

CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Pediatric Cardiology

Pros:

If you can organize your elective to be during clinic days, you get lots of exposure to a variety of different conditions, and get to see history, physical, ECG, US, assessment and plan from start to finish. Depending on the preceptor, you may also get lots of practice taking history, performing physical exams including classifying murmurs, reading ECGs, and doing case presentations.

Cons:

Cardiology is not taught in great detail until Med2, so a lot of the learning can be very new. However, it is great prep for the cardiology component in Med2!

Recommend? Highly recommend!

Tips:

Keep notes of new topics/concepts you are learning organized, as they can be very helpful to return to during elective as refreshers, and hopefully will be helpful come the cardiology component of Med2.

Pediatric General Surgery:

Pros: Good teachers, friendly, like to have enthusiastic students

Cons: If you don't want to deal with sick kids or crying babies, less hands-on (unlike adults)

Section 3

CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Pediatric Hematology/Oncology:

Pros: You get to experience lots of different environments (in-patient, out-patient, procedures, long-term follow-up, tumor board) and get a glimpse of some other specialties (especially at tumor boards) like pathology, radiology, surgery, palliative care, etc.

Cons: Their patients are there so often that even most of the clinic days are just checking in on how they've been the past few days (as opposed to a 6 month or yearly follow-up), so it's never really a standard clinic visit like what we practice in clinical skills.

Recommend? Yes!

Tips:

Ask your preceptor what's going on on different days of the week/in different parts of the unit. Sometimes if you don't ask you'll end up just seeing the same thing every week! Some days I would join one of the residents too if my preceptor wasn't seeing many patients.



CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Peds ENT:

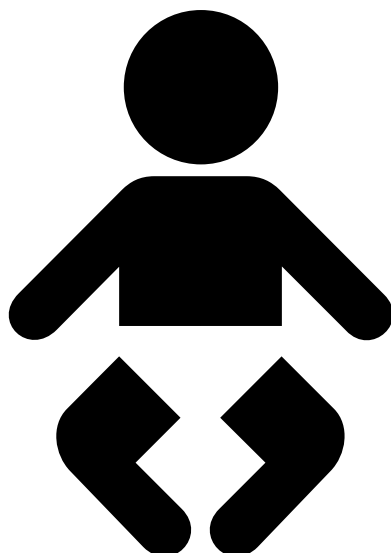
Pros: Lots of variety and preceptors are very welcoming in both the clinic and surgical environment! This is a great option if you are looking for pediatric exposure, as well as a little bit of clinic and OR time. You learn relevant head and neck anatomy early on in Med1, so this helps to provide some background.

Cons: Some surgical procedures can be difficult to observe (dealing with tiny humans and tiny spaces like the ears!). On the other hand, many procedures involve scopes and imaging, so you get to observe the relevant anatomy in action!

Recommend? Yes

Tips:

Ask your preceptor to observe with other members of the ENT team if your times are not matching up so that you can see different aspects of the practice (Ex. peds, airway, adults, plastics reconstruction etc), many team members are more than happy to take you for an afternoon to show you their practice.



CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Cardiac/Vascular Surgery

Pros:

An awesome elective that is very flexible allowing you to participate in different clinics and surgeries. Clinics are interactive and you get to scrub in during most surgeries. How much you want to immerse yourself in the cardiovascular life is all up to you as you get to decide when you go in and how long you stay for. Everyone is willing to answer questions, get you involved, and take you to the right OR suite if you are directionally challenged (this will happen).

Cons:

Although awesome, most surgeries are very long and because you have multiple people all trying to look into a small hole in the chest you may spend quite a few hours not fully understanding what is going on. The surgeries are complex and although the surgeons/residents/fellows are fantastic, they don't explain all of the steps unless you ask. Recommend? Absolutely! For anyone considering a future career in cardiovascular surgery it is great to dive in and see if it is the right fit for you. You definitely get a taste of the sometimes high stress environment and long hours, but it is worth it (I may be bias).

Tips: Research, research, research. You don't get any cardiology until med 2 and you can really help yourself enjoy your elective more if you understand what is going on.

CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Neurosurgery

Pros:

You get to see some pretty amazing things - the brain is beautiful! I have got to experience the OR, clinic, and rounds. My preceptor worked with another physician in one of his clinics, and I got to learn from both, plus it was a lot of fun to be a part of their clinic team. I got to do more hands on tasks in the OR than I thought. It was slightly intimidating, but I was well instructed and watched like a hawk - the brain is kind of squishy. You'll get comfortable saying "I don't know," and maybe get a little too excited when you do know the answer.

Cons:

I did not mind this, but with my elective I was not able to go every week and some days of the week worked better than others. So sometimes I would go a couple times a week. Also, we don't learn about brain anatomy until second year, so unless you have a bit of exposure before hand, it could be challenging to follow along.

Recommend? Yes, I have enjoyed it so much!!

Tips:

If you get a chance to go to rounds, take it. They are very informative and it's a great opportunity to learn more about the diseases/conditions and how a team of professionals work together to decide on the management of a challenging case.

CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE



Plastic Surgery

Pros: Great teachers in OR, hands-on, diverse cases, lots of anatomy, work with other surgical specialties (especially general and ortho), rewarding cases (patients are usually very happy with results), exposure to different surgical techniques (flap dissections, microsurgery, skin grafting for burn victims etc.), fast-paced clinic with minor procedures.

Cons: Cases are longer (this can be a pro or con depending on your perspective), not a lot of medicine in clinic.

Recommend? Yes, excellent for people interested in surgery (more chances to be involved for med students).

Tips: Eat before going in the OR, have a glance at the cases in advance and participate in the skills lab.

CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Urology

Pros:

Really passionate and engaging preceptors (I've worked with 2 different attendings and some amazing residents). The preceptors are eager to teach you about urology and answer any questions you may have
Opportunities for hands-on learning: scrubbing in for surgeries, performing physical exams, interviewing patients
Variety of learning environments -- I'm shadowing my preceptor in several settings (outpatient clinic, private fertility clinic, OR, etc)

Cons:

(I've worked with 2 different attendings and some amazing residents). The preceptors are eager to teach you about urology and answer any questions you may have. Opportunities for hands-on learning: scrubbing in for surgeries, performing physical exams, interviewing patients
Variety of learning environments -- I'm shadowing my preceptor in several settings (outpatient clinic, private fertility clinic, OR, etc)
You need to get very comfortable asking patients some very awkward questions
Some patients won't want you in the room during a clinic visit (especially when it's time for the physical exam)

Recommend? Absolutely!

Tips:

Make sure you can shadow your preceptor in a variety of environments so you're exposed to a broader scope of their practice
The residents are really helpful -- they'll answer a lot of your questions or point you in the right direction when you need to read up on something.

CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Neonatology

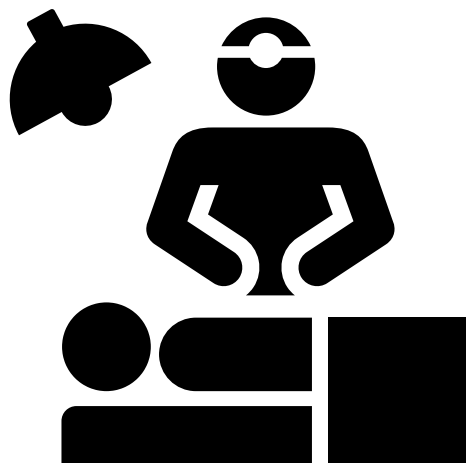
Pros: Very organized and structured sessions.

Each week has a theme (i.e. neonatal cardiology, respirology etc). The physicians give a lecture on the topic for an hour and then we get a chance to go up to the NICU and practice or observe what we learned. Each week, you have 1hr of evidence based rounds (where doctors critically appraise recently published articles), 1hr of lecture on the topic of the week, and the remaining time is spent in the NICU. You also get a mini break after the evidence based rounds. The neonatologists are wonderful teachers and you get a lot of one-on-one time with them to learn and ask questions.

Cons: There are a limited number of spots, so if you're interested, sign up soon! Evidence based rounds can be a little overwhelming at times if you don't have a lot of background in clinical/scientific research

Recommend? Yes!

