Welcome

Congratulations on your offer of admission!

This brochure has been assembled for you, the incoming class of 2023, by two first year medical students. We have included information that was of interest to us when we were in your position. It is our hope that this brochure will be helpful in easing your transition into the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine program.

We have included information about:

**PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING** > You will have ample opportunities to learn in diverse settings. Students find this methodology promotes understanding and reinforces concept retention.

**A WEEK IN THE LIFE** > This depicts a typical work week. It also illustrates how students maintain a balance in their lives; having time for academic, sporting, social and family events.

**ASSESSMENTS** > With five main tools, McMaster assessments facilitate the tracking of progress and the preparation for the final licensing examination.

**SETTING YOU UP FOR THE FUTURE** > The medical program accelerates students into clinical settings, while providing the knowledge and tools to succeed. The results speak for themselves, with McMaster students exceeding the national average for residency match rates.

**CURRENT MEDICAL STUDENTS** > A profile of first, second and third-year students. They lend advice and provide tips on how to succeed and optimize your first-year experience.

**HAMILTON CAMPUS**
**NIAGARA REGIONAL CAMPUS**
**WATERLOO REGIONAL CAMPUS**

We look forward to seeing you in August.

*Sincerely,*
Mary Boulos and Jhanahan Sriranjan and the Class of 2022
Q: Do I need a car?
A: Students are expected to travel outside their home campus area for mandatory teaching sessions, clinical placements, and clerkship rotations. Many first year students have cars to facilitate their transportation to these locations, but it is also possible to use public transit to get around. By clerkship, most students have a car.

Q: What textbooks should I buy?
A: Before coming in the middle of August, there are no required readings to be completed or textbooks to be purchased. Students wait until classes have begun and they have had the opportunity to take books out from the library before making any purchases. Upper year students assist in this process, both by offering advice on books they found useful and by selling their used copies. However, with an accessible library system and a vast array of online resources, most students do not purchase a large number of textbooks, and many students do not buy textbooks at all.

Q: What equipment do I need?
A: You do not need to make any purchases before you arrive. There will be an equipment sale during orientation which provides you with the opportunity to purchase a specific stethoscope (which is absolutely needed) and other equipment (blood pressure cuffs, reflex hammers, etc.) which is optional.

Q: Do I need a laptop?
A: The MD Program delivers lectures, course materials and assessments online, and communicates with students and faculty between the three campuses through the use of email as well as various software programs. Thus, it is a requirement that each student owns a PC or Apple laptop in good working order which meets the minimum requirements for running assessment software. Tablets are not necessary, but some students do find them useful (especially during clerkship) for accessing clinical resources and academic resources.
STUDENTS LEARN IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS

Introduced in August 2005, the COMPASS curriculum teaches medical concepts in different contexts. By learning in a variety of settings, students can obtain a superior grasp and understanding of material. The class is exposed to a cross-section of medicine through sessions given by doctors, discussions with peers in tutorials, interactions with patients and explorations in the anatomy lab.

McMaster divides its pre-clerkship curriculum into five Foundations, spanning a year and four months. Each Foundation covers several different systems in the body.

- **MF1**: Introduction to Medicine, Respirology, Cardiology
- **MF2**: Renal function, balance of acid and base, blood pressure, Hematology, introduction to Oncology
- **MF3**: Gastroenterology, Nutrition, Endocrinology, Reproduction
- **MF4**: Musculoskeletal Medicine, Neurology and Psychiatry
- **Integration Foundation**: Repetition and practice of key concepts previously introduced, introduction to more complex, multi-system illness and chronic illness, transition to Clerkship

For more information on the McMaster curriculum, visit [McMaster MD Program Curriculum](#).
Curriculum

TUTORIALS
• Participation: 6-8 students + 1 tutor or 2 co-tutors (M.D. or Ph.D.)
• Frequency: Two sessions per week (3 hours each) (typically Monday & Thursday or Tuesday & Friday)
• Structure of Tutorial:
  • Monday/Tuesday Tutorial
    – A case is a written patient scenario pertaining to a certain disease, presenting the situation as it would be seen by a practicing physician.
    – The group reads the case and creates learning objectives for the next tutorial. For example, if the case is on osteoporosis, objectives may include:
      1) The process of bone formation and resorption;
      2) The mechanisms of calcium homeostasis;
      3) The causes and pathophysiology of osteoporosis;
      4) Diagnosis, prevention and treatment of low bone density;
      5) The signs and symptoms of hyper- and hypocalcemia
  • Between tutorials
    – Research is conducted to answer objectives, using both textbooks and case-specific online resources that have been provided by the Medical Foundation planners.
  • Thursday/Friday Tutorial
    – Objectives are taken up via group discussion of concepts and questions.
    – The tutor may clarify unanswered questions, ask questions of the group, or provide a clinical perspective.
    – Objectives are created for the next case (ex: thyroid disease), which will be taken up in Monday/Tuesday’s tutorial.

