***Remember that each school has various guidelines; this document does not address all variations.**

Medical schools are competitive. Ensure that you understand the guidelines for each program and application. Some schools require MCAT scores, while others don't. Go beyond the application pages by looking at these resources.

- The **AFMC Annual Report** provides application details and statistics on every medical program in Canada. Download online: https://afmc.ca/pdf/2011AdBk.pdf
- For University of Calgary applicants, the best resource is **U of C Medical Admissions Blog:** http://mdadmissions.ucalgaryblogs.ca/
- **University of Calgary's Applicant Manual** is also useful in answering all application questions: http://www.ucalgary.ca/mdprogram/files/mdprogram/Applicant%20Manual%20final%20Aug%202.pdf

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Myth: I need to have a science degree to get into Medical School

A science undergraduate degree may meet the course requirements of some medical schools, but the degree itself is not required. In fact, several schools in Canada don't have any course requirements; a student with no science background can apply.

Myth: I need to write the MCAT to get into Medical S

on your passions. If your passions fit the typical pattern that's great, but don't feel like this has to be you.

In your personal statement, you'll be making a coherent argument about how your past experiences reflect your passion. Yes, have volunteer and extra-curricular experiences, but focus on quality and length of commitments over number. You want to show that you are engaged in activities that reflect your interests, while demonstrating an effective use of time and resources. If these activities are tied to helping others, that's all the better.

Myth: The criteria for getting into Medical School is the same as twenty years ago

If you talk to current faculty on admission committees, you'll often hear them say that they would not get into medical school now. More students have undergraduate degrees and a wider range of students are applying. The Canadian Medical Association has developed a framework which reflects the abilities and attributes of physicians (http://rcpsc.medical.org/canmeds/CanMeds-summary_e.pdf)

Read these guidelines: They will give you a sense of both what programs are looking for, and what you will be doing for the rest of your career. Key attributes listed include medical expert (central role), communicator, collaborator, manager, health advocate, scholar, and professional. Make sure to read this for yourself.

Myth: I must have a 4.0 to get into Medical School

GPA is considered in most medical school applications, but its weight varies from program to program. In fact, the minimum GPA requirements change for in province and out of province applicants. You need to be above the minimum requirements. With hundreds of applicants for a few spots, below the required GPA often means the rest of the application is not considered. Of course, the higher the GPA, the better the chances, but a high GPA certainly isn't a guarantee.

Myth: Reference letters are easy to get

A general reference letter that broadly describes the candidate is easy to get, but like most things most easily attainable, they are of little use. Letters are central to a strong application as they offer an outsider's perspective of the candidate.

1. **Select a willing referee:** It there is any pause or hesitation, don't press for a letter. Referees don't want to write bad letters. Always give an easy way for the referee to say no: I know you're busy….
2. **Prepare your referee:** Send your referee as much information about what is expected in the letter by the program. Send them a quick summary of the CANMEDS framework. Send them a copy of your personal statement. Refresh their memory about assignments, or events. A prepared referee can refer to a particular example. These letters mean more than "the student was in 3 of my classes and did well."
3. **Positions and titles add to an already strong letter:** The reference letter will be judge based on the perceived authority of the author. A professor's reference is stronger than a T.A.'s. Similarly don't get references from your peers.