Tips: There are a limited number of spots, so if you're interested, sign up soon.



CHOOSING AN ELECTIVE

Local Global Health

Pros: Get to see more of the psycho social aspects of medicine, which is hard to do in many other electives. Get to learn about a wide variety of things and be exposed to many different situations, because you will be placed with three different preceptors during the course of the elective.

Cons: Get to see more of the psycho social aspects of medicine, which is hard to do in many other electives. Get to learn about a wide variety of things and be exposed to many different situations, because you will be placed with three different preceptors during the course of the elective.

There's an application process, so you don't find out if you were picked right away! This can make it difficult to put a backup plan in place in the event that you don't get selected for the elective. You only get to spend 4 weeks with each preceptor, which goes by quickly.

Recommend? Yes, definitely!

Tips: Apply for an area close to school, or close to where you live. This makes transport to/from a lot easier. Ask questions!

Particularly about how the different services you've been placed with all work together to best serve patient.

STUDENT AFFAIRS



“Come Early Come Often”

Help is never far away

When you visit us at the Student Affairs office, you'll discover comprehensive services designed to help you maintain a healthy and positive life balance while you pursue a future in medicine.

Confidentiality is key

We value your trust. Whenever you meet with anyone in our office, you can rest assured that your meeting, along with any information you provide us, will remain completely confidential.

Sometimes problems that start small or appear insignificant grow to become troubling and disruptive. But if you see us when your concerns first arise, we're far more likely to find a satisfactory solution before the challenge becomes unmanageable.

**THE OFFICE MAINTAINS AN OPEN-DOOR POLICY FOR STUDENTS CONCERNS, ISSUES OR QUESTIONS
FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM - #DALMEDWELL**

WHO WE ARE



Halifax Campus:

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<https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/student-affairs.html>

Section 1

WHO WE ARE



Saint John Campus:

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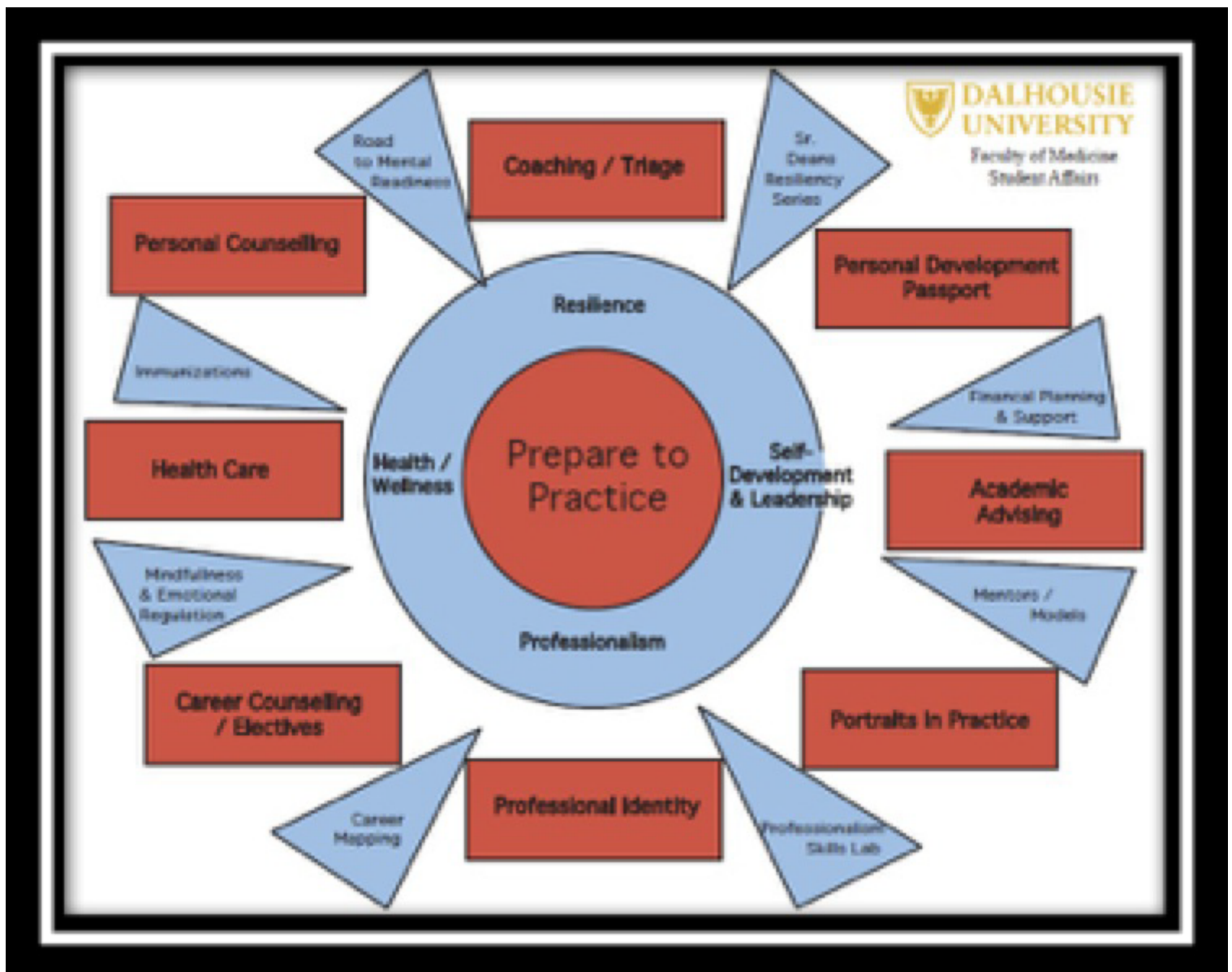
WELCOME