ACTIVE LEARNING

LARGE GROUP SESSIONS (AL-LGS)
• Participation: Entire class, mandatory to attend
• Frequency: several times during a Foundation, usually on a Monday or Friday morning
• Purpose: To supplement tutorial learning, with information that is relevant to tutorial cases presented by experts in the field.

ANATOMY
• Participation: Attended in tutorial groups
• Frequency: Weekly in most Medical Foundations
• Structure: (three separate sessions):
  • Anatomy Lab (1.5 hours)
    – Preceptors assist students in working with prosected specimens.
    – Students participate in a shared cadaveric dissection (regional campuses).
  • OSPES
    – usually one/medical foundation.
  • Extra sessions
    – Additional time for clinical skills practice and anatomy can be scheduled.

CLINICAL SKILLS
• Participation: Attended in tutorial groups
• Frequency: Every week (3 hours)
• Purpose:
  – Students work with preceptors (physicians and residents) in clinics, hospitals or with standardized patients.
  – Students learn history taking and physical examination skills that are relevant to the current Medical Foundation, and are provided with the opportunity to practice skills on the wards with real patients (under supervision by preceptor).

• Structure:
  • Clinical skills (1.5 hours)
    – A doctor explains and demonstrates examination techniques for the system currently being studied (eg: a thyroid exam), after which students have the opportunity to practice skills on a standardized patient or patients on the ward
  • Clinical Skills Practice Sessions (Hamilton)
    – three times/Medical Foundation

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES
• Participation: 8-11 students + 2 facilitators (one M.D., one member of another allied health profession)
• Frequency: Every Tuesday morning consisting of large group session and/or tutorials (3 hours)
• Purpose:
  – Develop knowledge in the areas of evidence-based medicine, medical decision-making, professionalism, health equity and determinants of health, interprofessional practice, health policy and medical ethics.
  – Refine communication skills through interviews with standardized patients.
  – Examine the social, cultural and humanistic dimensions of health care.

“Together, advancing health through learning and discovery”
A week in the life

Do students still find time for a social life? YES! Although demanding, the beauty of this program is the amount of flexibility it allows for its students.

The following is an example of a McMaster student’s schedule. Times for tutorial and clinical skills schedules vary according to the preceptor’s availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>1:00 - 4:00 p.m</td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>9 a.m. - noon</td>
<td>Professional competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:30 - 4:30 p.m</td>
<td>Clinical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9:00 - 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Standardized clinical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:30 - 4:00 p.m</td>
<td>Anatomy lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>1:00 - 4:00 p.m</td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9:00 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Active Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Large group session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: How many hours does it take to prepare for tutorials?
A: Between tutorials, students typically spend a total of 4 to 8 hours performing the necessary research in order to complete their objectives. Time spent depends on the student’s current knowledge.

Q: What are some other academic activities that students participate in between tutorials?
A: Although optional, many students participate in horizontal electives (explained in “Setting you up for the Future”). In the example above, a horizontal elective could be completed Thursday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon with a cardiologist at a local hospital. There are also lecture series that often take place in the evening. In the schedule above, a student could attend an Emergency Medicine lecture series Tuesday evenings from 6-8 p.m.

Q: Are there clubs or organizations that students can be involved in?
A: There are countless opportunities for students to get involved at McMaster. From helping with the admissions process or orientation activities, to being class representative or a member of student council, students find it easy to be actively involved. There are also many groups organized by students interested in specific specialties. For example, students can become involved in the rural medicine, surgery, or pediatric interest groups, to name a few. As well, the university has many student-run clubs and intramural sports teams that welcome new members.

Q: Do students still find time for a social life?
A: Yes! Although demanding, the beauty of this program is the amount of flexibility it allows for its students. Students can maintain what is important to them while at medical school. There still exists time for the gym, to spend with your family, or to relax with friends throughout the week. Various student committees also plan events throughout the year, such as: formal, the Mac Med Musical, Karaoke nights, comedy club and pub nights.
Assessment

Assessments at McMaster are designed to provide students with constant feedback. This enables them to gauge their progress and the effectiveness of their learning methods. Assessments are also geared to prepare students for the clinical situations they will encounter in clerkship as well as for their LMCC (licensing examination).

