Med School 101

Kira, she/her

Career Advisor

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Introductions



Kira Bruschke (she/her)

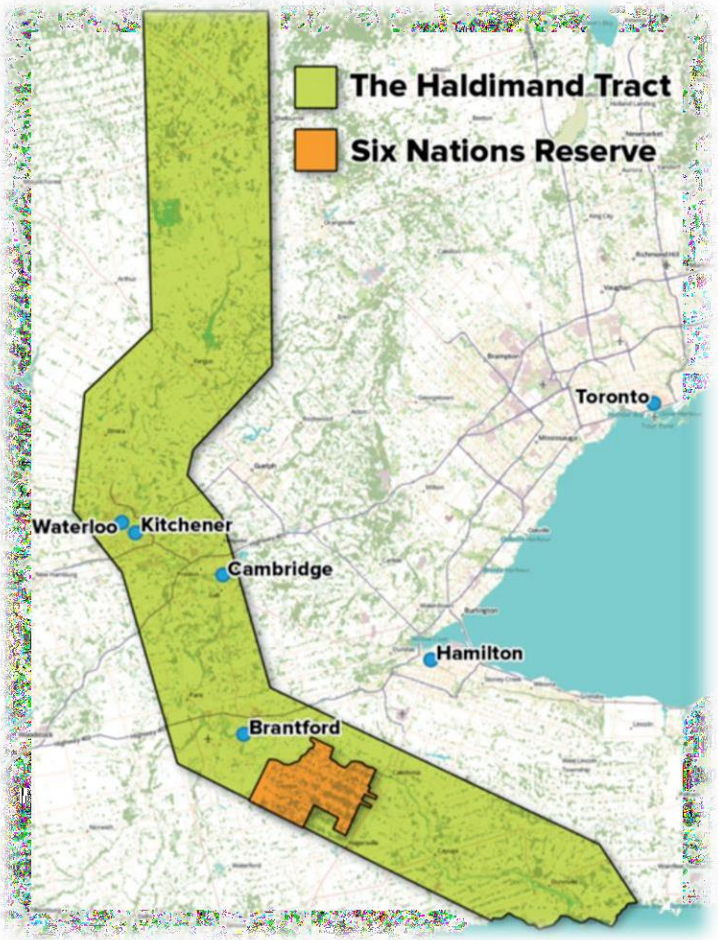
- Career Advisor at CCD

- kbruschke@uwaterloo.ca

- Who is here today?
- What stage at are you in your journey?

WHOSE LAND ARE WE ON?

We respectfully acknowledge that we work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River: land promised and never returned to the Six Nations.



Reports: TRC Calls to Action, National Inquiry into MMIWG

Reading:21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act, This Place: 150 Years Retold &

Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous health

Learning opportunity:
INDG 201 The Indigenous Experience in Canada

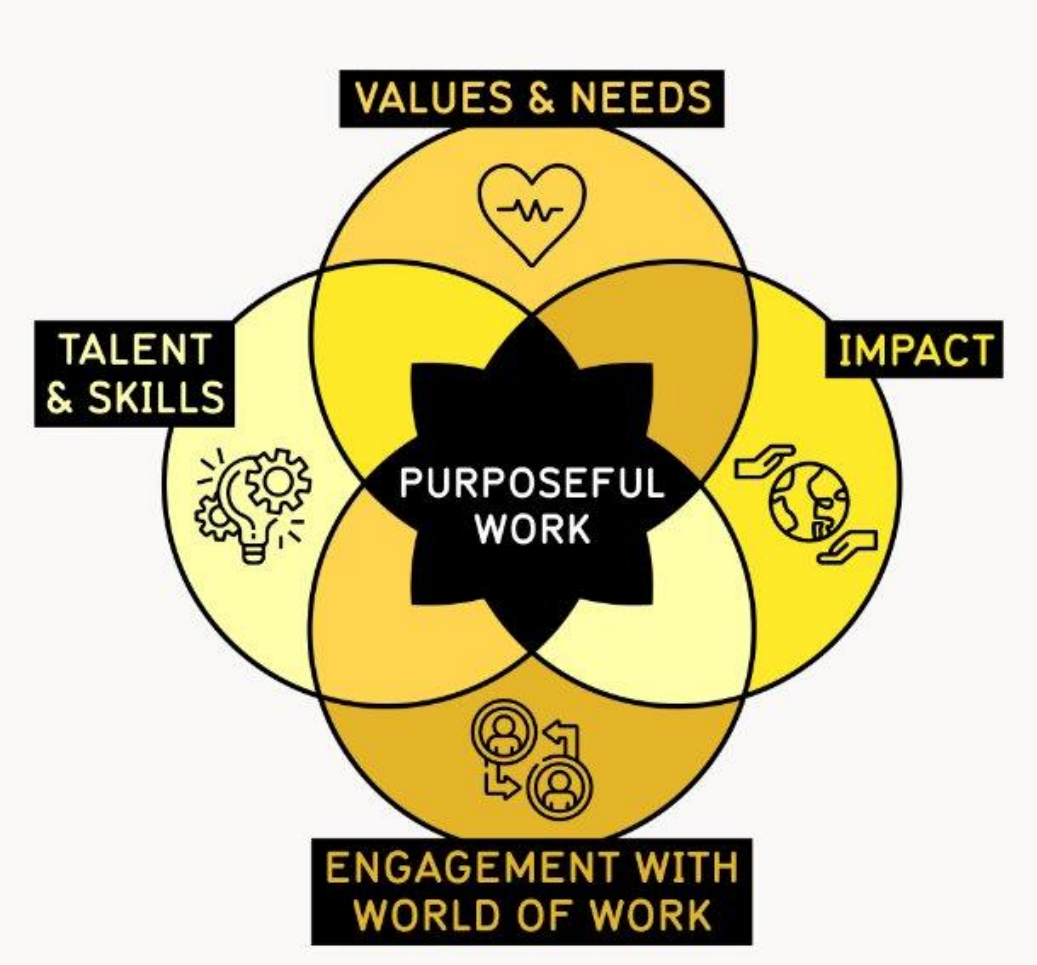


WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

Agenda

- Focus on OMSAS—Ontario med schools
- Preparing for med school/requirements
  - Pre-requisite courses, GPA, Experience, CASPER, MCAT, references
- Application process
  - Timelines/Dates
  - Different application streams
  - Documents (ABS, Essays)
- Strategies and tips
- CCD supports
- Resources

Is a career in medicine a fit for me?



WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY TO MED SCHOOL?

Think like a med school admissions team:

- What makes a good physician?
- Assessed via:
  - GPA, pre-requisite courses, MCAT
  - Experiences
  - CASPER, Interview
  - References

Image credit: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada



Coursework and GPA

- Minimum 3.0 to 3.6 on 4.0 scale
- 3.0 = 73 – 76% at UW
- A variety of courses in sciences, math, and or social sciences could be required (e.g. Ottawa and UofT)
- Most UW courses are worth 0.5 FCE (lab courses 0.25 FCE)
- You can apply to some Ontario med schools from your 3rd year of undergrad



Tip: Involve your academic advisor if needed! And do what you can to keep your grades strong!

GPA CONVERSION CHART

Conversion Table

Type	Numeric		Percentage				
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
OUAC value							
4.00	9	8	90–100	93–100	94–100	94–100	A+
3.90			85–89	84–92	87–93	85–93	A
3.80							
3.70	8	7	80–84	75–83	80–86	80–84	A-
3.30	7	6	77–79	72–74	75–79	75–79	B+
3.00			73–76	69–71	70–74	70–74	B

Column 3 and 7 correspond to UW grades

Experience

- Research
- Work & volunteer (including some clinical experience if possible)
- Extra-curricular and hobbies
- Leadership

Tip: Consider activities you will enjoy and track your hours and verifiers.