Section 2

STUDENT AFFAIRS KEY ROLES

Personal Growth & Health Academic Advising/Support Career
Counselling & Planning
Maintaining Positive & Safe Learning Environment
Advocacy for Students at Dean's Tables

The activities of the Student Affairs office are organized under a Prepare to Practice structure emphasizing individual development and progression during medical school with emphasis on skill development, resiliency and peer support models.



Section 2

STUDENT AFFAIRS KEY ROLES

Personal Growth & Health

Are you finding your workload and/or adjustment to medical school a bit overwhelming? Are you dealing with some personal or health related issues and feel you need some help in accessing supports and services? Do you need a leave of absence or an emergency loan?

Student Affairs is here to help. In fact, we can help you address just about any personal challenge you encounter during medical school.

We are here to guide you through any physical and mental health problems. Plus, we provide support for all kinds of student initiatives, ideas and projects.

Some examples of what Student Affairs can help you with:

- family planning
- adjustment to medical school
 - mental health
- psychological support
- personal circumstances or situations
 - illness (short and long term)
 - leaves of absence or time off
- scheduling changes or adjustments
 - clerkship scheduling – location

We encourage you to come meet with us as soon as you notice a problem or challenge. If we can't help, we'll find someone who can.

Section 2

STUDENT AFFAIRS KEY ROLES

Available Resources:

Dalhousie Health Services

Dalhousie Counselling & Psychological Services Doctors Nova Scotia

Professional Support Program Relationship/Family Counsellors

Private Counsellors & Psychologists

Mental Health Referral Assistance

Academic Advising

Medical school is a whole new world, with new challenges. As you begin your first year, you may begin to feel underprepared or you may have underestimated the time that it takes to juggle case-based learning, lectures, tutorials, case practice, clinical skills and rotations.

Student Affairs is here to support you. If you're experiencing problems that affect your studies, we want you to get in touch as early as possible. We'll help you find a solution that works for you, your education and your academic progress. Unless you give us permission, we'll never share anything you tell us with an outside party. No one, from your professors to your parents, will even know you came to see us—unless you want them to.

Some examples of what Student Affairs can help you with:

- Strategies & Tips
- Game Plan to Limit Personal Impacting Professional
 - Liason with Unit Heads/Content Experts
 - Learning Problem Support
 - Liason with UGME
 - Advocacy/Support with UGME

QUICK TIPS TO START YOUR YEAR OFF RIGHT



- Review the Promotion and Assessment Regulations each year. This document is produced by UGME and provides students an overview of all rules and regulations about your academic progress from year to year.
- Make time to exercise and eat right. Taking care of your health will keep your mind attentive.
- Join a study group. They're a great way to support and supplement your independent learning and they help keep you on track.
- Set realistic personal expectations. After all, lifelong learning is what medicine is all about.
- Numerical grades you receive are for your feedback and do not get recorded on the official transcript.
- Remember, your official transcript will only show if you passed or failed.