TUTOR FEEDBACK
- **Frequency:** Informal feedback after every tutorial; formal feedback halfway through a Medical Foundation and at the end of each Medical Foundation
- **Format:** Given verbally and in writing
- **Purpose:**
  - Allows student to gauge how they are contributing to group process.
  - Gives students the opportunity to refine how they are learning and improve over the course of the Medical Foundation.
  - The final written summary from the tutor comprising self, peer and tutor input is the sole contribution to the students’ final transcript.

CONCEPT APPLICATION EXERCISES (CAE)
- **Frequency:** Every few weeks throughout each MF
- **Format:** Short answer questions, in which students apply their knowledge to clinical scenarios
- **Purpose:** To provide students with the opportunity to synthesize concepts from the Medical Foundation and identify areas that may require additional study.

PERSONAL PROGRESS INDEX (PPI)
- **Frequency:** Three times a year, over all three years
- **Format:** 180 multiple choice questions

OBJECTIVE STRUCTURED CLINICAL EXAMINATION (OSCE)
- **Frequency:** Once a year, over all three years
- **Format:** 10 stations where students read a scenario and complete necessary history and physical examination
- **Purpose:** To evaluate the students’ clinical skills and to prepare the students for the clinical skills portion of the licensing examination completed after a year of residency.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE EXERCISE
- **Frequency:** Approximately once per week, immediately after the Active Learning Large Group Session
- **Format:** Five multiple choice questions, in which students answer questions about the large group session and pre-readings
- **Purpose:** To provide opportunities for enhanced learning and to practice using the information that you learned during the session.

Setting you up for the future

HORIZONTAL ELECTIVES
These are optional placements, set up by students throughout their time at McMaster. Students may contact doctors in areas of interest, and work with them for the desired amount of time. For example, a student may set up an elective with an obstetrician for 3 hours every Thursday morning, for the months of November and December. Students work alongside physicians taking histories, performing physical exams, discussing possible diagnoses or assisting in operating rooms. The possibilities are endless, depending on individual students’ comfort levels and supervisor preferences.

BLOCK ELECTIVES
These are mandatory electives, completed for seven weeks during July and August of first year, and seventeen weeks throughout clerkship. This is one of the highest numbers of elective weeks of all Canadian schools. Block electives can be carried out anywhere in Canada or internationally that a student is able to arrange for a preceptor. A focus is often placed on completing electives in the specialty in which the student wishes to apply for residency. However, electives can also enable students to carry out additional learning in an area of weakness, or to explore an area of interest.

MATCH RATES*
In 2020, 98% of McMaster students matched in the residency match. McMaster students generally fare very well in the Residency Match. In 2019, 56% of McMaster graduates matched to their top choice (discipline and location). The National average was 52%; and 85% of McMaster graduates matched to one of their top three choices (discipline and location). The National Average was 79%. In 2019 93% of McMaster graduates matched to their first choice discipline (i.e. Peds, Obs, Surgery, Family, etc.). The National average was 87%; and 99% of McMaster graduates matched to one of their top three choices discipline (National average 98%). McMaster students are given many opportunities to get involved and show the initiative that residency programs desire. Through horizontal electives, lecture series and interest groups, and with much upper year support, students are working towards their desired specialty very early on. Furthermore, a learning environment geared towards hospital situations prepares students well for clerkship and residency programs.

*At the time of printing, only preliminary results for the 2020 match were available.
**HAMILTON, THE CITY**

- **Staying Active – Cootes Paradise, Pier 4 & Bayfront Parks**
  The attractive university campus in west Hamilton backs onto a wildlife sanctuary and coastal marsh, Cootes Paradise. Surrounded by the Niagara Escarpment, Cootes Paradise is a picturesque area in which to walk, run, rollerblade or bike. If you live closer to downtown, Pier 4 and Bayfront parks are similar waterfront areas.

- **Night Life – Hess Village**
  This unique feature of Hamilton is a cobblestone street completely lined with restaurants, pubs and bars. Although a huge attraction throughout the year, in summer these establishments open their patios, filling the streets with sights and sounds until the early hours of the morning.

- **Eating at home – The Hamilton Farmer’s Market**
  Open year-round, the market is frequented by many students. The market is a large indoor complex where vendors sell various foodstuffs, ranging from fresh produce to cooked meals. Students find the prices both affordable, and often negotiable. Hamilton also has many ethnic food stores scattered throughout the city.