References (Confidential Assessment Forms)

- Academic, non-academic, and one referee of your choice
- Choose someone who can comment on:
  - Your potential as a physician
  - Communication, problem-solving, professionalism, empathy
  - Areas for improvement



Tip: Build relationships early on and over time. Give over a month's notice for deadlines.

MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)

Multiple-choice, no calculator.

Required by McMaster,Queen's, UofT, Western.

SECTIONS:

- Chemical and Physical Foundations of biological systems **(CPBS)**
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills **(CARS)** ** Most important for Canadian med schools
- Biological and Biochemical Foundations of living systems **(BBLS)**
- Psychological, Social and Biological Foundations of Behaviour **(PSBB)**
- 90 to 95 minutes per section, plus breaks

- Register on Association of American Medical Colleges site (with name matching your govt ID)
- Fee assistance program info
- Accommodations available
- Study options:
  - Online prep courses, books, practice exams, question banks, undergrad courses with relevant content

Tip: Research your study and prep options carefully as some are costly. Choose what works well with your typical study habits.

CASPER (Computer Based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics)

- Required by McMaster, Queen's, Ottawa
- 65-85 minute online situational judgment test
- Run by Acuity Insights (usually available July to October)
- Assesses: empathy, communication, teamwork and ethical reasoning
- 4 Video scenarios (2 questions each, 1 min to respond to each)
- 7 typed scenarios (2 questions each, 3.5 min to respond to both)
- Results given in quartiles (e.g. fourth quartile is top 75 to 100 percentile)

Tip: download the CASPER guide for detailed info and try the practice test online!



APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINES

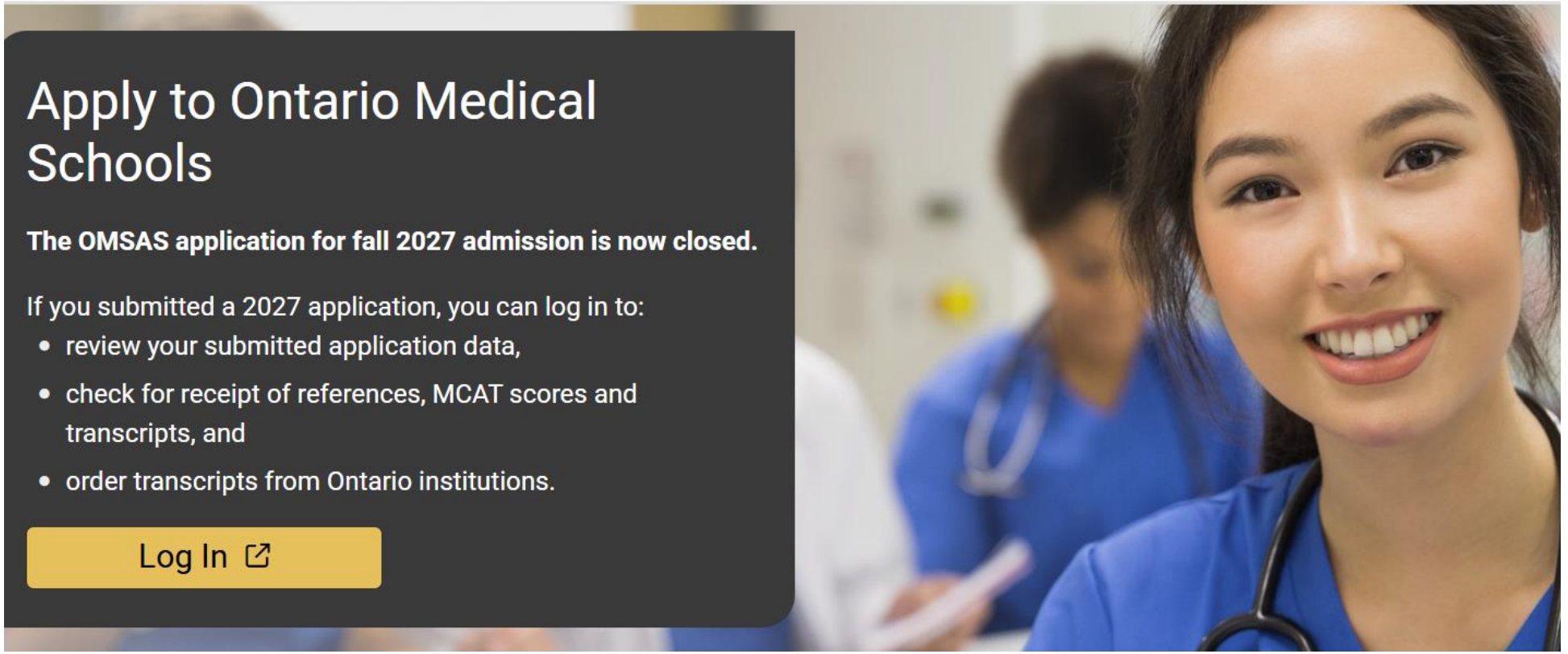
Ontario

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OMSAS ONLINE PLATFORM

OUAC Ontario Universities' Application Centre

Planning for University | Undergrad Applicants



OMSAS Important dates and timelines

July	• OMSAS opens
Late August	• AFMC Fee Waiver
Mid-September	• Request to pay by cheque • Submit references
Early October	• Final deadline
November	• Asynchronous assessments/interviews on Kira Talent platform
January-March	• Interviews
May	• Earliest admission offers

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Documents required

- Transcripts
- References (Confidential assessment form)
- MCAT scores released to OMSAS by AAMC
- Written components:
  - ABS (autobiographical sketch with up to 32 entries)
  - Essays, short answer questions/supplementary questions

*Possibly more if applying through specific admission stream or initiative

Admission streams/Initiatives by school

McMaster

- Black equity stream
- Facilitated Indigenous Admissions Program

NOSM

- Black admission stream
- Indigenous admission stream

Ottawa

- Black Student App Program
- Family Medicine Focus
- Indigenous Program
- Social Accountability Initiative
- Regional Initiative

Admission streams/Initiatives by school cont'd

Queen's

- Black Student Pathway
- Indigenous Student Pathway
- Socioeconomic Accountability Admissions Pathway
- Family Medicine Program

Toronto

- Black Student Application Program
- Indigenous Student Application Program

TMU

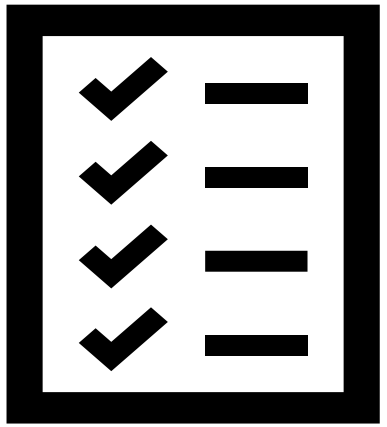
- Black Admissions Pathway
- Indigenous Admissions Pathway
- Equity-Deserving Admissions Pathway

Western

- Access Pathway
- Black Applicant Pathway
- Indigenous Applicant Pathway
- Southwestern Ontario Pathway

Common requirements for admission streams

- Self-declaration
- Documentation to verify self-declaration
- Letters of support from community
- Documentation from a licensed regulated professional
- Additional Essay(s)
- Dedicated admissions committee
- Interview panel who shares that identity



Tips for written components

- Start with research to understand your audience
- Show your motivation, fit and values
- Make (subtle) connections to CanMEDs and or program's values and mission
- Use writing strategies that work for you in other settings (brainstorm, free write
- Get support from CCD and WCC, share with family, trusted friends etc.



