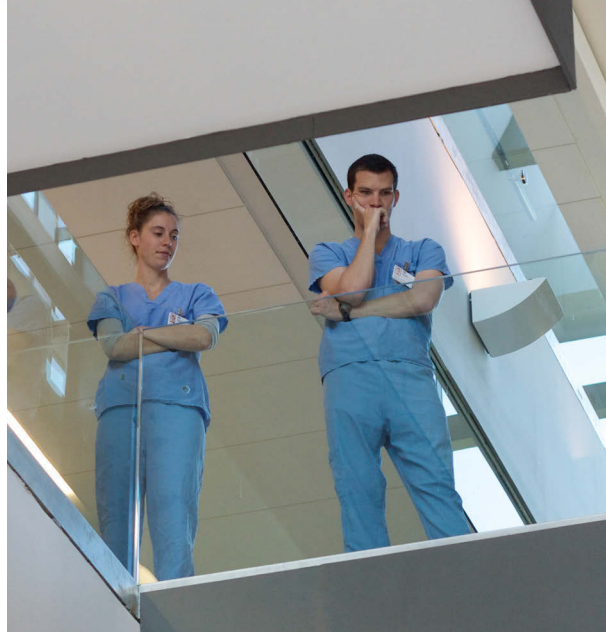
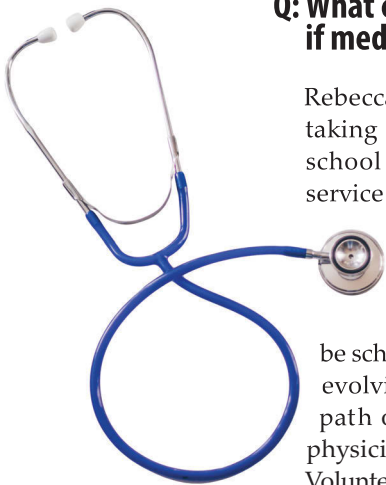


GETTING INTO MEDICAL SCHOOL: Advice from a Medical School Recruiter

Thinking about applying to medical school? We interviewed Rebecca Jozsa, an Admissions Officer at Queen's School of Medicine to get some insight into the application process and what Queen's looks for in an applicant.



Q: What can a prospective student do to determine if medical school is right for them?



Rebecca stressed the importance of prospective students taking a look at themselves to understand if medical school is right for them. "At Queen's, a willingness to service the community is very important. As a physician, you provide care to those who rely on you," she said. Leadership qualities, as well as an interest in research and critical appraisal are things to consider as well. "Aspiring physicians should also be scholars and lifelong learners. Medicine is consistently evolving," she added. To learn more about the career path of physicians, students should spend time with physicians to gain exposure to their work and lifestyle. Volunteering at hospitals and senior homes and shadowing physicians are great ways to do this.

Q: What kind of person succeeds at Queen's Medical School?

A: Rebecca commented that the people who succeed in the medical program at Queen's tend to be those who know how to manage their time, prioritize, stay organized, and are willing to work hard. "The ability to collaborate is important as well, as medical school is very team oriented," Rebecca said, "students should want to continue learning, and want to continue to serve the community." The ability to manage situations well is also another factor. A useful resource is the CanMeds framework found online, that outlines the key competencies of successful physicians.

Q: What does Queen's Medical School look for in an applicant?

A: As many students know, a potential applicant should have the academic capability, as demonstrated through MCAT scores and GPA. But beyond academics, Queen's is also looking at experiences such as volunteering, employment, extracurricular activities, professional behavior, and research. Rebecca noted that "it doesn't have to be healthcare related." What matters to them more are the personal attributes

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Fall: October 17-18, 2017
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revealed through your experiences, and how well these attributes demonstrate your interest in and potential to become a physician. She also mentioned to focus on quality over quantity: “Queen’s is not looking for a long laundry list, but rather a commitment in volunteering,” she said, “it’s about what you did to give to people in that community.”

Concerning the undergraduate field of study, Rebecca insisted that at Queen’s, it doesn’t matter. Instead, she urges students to consider their own strengths based on their unique backgrounds. “For example, if you come from a business background, then you might have valuable teamwork skills to bring to your team projects. Different people have different strengths, and contribute in various ways,” she said.

Q: What are some steps a student should go through before applying?

A: “Different schools have different methods,” Rebecca stressed. So before you apply, do research on each school, their application process, and their GPA and MCAT scores. What might be a preference or requirement at Queen’s isn’t always the case for another school. As for how to best prepare for the MCATs, she says, “If you have the ability, you will get the scores you need

no matter how you choose to prepare. It depends on who you are as a learner and as an individual.”

Q: What can a potential applicant to Queen’s do to stand out?

A: Rebecca notes that one way that students can differentiate themselves to Queen’s is through their reference letters. “Choose your referees properly,” she advised, “It’s not about who is writing your letter, but about how much they know you.”

Find referees who know you in-depth as a person, can specifically cite characteristics that would make you a good physician, and are able to include examples in their letter to back up these characteristics. In the end however, the best way a student can differentiate themselves is by demonstrating that they are well rounded. “A competitive candidate has strengths in all of these areas,” she said, listing academic ability and a passion for learning, demonstrated service to the community, and strong proven leadership, teamwork, and communication skills as key characteristics.

With Rebecca’s insights in mind, you can research whether medical school is a goal for you, and if yes, determine your application strategy to maximize your chances.

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