FAQ for Unsuccessful Applicants (June 25th, 2014)

Academic Requirements

1. Is there an undergraduate or graduate program of study that is most suitable for admission to medicine?
   No. Students with university education in any discipline are encouraged to apply. Medicine requires individuals with strong backgrounds in the social sciences, humanities, physical sciences and life sciences. All programs are treated equally in the evaluation process.

2. I took some online courses and summer courses, so I’m unsure how my GPA was calculated? Can you clarify this? Can you tell me what was recorded for my GPA?
   GPA weighting is applied for those applicants who completed a full course load each academic year up to the point of their applications. Please note that summer courses are not included in the course load calculation. If you have specific questions about your GPA calculation or if you would qualify for the weighting formula, it would be best if you email our office with detailed information on your academic history.

3. Should I pursue an additional year of undergraduate studies or a Master’s degree during my year off?
   This decision really depends on your personal goals. If it makes sense for you to complete an extra year or Master’s degree during your gap year, you should pursue this option. However, if you were not particularly interested in taking extra courses at UG/grad level or in research, you probably will not be spending your time as effectively and efficiently as pursuing an alternative option (e.g. work, volunteer) that you’re more passionate about.

4. Should I pursue a Master’s or doctoral degree to increase my admission chances?
   Completing a graduate degree is a lot of work! Students should pursue this option, if they are highly interested in the field of study and if the programs are good fit. The same is true for pursuing a second degree.

5. My MCAT score was 9, 10, and 10. Should I re-write my MCAT?
   MCAT results are used as a threshold and currently we require a minimum score of 9 in each of the MCAT sections. Should you decide to re-write the MCAT, you should note that only the most recent MCAT scores will be considered in the application process.

6. I’ve written my MCAT twice. Did you take the highest score, or were they averaged?
   Only the most recent MCAT scores will be considered in the application process, even if your most recent score is lower than a previous score.

7. What is your admission policy for MCAT2015?
   This is still being determined. Please check our website for updates on MCAT 2015.

Autobiographical Sketch, Breif Personal Essays and Letters of Reference

8. What types of extracurricular experiences are you looking for in an applicant? How can an applicant make their Autobiographical Sketch (ABS) stand out?
   There is not one answer to this question, as we have applicants with a broad range of skills and experiences applying to our programs. There is no
“ideal” extracurricular experience, instead an applicant’s range of experiences will be considered overall. Diversity of experiences, a significant commitment to activities, and opportunities where your passion for medicine is highlighted would all be looked at favorably. These experiences can take place anywhere in the world including your community – volunteering in the developing world is not required.

9. **How much volunteer and research experience do I need?**
   There is nothing that an applicant “needs” in the ABS. There is no required number of activities or required number of hours. Some candidates may have a large number of activities among which they share their time; others may have a few activities to which they devote a large amount of time.

10. **How should verifiers be selected?**
   Verifiers should be able to confirm your completion of, or level of commitment to an activity, as listed on your ABS. Verifiers may include coaches, supervisors, academic instructors, managers, etc. It would be wise to select a verifier that has interacted with you in a significant way, so that they can verify details about the activity you are listing. While peers may be listed as verifier, it is encouraged that applicants seek out “higher level” verifiers where possible. Activity verifiers will be checked at random.

11. **Do you prefer candidates who have completed volunteer work abroad, over those who have only volunteered with local organizations?**
   We do not give preference to volunteer work completed overseas. In fact, we assess involvements based on the quality of involvement, whether students have volunteered locally or internationally.

12. **Do you prefer candidates who have had work or volunteer experience in a hospital or healthcare setting?**
   Again, we do not give preference to applicants with hospital/healthcare work or volunteer experiences, but would look at the level of involvement and quality of an applicant’s overall experiences. Being able to demonstrate your interest in and passion for Medicine can come out through a variety of experiences.

13. **How important is it to be published? Do you look more favorably at applicants who have had their research papers accepted for publication?**
   All accomplishments, including publication, will be considered when files are reviewed. However, being published is not a requirement for admission.

14. **Do you have suggestions on how to write a strong Brief Personal Essay?**
   While we can’t coach you on how to write a good essay, here are some things you might want to consider: Do your essays address the questions posed? Are they clear and well-written? Are there grammatical or spelling errors that detract from the clarity? It’s always a good idea to have someone (perhaps a trusted friend or relative) proofread your essays before they are submitted, as they may be able to catch grammatical errors, or provide helpful feedback.

15. **I am worried that my letters of reference were not strong. Do you have any tips on how to find good references, or are there any specific referees that you would prefer to see (e.g. professors, research supervisors, etc.)?**
   Referees should have extensive knowledge of the applicant and be in a position to make reasonable statements concerning the applicant’s character, personal qualities and/or academic capabilities. Candidates may wish to vary their choice of referees to include those with knowledge of different aspects of the candidate’s activities, both academic and non-academic. All competencies must be covered. Applications from candidates with letters from friends, family, or colleagues will not be considered, as they are not viewed as objective. Applications with an inadmissible letter such as this will not be considered.

**Interview**

16. **Are there any tips you would provide candidates to improve their MPI interview skills?**
We can’t provide a specific guide on how to do this, but some basic things to think about: listen to the questions being asked, take the time to think about your answer, try to use relevant examples, be yourself.

17. Are there common interview mistakes that students make?
As with any interview, some common mistakes might be not addressing the question that was asked, speaking too quickly, not providing examples to support your answers, not being able to expand on your ideas, if asked, and not being able to speak clearly and confidently.

Admissions Statistics

18. Was it more competitive to get into St. George academies? If so, would it increase my admission chances if I were to apply to the MAM in the following year?
No, we extend offers based on candidates’ merits not campus availability. The campus preference you select will have no bearing on your admissions decision.

19. How many students are on your waitlist?
Each year, different numbers of applicants are waitlisted, dependent on their file and interview scores and how competitive the applicant pool is for that year, so we cannot provide specific numbers on this.

20. Can you explain how offers are made off of the waitlist?
In May, we have sent out our initial round of offers. If any the offers were declined, we then extended additional offers off of our waitlist. We will continue to make offers until all of our seats are filled.

21. Are there quotas for how many graduate applicants are accepted?
No. The most competitive of all applicants are offered admission to the program, regardless of academic level.

22. Are there quotas for Ontario residents, versus out-of-province residents, versus international students?
We do not have a quota for applicants from within Canada. We can only accept a maximum of 7 international students per year. International students are defined as students who are studying in Canada on a visa, Canadian Citizens or Permanent Residents of Canada who have completed their education outside of Canada would not be included in this. However, there is no preference given to Canadian students over international students in the admissions process – all compete in the same pool.

23. Is preference given to University of Toronto students or students from specific Canadian universities?
No. All universities across Canada are treated equally in the application process.

24. This is my second time applying to U of T, is there a limit on the number of times I could apply? Do you ever accept applicants after multiple attempts? When would you advise candidates to move on?
No, we do not look at how many times an applicant has applied to the program; this is in no way factored in to our admission review. However, we would encourage students to evaluate their fit for the field of medicine and for U of T’s medical program specifically, each time they are unsuccessful in their application.

For the most up-to-date information on the admissions process and requirements, please visit: http://www.md.utoronto.ca/admissions