Section 4

CAREER COUNSELLING & PLANNING

The Student Affairs office will provide you with the information and resources to help you feel confident in making informed decisions about your career and your residency. We'll guide you through the decision-making process, decreasing the stress associated with choosing a career.

We encourage you to make an appointment with our Career Advisor to discuss your interests. Start early, consider all the options and plan. Student Affairs is here to guide you along your path.



Some sample questions to ask yourself:

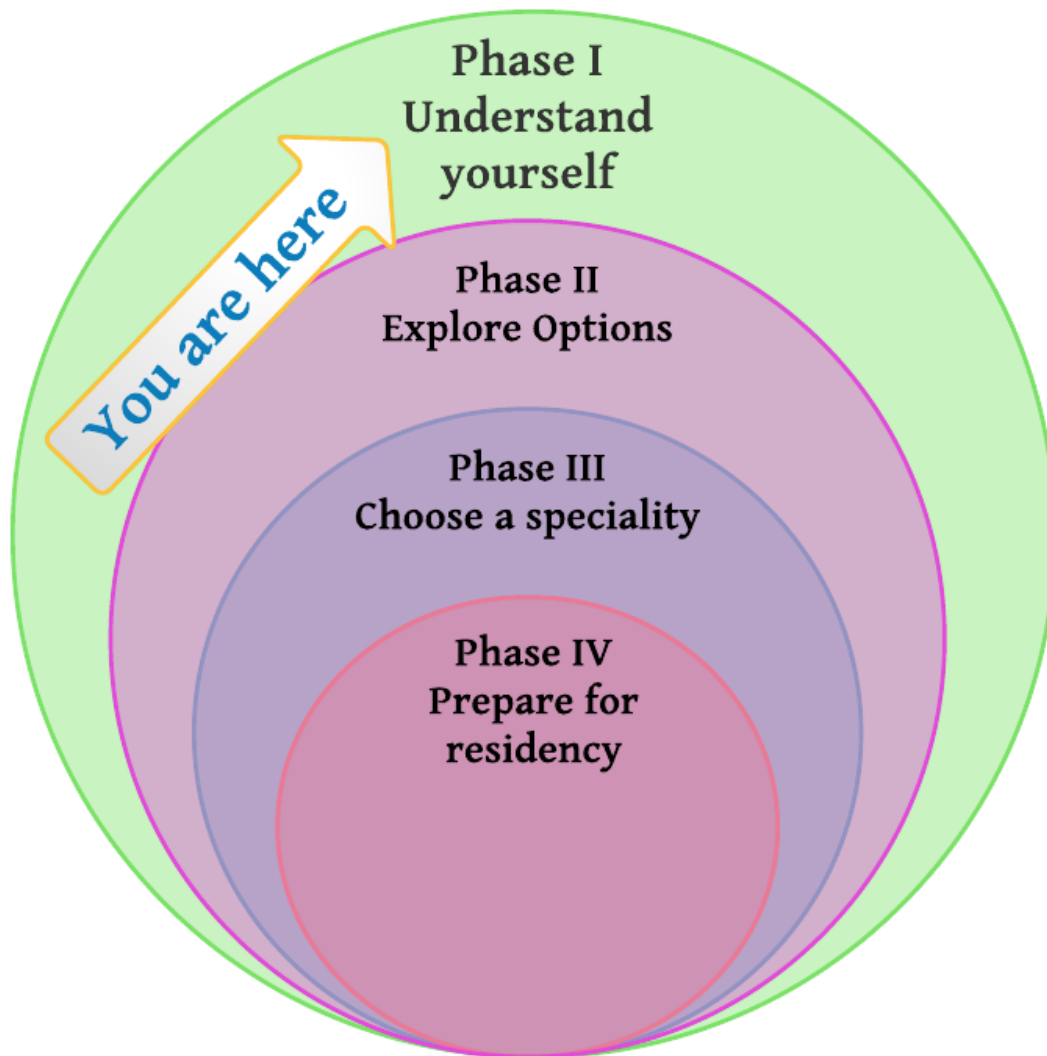
- What kind of lifestyle do you want?
- Who do you see as your ideal patient?
- Would you like to work in an urban or rural setting?
- Do you see yourself as a generalist or a specialist
 - Do you want to teach?