ABS=Autobiographical Sketch

Employment

Volunteer activities

Extracurricular activities

Awards and honours

Research

Other

ABS writing tips

- Track dates, verifiers, hours
- Use lay language
- Share a range of skills, responsibilities, personal growth, lessons learned\connections to CanMEDS
- Quantify impact where applicable
- Strategically leverage space with concision, abbreviation, acronyms and symbols
- Share ABS entry with corresponding verifier



Strategically leveraging space in the ABS

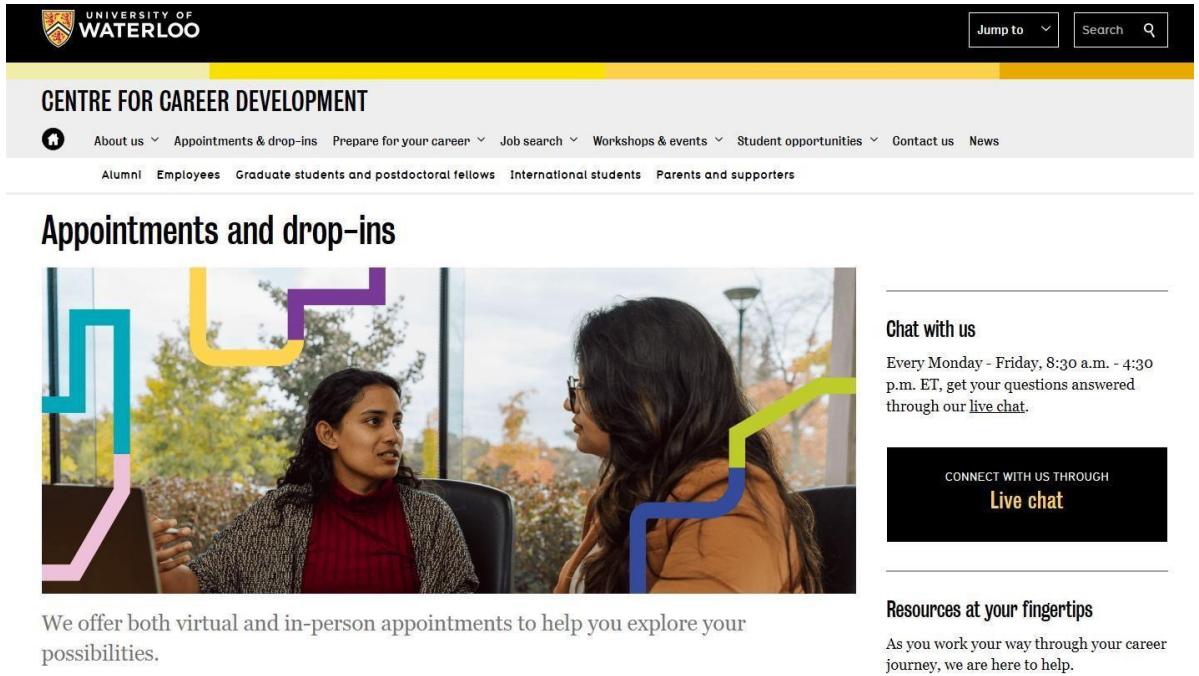
Employment/Volunteer/Extracurricular categories

- Date (Month/Year):
- **Description:** *50 characters*
- Location:
- Verifier #:
- Level of Education:
- Hours:
- **Summer/academic yr, before/after graduation:** *100 characters*
- **Responsibilities/Type of Activity/Level of performance:** *150 characters*



Additional Support at the CCD

- 30-60 minute appointments with career advisors
- Support with further education exploration, decision-making, application documents and interviews
- Ongoing workshops
- All booked on WaterlooWorks
- https://uwaterloo.ca/career-development/appointments-drop-ins



WHAT OTHER QUESTIONS ARE COMING UP?



Resources

- OMSAS application portal
- Casper guide
- MCAT info
- Exploring other careers in healthcare
- UW Pre-medical society