- **Cultural Activities**
  The Hamilton Philharmonic and Opera Hamilton both have busy seasons featuring internationally known artists. Theatre Aquarius puts on a wide range of successful plays. The University also has a number of music groups and artists-in-residence who perform regularly on campus. The Art Gallery of Hamilton, located near Hamilton Place, is the third largest gallery in Ontario and has a prestigious collection of works by national and international artists. The McMaster Art Gallery, located in the Mills Library, is one of the most extensive university art collections in Canada. Nearby Brantford is the location of the Six Nations Reserve, where one can visit several museums and displays of native art and culture.

- **Sports Activities**
  Hamilton is the home of the Hamilton Tiger Cats football club. First Ontario Centre is a modern sporting and entertainment complex which hosts hockey games, popular concerts, and sports competitions.

**HAMILTON, THE CAMPUS**

The first three months of training (Medical Foundation One) will take place for all students at the Hamilton campus, providing students with the opportunity to get to know their entire class. The curriculum is identical at all three campuses and McMaster takes full advantage of videoconferencing technology to ensure parallel experiences at each campus.

McMaster’s Hamilton campus, which is restricted to pedestrian traffic, is adjacent to the Royal Botanical Gardens at the western end of Lake Ontario. The campus is minutes from downtown Hamilton and the activities that a major city has to offer.

Clinical placements are conducted in local hospitals and outpatient clinics as well as community physician’s offices in the surrounding areas including Guelph, Oakville, Burlington, Brantford, Dundas, Ancaster, Stoney Creek, Newmarket and Mississauga.
Kika Otiono
1st Year
Undergrad: BHum Combined Honours Humanities & Biology
Hometown: Ottawa, ON
Interests Outside of Mac: Laughing loudly with friends, listening to music, spin classes/spinning, reading, writing, baking, and knitting.

Q: What do you like best about being in Hamilton?
A: As a huge arts/culture nerd, being just a one-hour bus from Toronto is a plus! For Hamilton itself, there is so much to explore and I especially love the nature hikes/trails (as well as some great bookstores!)

Q: Describe your adjustment from your previous education/experience to MacMed.
A: The vast majority of my classes, extracurriculars, and research projects in undergrad were in philosophy, religion, art & music history, and classical studies. So it has been quite the transition! Finding resources and being adequately prepared for tutorials - without a traditional/didactic curriculum - has been tough, but so worth it. I’ve loved (almost) every minute.

Q: What clinical experiences have you had so far?
A: I completed my Family Medicine Experience early on, which allowed me to really appreciate the field! From there, I completed horizontal electives in peds (endocrinology and nephrology), surgery (plastics, general, vascular, cardiac, urology), pathology, and anesthesiology.

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students?
A: HAVE FUN IN PRECLERKSHIP! Do not burrow only in your schoolwork - you will burn out. Go out with your friends, go for a run on a trail, visit a new restaurant, and just laugh. Medical school CAN and SHOULD be fun!

Charlotte McEwen
2nd Year
Undergrad: BScN
Hometown: Thunder Bay, ON
Interests at Mac: Rural Medicine, Surgery Interest Group, MMSC, Mac Med Student Research Day.
Interests outside of Mac: Camping, Canoeing, Reading.

Q: How did you find the transition into clerkship?
A: Clerkship is incredible! Don’t get me wrong - I love learning in a classroom, but being in the hospital and working one-on-one with doctors and patients - it’s such an exciting, concrete way to learn. We have a lot of support, and my best advice is: when you don’t know something - ask!

Q: What did you do during your first summer elective block?
A: Summer electives were incredible! I saw my first cardiac surgeries, worked for some time in a beautiful rural emergency room, and did the Wilderness Medicine course where I learned to assess and manage patients in isolated & extreme environments with limited equipment.

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students?
A: Try new things - explore specialties by shadowing, go to interest group events, and join research projects! My best day of pre-clerkship wasn’t in the classroom - it was in the helicopter with Ornge paramedics! This is your chance to explore medicine - have fun with it!

Garina Lalla
3rd Year
Undergrad: B. Ed in Second Science Education, McGill
Hometown: Montreal, QC
Interests at Mac: Mac Med Français interest group, founder of Stories of Medicine and peer mentorship.
Interests outside of Mac: Music (voice, piano, ukulele), French voiceover artist for commercials, long-distance walking around beautiful Hamilton.

Q: Looking back, what are you glad you did at Mac?
A: I am so thankful that I became socially involved early on. Getting to know my wonderful classmates and building strong support networks through my new friends was instrumental in helping me adjust to my new city and life.

