items do NOT belong in a garbage bin/landfill. To encourage this behaviour, Ottawa only picks up garbage once every two weeks!
  o If you are unsure about where an item should be placed, **don’t throw it in the garbage!**
  o Take two seconds to look up where an item goes with the handy Ottawa Waste Explorer website!

● Invest in a Reusable Coffee/Tea Travel Mug and Water Bottle:
  o There are many areas to acquire coffee and water at RGN, but reusable mugs and water bottles are always encouraged (and preferred!) over paper and plastic. We highly recommend Zojirushi (super insulated)!
  o If you are planning events at the Faculty, encourage the use of **compostable items** (cutlery, plates, etc.)!

For more information on **eco-friendly items to purchase** in anticipation of starting medical school, please review our wish list and recommendations:  [https://www.amazon.ca/hz/wishlist/ls/JH5YO79FQA63?ref_=wl_share](https://www.amazon.ca/hz/wishlist/ls/JH5YO79FQA63?ref_=wl_share)

### POPULAR THINGS TO DO IN OTTAWA

**Tip:** As a uOttawa student, you are entitled to a U-Pass, paid for as part of your tuition fees. This allows you to utilize the Ottawa and Gatineau bus and O-Train system fully during the academic year. Don’t let it go to waste; explore your city!

In downtown Ottawa, you will find the **Rideau Canal** locks (the only UNESCO World Heritage site in Ontario), the historic **Byward Market, Parliament Hill**, as well as seven national **museums**. Be sure to visit the Canadian Science and Technology Museum, which has recently reopened following a $80 million makeover! The National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Nature, Canadian Museum of History and Canadian War Museum offer **free admission on Thursday nights** from 17:00 to 20:00, while the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, Canada Aviation and Space Museum, Canada Science and Technology Museum offer **free admission daily** between 16:00 and 17:00. In the evening, the **Northern Lights** sound and lights show is held on Parliament Hill between July and September.

If you are looking to get out of town, **Gatineau Park** is about 15 minutes north of downtown and is a very popular location. It offers more than 165 kilometers of trails, and the vast majority are open year-round. In the winter, you can rent snowshoes at the low-cost reception center. The park also has beautiful cross-country ski runs. In the Gatineau Park area, you will find the **Mackenzie King Estate**, the beautiful historic village of **Old Chelsea** (visit La Cigale for an ice cream cone) and the famous spa **Le Nordik** (the largest spa in North America)!
In winter, the Rideau Canal turns into the largest ice rink in the world! Rent skates (usually at Dow’s Lake, near the National Arts Center or Fifth Avenue) or bring your own and skate through the 7.8 km rink, stopping for a beaver tail. It is generally open from January to March, according to Mother Nature’s mood. In February, other activities are organized around the canal as part of Winterlude. In the summer, rent a pedal boat, a kayak or even a paddle board at Dow’s Lake and paddle your way to the Rideau Canal.

For winter sports enthusiasts, Camp Fortune is 15 minutes from Ottawa. On Tuesday and Saturday evenings, you can get two lift tickets for the price of one between 16:00 and 22:00! There are other tracks with slightly higher peaks a little further away (Mont Cascades, Vorlage, Edelweiss) and the Laurentians (north of Montreal) are a little less than two hours from Ottawa. Snow usually begins to disappear by mid-March and leaves fully in the spring! As of mid-May, you can enjoy Sunday Bike Days where 50 km of some of Ottawa’s most picturesque roads are closed to traffic between 9:00 and 13:00 for cyclists and joggers. You can enjoy it until Labor Day in September. For the rest of the year, Ottawa remains very open to bicycles. You’ll find a ton of beautiful bike paths, totaling over 800 km! Be sure to wear a helmet and buy a bicycle bell!

For those who enjoy picnics, a great spot is Major’s Hill Park, which is directly behind the Château Laurier. It has excellent views of Parliament. Another great location is Dick Bell Park, which has a great view to watch the sunset. You can also go directly to the lawn of Parliament, where you can even play a game of soccer. For a quieter location, the Mer Bleue Bog will quickly make you forget that you are just minutes away from downtown of the 4th largest city in the country.

For movie buffs, the Cineplex at Lansdowne Park is the closest to RGN. The ByTowne on Rideau Street and the Mayfair on Bank near Lansdowne feature classics and independent films.

For the sports fans, go see a football game with the Ottawa Redblacks (winners of the Grey Cup in 2016) or a hockey game with the Ottawa Senators!
A Big Thank You!

This is the eighth edition of the Aesculapian Society’s Survival Guide. It comes back year after year due to popular demand! Each year the Survival Guide is updated to reflect the newest changes within the Faculty of Medicine, uOttawa and the city of Ottawa. We hope it helps you navigate your first year of medical school and please feel free to reach out to upper-years, MedBuddies or the Aesculapian Society to learn more about the information presented in this guide!

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We hope that you will have a wonderful first year!

Sincerely,

Justin Lalonde and Moiz Hassan
MD2025 Co-Presidents