The career planning process is divided into a four-stage program to guide you throughout your four years of study. Our program follows the Association of American Medical College's (AAMC) Careers in Medicine (CiM) guidelines. We aim to help you discover the specialization that is most suitable for your personality, your goals, your values and your skills.

The stages include:

- understanding yourself
- exploring your options
 - choosing a specialty
- preparing for residency

CAREER COUNSELLING & PLANNING



We've developed resources to help you at every stage of the decision-making process. If you're having trouble making a decision, we encourage you to make an appointment to speak with us to discuss your areas of interests.



Section 4

CAREER COUNSELLING & PLANNING

We'll also arrange sessions that provide you with information and expertise from different specialties.

List of Career Curriculum Sessions:

Med 1 - Career small groups

Med 1 – Individual meetings – 1:1 discussions of career interests and plans

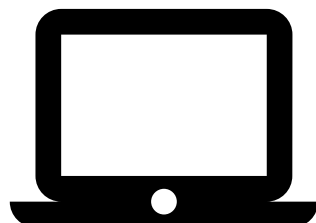
Career Evening – Interactive event with Residency Program Directors, residents and hands on activities

Careers in Medicine website access – CiM program developed by the AAMC Career Advisor - half day in Student Affairs office for student appointments CaRMs – information, guidance and assistance

Career Days – opportunity to attend several brief presentations on various specialties

Organized Career Advising workshops and events throughout the year

Student panels – elective planning, clerkship tracks selections, CaRMs



Section 5

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE & SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Dalhousie Medical School is committed to providing its students with a learning environment that is free of harassment and mistreatment. All students, residents, faculty and staff within the medical school and postgraduate training programs share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a climate of respect, and for taking appropriate steps to seek advice and/or address harassment and mistreatment when it occurs.

If you have a complaint of student mistreatment--whether it involved you or a classmate--it's important to report it. It's also important to acknowledge professionalism in action.

Student well-being

Trust, respect, fairness and collegiality between faculty, staff, postgraduate trainees and students is essential for creating the best possible environment for learning. The Student Affairs office is here to assist you through difficult times and to support a positive learning environment at Dalhousie Medical School.

If you have a complaint of student mistreatment, whether it involves you or a classmate, it's important to report it.

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE & SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

If you have a complaint of student mistreatment, whether it involves you or a classmate, it's important to report it.

What is student mistreatment?

Student mistreatment can be defined as:

- discrimination based on race, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics protected by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act
- verbal abuse: shouting, swearing, belittling, ridiculing or making disparaging remarks physical abuse: throwing objects, pushing, slapping or making threatening gestures
- sexual harassment/abuse: unwelcome comments, gestures, touching or actions of a sexual nature
- workload abuse: contractual infraction, excessive service volume, lack of supervision, or not making reasonable illness, disability or leave allowances
- reprisal for having lodged, or being a witness in, a harassment or intimidation complaint

Section 5

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE & SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Dalhousie is committed to providing its students and postgraduate trainees with a learning environment that is free of harassment. All students, residents, faculty and staff within the medical school and postgraduate training programs share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a climate of respect, and for taking appropriate steps to seek advice and/or address harassment when it occurs.

https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/undergraduate/current-students/student_mistreatment.html

Reporting positive behaviour:

We are also interested in hearing about exemplary positive behaviour.

Section 6

A FINAL MESSAGE

Think of your Student Affairs Office as your “triage” office. We will point you in the right direction and provide you with guidance on how to deal with simple to difficult situations.