Q: If you could change something about your experience here, what would you do differently?
A: When I first start at Mac, I was initially overwhelmed/hesitant about all of the extracurricular activities. I wish I had thought about what interested me earlier, and that I had not been afraid to sign up for relevant opportunities, or to make my own (thankfully, I eventually found my way!)

Q: What are your future plans?
A: I have matched to family medicine at McGill University where I will be working in the Gatineau region, a Francophone program!

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students?
A: Don’t be afraid to be yourself - you have made it here for a reason and you should be proud. Everybody at Mac Med is eager to get to know you and work with you! You will make lifelong friends and have so many opportunities to let your interests flourish.
NIAGARA, THE REGION

• **Niagara Falls** — Drench your senses with the breathtaking majesty of Niagara Falls.
• **St. Catharines** — Known as the Garden City, this region boasts beautiful waterfalls, wineries and a vibrant cultural scene.
• **Niagara on the Lake** — Niagara-on-the-Lake’s many attractions include historic sites: Fort George and the Historical Society Museum, the Shaw Festival, and Niagara wineries.
• **Port Colborne** — The City of Port Colborne is home to successful industrial and business sectors, beautiful and scenic residential areas, and a thriving festival and entertainment scene.
• **Welland** is a truly historic canal city situated in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula.
• **Fort Erie** — Located in the Niagara Peninsula’s south western corner where Lake Erie enters the Niagara River, Fort Erie offers the best of both worlds blending small-city living with the convenience of nearby large metropolitan areas, Toronto and Buffalo.
• **Grimsby** is a small rural town with quiet, tree-lined avenues and many parks. The natural Niagara Escarpment winds through the town’s centre, and Grimsby borders on the on the shores of Lake Ontario.
• **Beamsville** is a friendly and inviting town between the shores of Lake Ontario and the cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment, well known for its tender fruit production.
• **Smithville** is a small village in the township of West Lincoln between Hamilton and Niagara Falls. It is largely an agricultural community.
• **West Lincoln** — Scenic back roads with vast farmlands and meandering rivers, canoeing on Twenty Mile Creek or the Welland River, cycling, country fairs and quaint bed & breakfasts.

NIAGARA, THE CAMPUS

The first three months of your training — Medical Foundation One — will take place at the Hamilton Campus providing you with the opportunity to get to know the entire class. You will complete the remainder of your training in the Niagara Region. With state of the art technology and videoconferencing sessions at the three campuses, friendships and alliances will remain intact and interactive teaching experiences will be completely analogous. The curriculum delivered in the Niagara Regional Campus is identical to the curriculum delivered in the Hamilton and Waterloo Regional campuses.

The Niagara Regional Campus is integrated with the hospital system, which includes eight sites throughout the region. This environment encourages interaction with a variety of healthcare professionals who care for patients in the hospital setting.

Academic components and Anatomy take place in the Niagara Regional Campus, located at Brock University in the Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex.

Clinical placements are available in outpatient clinics, private offices in various specialties, our Public Health Unit, and in all Niagara hospitals including the St. Catharines Site, Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre (St. Catharines), Greater Niagara General Site (Niagara Falls), Welland Site, Niagara-on-the-Lake Site, Douglas Memorial site (Fort Erie), Port Colborne Site and West Lincoln Memorial Hospital (Grimsby).
interested in to come up! of doing it - wait for something you're need to do something just for the sake involved in different things, so there's no med school to be a good physician! There A: Remember that ultimately you're in students? Q: What advice do you have for incoming very rewarding and educational as well! the homeless shelter health clinics has been paced environment of the ER. Working in experiences in the OR as well as the fast during my first post-MF4 elective clerkship? A: Just like everything, it is a transition but there is a tremendous amount of support along the way. Often you start with electives in many streams which can be daunting but you'd be surprised how well Mac students do due to the ample clinical exposure you get in pre-clerkship!

Q: What did you do during your first summer elective block? A: During my first post-MF4 elective block I did two weeks of EM in Niagara, two weeks of Internal at Etobicoke, two weeks of Paediatrics in Oakville and one week of Anesthesia. I would definitely recommend Etobicoke Internal!

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students? A: Keep an open mind, explore different specialties and look for those where you don't find yourself consistently checking the clock! Also, work hard but also take time to relax and enjoy medical school (you'll find Mac offers many opportunities for wellness).

Q: What clinical experience have you had so far? A: I’ve tried to see and do a bunch of different things because I’m not quite sure what I want to do yet. I’ve really enjoyed my experiences in the OR as well as the fast paced environment of the ER. Working in the homeless shelter health clinics has been very rewarding and educational as well!