**Remember it never hurts to
ask us if we can help!!**



ACADEMIC RESOURCES



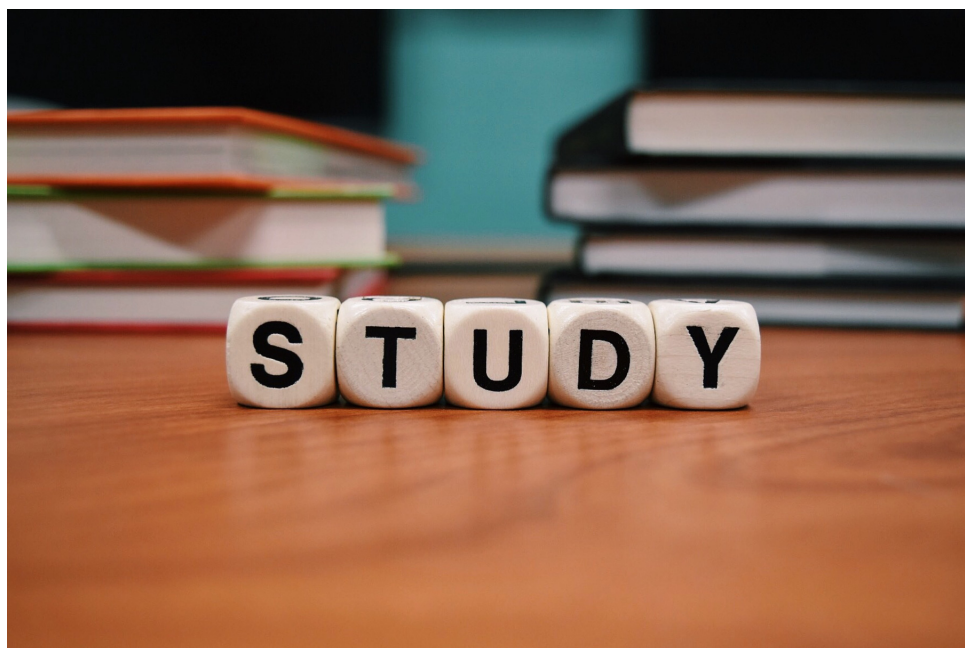
DON'T buy textbooks! Firstly, most of our class did not end up using textbooks very much, because lecture slides, provided resources and google are often sufficient. However, if you would like to refer to textbooks for supplementary information, there are plenty of textbooks laying around or online. Your Med Buddies will be able to guide you on where to find useful information.

Aside from textbooks, there are other resources that might come in handy, especially when preparing for tutorial cases. Some students in our class bought a membership for “UpToDate”, an evidence-based resource, that allows you to search up symptoms, disorders, treatment options, drugs, etc. and read clinically-relevant, updated information. The membership costs about \$170 (US) and lasts two years. You can also get an app that can be useful when you're in the hospital during an elective.

There are other free websites useful for tutorial cases such as “**BMJ- Best Medical practice**”, the links to which are available through the Med- Lib Guide.

Section 1

STUDYING ADVICE



Something different works for everyone, you will probably need to experiment with different studying techniques to find what works for you!

Medical school is likely very different from your undergraduate or graduate experience. It is near impossible to remember all the details you'll get in lectures, and it's something many med students struggle with. Try to get comfortable with not knowing everything from the beginning to save yourself lots of stress!

Pace yourself -- you'll never regret starting early!

Writing out notes works for some people but can be quite time-consuming. Many people in our class find it useful to make summary notes from lectures that they can review before exams.

Remember -- you're learning to help treat patients down the road, the nitty gritty details will likely not stick. Try to learn concepts and retain big themes as you progress through your medical training.

Don't spend too much time on cases (max. 2 hrs!) -- you will learn more from others in your group.

STUDENT PROFILES



We asked a few of our classmates from different backgrounds who are balancing different things in their lives with Medical School to share their stories and some advice with the aim of showing you a few different ways first year Med Students at Dal make their lives and school work together.



Section 1

SAMANTHA BLAND - DMNB - READJUSTING TO SCHOOL (AND CANADA) AFTER BEING AWAY



I spent the last 3 years living and traveling around Asia, working as an English teacher and a Divemaster. As excited as I was to get accepted to Dal Med, I knew it was going to be a huge adjustment getting back into school mode, especially after taking a 4 year break from university. When I moved back to Canada, I was nervous about feeling like I belonged here again. I was also worried about how rusty I was on all the science/MCAT stuff after spending so much time away from it. For anyone with similar concerns, I want you to know a few things. First, your first unit is called Foundations and it is meant to get everyone on the same page.