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students? A: Remember that ultimately you’re in med school to be a good physician! There will be lots of cool opportunities to be involved in different things, so there’s no need to do something just for the sake of doing it - wait for something you’re interested in to come up!

Q: Describe your adjustment from your previous education/experience to MacMed. A: My transition from business into medicine was (and continues to be) a steep learning curve. Finding the right resources, learning the fundamentals, and understanding how the healthcare ecosystem functions has been a challenge. Thankfully I’ve made great friends and mentors who have helped me get up to speed with the content.

Q: Looking back, what are you glad that you did at Mac? A: I’m glad I became a part of the NRC community! I took the time to be a part of my class, worked with my peers, and got to know the NRC faculty. These are some of the most amazing people I know, and some of the best relationships I’ve ever formed.

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students? A: Keep a log. Medical school gets busy and as much as you think you won’t, you will forget your experiences when others are piled on top! Create a CV as you go, document patient experiences, journal, make a resource list or all of the above. Definitely things to consider!

Q: What did you do during your first summer elective block? A: During my first post-MF4 elective block I did two weeks of EM in Niagara, two weeks of Internal at Etobicoke, two weeks of Paediatrics in Oakville and one week of Anesthesia. I would definitely recommend Etobicoke Internal!

Q: What advice do you have for incoming students? A: Keep an open mind, explore different specialties and look for those where you don’t find yourself consistently checking the clock! Also, work hard but also take time to relax and enjoy medical school (you’ll find Mac offers many opportunities for wellness).
WATERLOO, THE REGION

• Kitchener-Waterloo
The twin cities of Kitchener-Waterloo, known locally simply as K-W, have large city amenities with a small town flavour. The area is steeped in culture with one of the best farmers’ markets in all of the province and the largest Oktoberfest celebration outside Germany. A culturally diverse community, K-W has world-renowned educational and research institutes, and a booming technology sector.

• Guelph
Also known as The Royal City, Guelph is a vibrant community with rich architectural heritage, a lively downtown, a thriving art scene, good shopping and a dynamic cultural core.

• Cambridge
An amalgamation of Galt, Preston and Hespeler, Cambridge is a unique community with three downtown areas. It’s a growing community where there’s always something going on.

• Surrounding Rural Communities
A number of communities in the surrounding Waterloo-Wellington area provide clinical placements. These communities exemplify small town Ontario and welcome students with small town friendliness. Fergus is a quaint, historic town comfortably nestled on the banks of the Grand River. It’s full of rich heritage, and charming Scottish atmosphere. Nearby Elora is well known for the spectacularly picturesque Elora Gorge on the Grand River. Mount Forest, Palmerston and Wellesley are all in the heart of Mennonite country.

WATERLOO, THE CAMPUS

The first Medical Foundation, which takes three months to complete, takes place in Hamilton. This provides you with the opportunity to get to know your class. The remainder of your program takes place in the Waterloo-Wellington area.

The curriculum is identical to that delivered in Hamilton and takes full advantage of videoconferencing technology to ensure parallel experiences at each of our campuses.

Academic components of the program are centralized at the Waterloo Regional campus. The campus is located in downtown Kitchener within the University of Waterloo Health Sciences Campus. This campus includes the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine Waterloo Regional campus, the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, and a Centre for Family Medicine which will integrate clinical care and teaching in medicine, pharmacy, optometry and social work.

This progressive, innovative campus has been built with the direct intent of providing a milieu of professionals working collaboratively.

Clinical placements may be conducted within physicians offices or within local hospitals (Cambridge Memorial Hospital, Groves Community Memorial Hospital in Fergus, Guelph General Hospital, Homewood Health Centre in Guelph, Grand River Hospital in Kitchener, St. Mary’s General Hospital in Kitchener, Louise Marshall Hospital in Mount Forest, and North Wellington Hospital in Palmerston).

For more on Waterloo attractions visit: Explore Waterloo Region, City of Waterloo
**Andrew MacLean**  
1st year  
Undergrad: Undergrad in leadership, grad degree in policy and economics  

**Hometown:** Lawrencetown, NS  

**Interests at Mac:** A couple of academic committees; research in family medicine, physician remuneration; rural medicine, French, family med IGs.  

**Interests outside of Mac:** Dad of three, running, guitar, reading.  

**Q:** What do you like best about being in Waterloo?  
**A:** Waterloo has quite a few mature/non-traditional students, and it’s a natural community. Our campus is gorgeous and fosters a lot of social time. I also love the ease of getting horizontal electives and the enthusiasm of faculty.  