Don't sweat it if some of your classmates find it easier than others. Everyone has different backgrounds and that's what makes the class dynamic interesting! Second, and more importantly, don't let age or time away from school make you feel out of the loop or like you shouldn't be here. Time away gives you so much life experience, maturity, and perspective. These experiences will help you see things through a broader lens and help you connect with patients. Whenever you feel concerned about readjusting to school after time away, remember this.

If you ever want to chat more about this or are having any trouble getting back into the groove of things, don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Section 1

STEPHANIE DENNIS - MOM & MEDICINE



My name is Stephanie - I'm a mom to an almost 2 year old, pregnant with my second (due 2 weeks after the last day of first year), swimmer for the Dalhousie varsity team, and am married to a serving military combat pilot. I finished my undergrad in chemistry 8 years ago and since then I've been flying combat missions with the Canadian Forces - so medicine and going back to school certainly has been a change of pace! I wanted to share a bit about how I've successfully managed my first year at DalMed because when I first showed up, I had no idea if this was doable but with some serious time management, a LOT of caffeine, and a fantastic support network, I'm living proof that anything is possible.

So here's how it works for me: with a full time working spouse, we have to tag-team being parents. Scott takes our son, Eric to daycare every morning. This allows me to get to swim varsity practice. After practice, I head to class if it's first thing in the morning. If not, I study and prep for lectures/tutorials/labs. I pick up Eric from daycare around 5-530pm everyday and it's full time mommy-baby time. We have dinner as a family, I take him for his bath, we play and read books then it's bedtime by 7pm. At 7pm, I hit the books but, as an athlete and being pregnant, I have to call it somewhat early so that I can get adequate sleep so it's lights out no later than 10pm each night.

Section 1

STEPHANIE DENNIS - MOM & MEDICINE

This is my big advice for you in relationships or with kids: prioritize them! Friday nights are date night: we head out in town to do something without baby so we can just be us. If you're worried about babysitters, you have a whole class of people with their vulnerable sector checks and infant CPR - enjoy cherry picking! Sundays are family time: I don't look at schoolwork AT all on Sundays so if I'm behind or need to prep for Monday and am not ready, it's my own fault and I'll have to get up early on Monday morning to make up for it.

I could write about how to do this for ages but I've already take too much space in this guide so if you have any questions at all (daycare, babysitters, varsity, military, anything!) feel free to email me at st502787@dal.ca. Good luck, enjoy, and see you all next fall!

I could write about how to do this for ages but I've already take too much space in this guide so if you have any questions at all (daycare, babysitters, varsity, military, anything!) feel free to email me at st502787@dal.ca. Good luck, enjoy, and see you all next fall!



Section 1

DEVIN O'BRIEN - DMNB VARSITY ATHLETE



Congratulations on getting into Dal Med and welcome to the fam! Without a doubt, you're about to embark on some of the most exciting years of your life and about to meet people that you'll soon call your best friends. My name is Devin O'Brien, I'm a 25-year-old student at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick. I am going to share my experiences as a med student while being a varsity athlete.

At Dal Halifax you can join the Dalhousie Tigers varsity teams, and at DMNB since we have dual citizenship, you are able to play for the UNB Saint John Seawolves. While it is obviously a daunting task to go to practice 4 times a week for 2 hours and then travel on weekends for games while the rest of your classmates are at the library studying, it is worth it if athletics is one of your true passions.

From my experience, the only downside being a varsity athlete in med school is the amount of time it takes away from your studies. Fortunately, the pros far outweigh the time commitment. Practice and games are a great way to relieve stress, get your exercise in, interact with other friends outside of school, and have a ton of fun! Work-life balance is by far the most important thing to keep you sane during this crazy time in your life. Whether it's sports, arts, or grabbing a beer with friends, you need to make sure you have other things to fall back on when you get overwhelmed with school. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me on FB (Devin Jarrad) or shoot me an email devinobrien@dal.ca! Let me know if you need anything else!