**Q:** Describe your adjustment from your previous education/experiences to MacMed.  
**A:** Coming off of a decade-long career to enter medicine was tricky, but I was pretty prepared. I’d encourage anyone with questions to let me know and we’ll have a virtual coffee! There are three parents in our class and med students are exceptionally intelligent and talented folks who inspire you!  

**Q:** What clinical experiences have you had so far at MacMed?  
**A:** Lots! Many histories, exams, discharges, and time in the ER (as part of a team that was much more experienced and smarter than I), several paed’s, family medicine and orthopaedic surgery days... the list goes on.  

**Q:** What advice do you have for incoming students?  
**A:** My advice is for the “mature” crowd - you can find your people here. Honestly my single greatest piece of advice would be to pick WRC, but I’m biased - I remember people saying this last year and thinking “everyone would think their campus is best” but I’ve met many students who truly believe WRC is the best fit for them, and would have made it their top choice if only they’d known.

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**Rina Patel**  
2nd year  
Undergrad: BHSc, McMaster  

**University**  

**Hometown:** Waterloo, ON  

**Interests at Mac:** MMSC, various WRC community initiatives, mentorship.  

**Interests outside of Mac:** Exploring local cafes/good eats, yoga, critiquing concept albums & Oscar noms.  

**Q:** How did you find the transition into clerkship?  
**A:** Tough but exciting! Post-MF4 electives were amazing and helped me prepare for clerkship mentally. It’s encouraging to be able to apply what you learned in pre-clerkship to real-life clinical situations. And it’s even better to learn and practice skills you can’t necessarily gain in the pre-clerkship setting.  

**Q:** What did you do during your first summer elective block?  
**A:** So far I’ve done a mix of rural family medicine, complex care pediatrics, anesthesia, developmental pediatrics, neonatology and child-adolescent psychiatry.  

**Q:** What advice do you have for incoming students?  
**A:** Get involved in whatever interests you, and it is okay if this changes over time. Try multiple horizontal electives early so that you can rule out specialties that don’t fit for you. As time goes on, you’ll start to get a sense of the feeling you get when a specialty really speaks to you. Most importantly, have fun along the way! The program flies by and before you know it you’ll be graduating.

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**Erica Sacoransky**  
3rd year  
Undergrad: BKin, University of Toronto  

**Hometown:** Toronto, ON  

**Interests at Mac:** MMSC, intramural volleyball, core rotation representative  

**Interests outside of Mac:** Gymnastics, running, hiking, travelling  

**Q:** Looking back, what are you glad you did at Mac?  
**A:** I’m glad that I got involved both in Hamilton and in Kitchener-Waterloo. I met so many great people and enjoyed having the balance I achieved by engaging in activities outside of classroom and clinical setting.  

**Q:** If you could change something about your experience here, what would you do differently?  
**A:** I would have embraced all that WRC has to offer earlier. I can honestly say that the campus, the administration, and my classmates felt like home/family. Also, the countless opportunities for hands-on learning were invaluable.  

**Q:** What are your future plans?  
**A:** Residency in OB/GYN at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am very interested in urogynecology and may pursue a fellowship in this area.  

**Q:** What advice do you have for incoming students?  
**A:** Get involved in whatever interests you, and it is okay if this changes over time. Try multiple horizontal electives early so that you can rule out specialties that don’t fit for you. As time goes on, you’ll start to get a sense of the feeling you get when a specialty really speaks to you. Most importantly, have fun along the way! The program flies by and before you know it you’ll be graduating.
For more on living in Hamilton:

Hamilton offcampus kijiji

Laura Fallico
Location: Westdale (Main and Dalewood)
Rent: $2,800, 3-bedroom house
Distance to Campus: 1 km
Getting to Campus: 5-min walk
Advantages:
– Only a five minute walk to campus
– Short walk to bus route on Main Street
– Lived with two other roommates in the med program
– Driveway accommodated three cars
– Two of the bedrooms were very spacious
Disadvantages:
– Farther from downtown Hamilton
– House was older and required regular cleaning/maintenance
– One of the bedrooms was smaller

Grace Martin
Location: Downtown (King at John)
Rent: $1,850, 2-bedroom apartment includes heat and 1 parking space, water, hydro, & internet extra
Distance to Campus: 5 km
Getting to Campus: 15-min bus; 10-min car
Advantages:
– My roommate is doing her master’s degree at McMaster which is nice to escape the med school bubble
– Lots to do living downtown
– I did my undergrad at McMaster so I also wanted a change of scenery, since I lived close to campus for 4 years
– Close to most of the hospitals
– Bus stop to campus close by
– I enjoy having one roommate because there is always someone to hang out with but not too loud or messy
– Having parking included is great because renting a spot can be expensive
Disadvantages:
– Need to bus to campus for class (most classes are on campus in first year)
– Need to bus/drive to the grocery store

Amirthan Sothivannan
Location: Downtown (Macnab and Robinson)
Rent: $1,750, 2-bedroom apartment with balcony. Access to gym/lounge/rooftop patio/pool/sauna. Hydro not included; $70/month for underground parking.
Distance to Campus: 4.5 km
Getting to Campus: 10-min walk + 15-min bus
Advantages:
– Buses are always available in the downtown core: McMaster campus and every hospital are one bus route away
– The centre of food, drink, and night scene
– GO station nearby for GTA/GHA commuting
– Significant number of medical students live downtown
Disadvantages:
– Not close to campus: commuting to class for pre-clerkship is a little bit of a trek (25-min by bus or by bike)
– Laundry is pricey and adds up
– There aren’t many grocery stores nearby.
NIAGARA REGIONAL CAMPUS

For more on living in Niagara:
St. Catharines rentals kijiji

Gianluca Calcagno
Location: Village Road (near the Penn Centre mall)
Rent: $2,800, 3-bedroom house, common living room space, kitchen and laundry room, spacious backyard with storage sheds and patio equipment. Parking included. All unlimited wifi, 2 shared bathrooms, laundry equipment access, utilities and house maintenance (cutting grass, shovelling snow, etc.) included.
Distance to Campus: 3 km
Getting to Campus: 6-min car (parking on campus is $600 for the year), 15-min by bus and 2 minute walk to bus stop
Advantages:
– Right next to campus and equally close to the grocery store and mall
– Amenities (gas station, hospital, restaurants, etc.) within 8-min drive
– Parking is included, as well as all of the other amenities. You pay $700 per month with no additional charges and everything included
– House is shared with other med and graduate students
– The property has a strict policy against parties and you can study uninterrupted
Disadvantages:
– Neighbours are new families with young children
– Overnight guests, pets, and smoking are all prohibited
– No garage, but a spacious driveway is provided for parking (but with no overhead coverage for your vehicle)

Kristen Viaje
Location: Thorold (David and Pine)
Rent: $1,300, 3-bedroom semi-detached house with garage and driveway (fits 5 cars). Utilities/hydro/internet extra (~$200-$300)
Distance to campus: 4.2 km
Getting to campus: 7-min car, 23-min bus; 15-min bike

Advantages:
– Lots of space and storage
– Cheaper rent, option to house 2 people and use extra room for common office
– Backyard/patio/garage
– Central location (short drive to Brock, St. Catharine’s/Niagara/Welland sites)
– Close to Pen Centre, shops and downtown
– Close to highways
– Safe, friendly, family neighbourhood

Disadvantages:
– Neighbours are new families with young children
– Overnight guests, pets, and smoking are all prohibited
– No garage, but a spacious driveway is provided for parking (but with no overhead coverage for your vehicle)

WATERLOO REGIONAL CAMPUS

For more on living in Waterloo:
UWaterloo listings offcampus kijiji

Ryan Scanlan
Location: Uptown Waterloo
Rent: $1,850, 2-bedroom apartment
Distance to Campus: 2 km
Getting to Campus: Walk
Advantages:
– Close to Grand River Hospital and uptown Waterloo shops (grocery store, restaurants, cafes)
– Short walk to campus
– Close to LRT line if the weather is bad
Disadvantages:
– Further from campus than classmates who live in downtown Kitchener

Alex Hoggarth
Location: Downtown Kitchener
Rent: $2,550, 4-bedroom house
Distance to Campus: 1.5 km
Getting to Campus: 15-20 minute walk
Advantages:
– Lots of space in the house
– Relatively low cost (huge bonus to split rent and bills/utilities)
– Great camaraderie with roommates (also classmates)
Disadvantages:
– Expensive
– No gym

Justin Diep
Location: 1 Victoria Condominiums
Rent: $1,800, 1+1 bedroom and den apartment. Access to gym, above-ground parking, party room, outdoor deck, balcony. Internet and utilities separate
Distance to Campus: .05 km
Getting to Campus: 1-min walk
Advantages:
– Closest apartment to WRC
– Quiet, well-maintained building
– Very close to Grand River Hospital
– Secure fob system to enter building
Disadvantages:
– The gym is not fully equipped
– There is no front reception or security