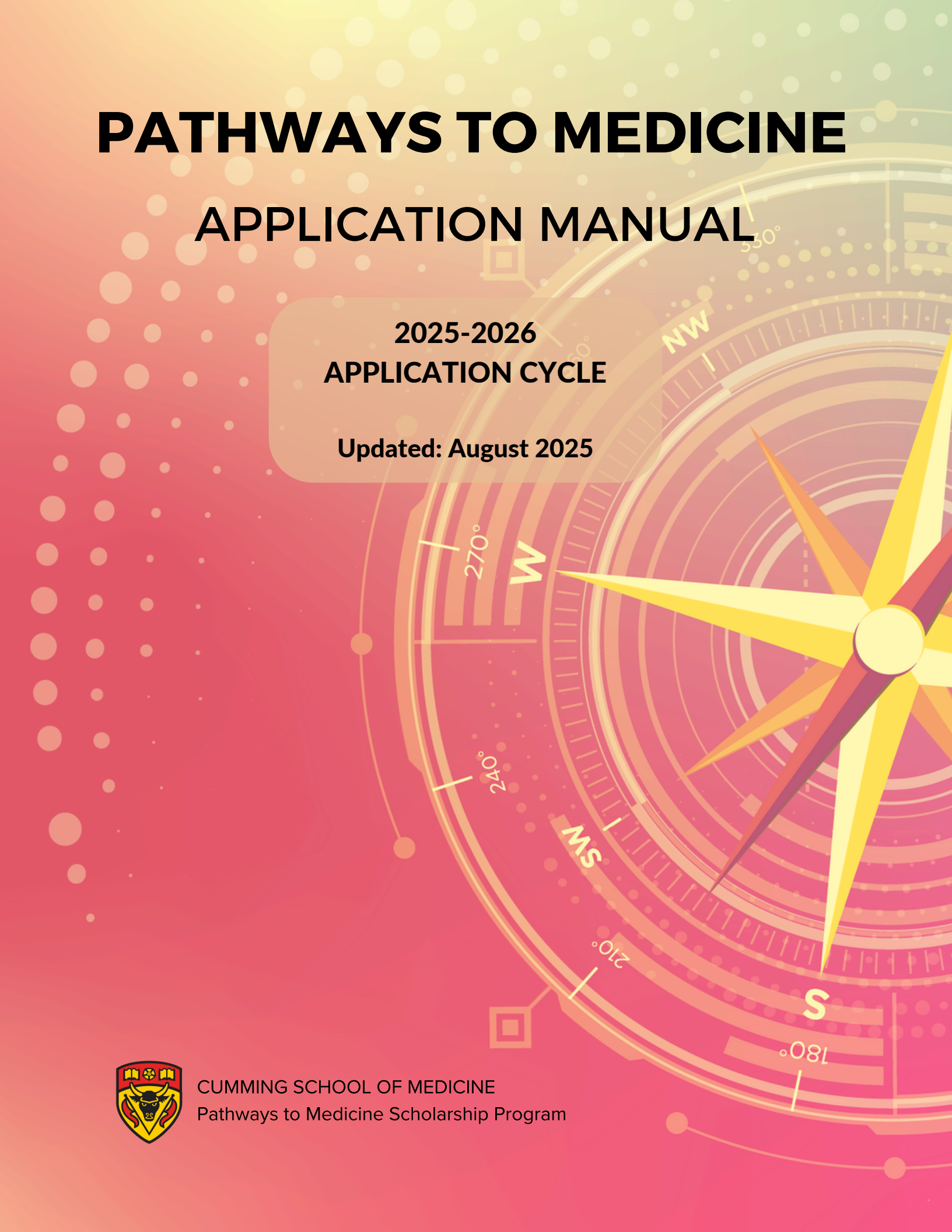
PATHWAYS TO MEDICINE

APPLICATION MANUAL

2025-2026
APPLICATION CYCLE

Updated: August 2025



CUMMING SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Pathways to Medicine Scholarship Program

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Section 1: General Information

1.1 General Information

The Pathways to Medicine (P2M) Scholarship is an initiative of the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) at the University of Calgary. Since 2016, this scholarship has facilitated the career development of promising high school graduates from **low socioeconomic backgrounds** with a career goal of becoming a physician. There is a particular interest in rural and Indigenous students. Five P2M Scholarships will be awarded each year.

The Pathways to Medicine scholarship was created in recognition of the extensive body of literature showing that patients have better outcomes when they have more in common, sociodemographically, with the physicians who are providing their care. In order to meet its obligations to the public it serves, it is important for the CSM to create training opportunities for physicians who come from a wide range of sociocultural and economic backgrounds. Other research, however, shows that students from low-income backgrounds, despite great enthusiasm for a medical career at the time of high school graduation, are much less likely to apply to medical school upon university graduation. The P2M scholarship aims to address that gap by supporting a small group of exceptional students through their pre-medical journey.

To be considered for a P2M Scholarship, students must be independently accepted into an undergraduate program at the University of Calgary. As part of the scholarship, recipients are **guaranteed admission to the CSM MD program** upon completion of their undergraduate degree, provided that certain conditions have been met, as detailed in Appendix A.

1.2 Scholarship Program Details

The P2M Scholarship Program will consist of the following elements, in addition to the guaranteed admission to the CSM MD program as described above:

- Tuition support of up to $ 5,000 per year, to a maximum of four years (contingent upon successful progress within the program). P2M participates in the U of C's Equitable Distribution Policy, which limits total awards to a single student to $15,000 per year. For students whose total scholarship awards at the U of C exceed $15,000, the dollar value of the P2M award may be decreased accordingly.
- Identification of peer, medical student and faculty mentors.
- Access to formal clinical shadowing experiences within the CSM
- Financial support for an MCAT preparatory course and MCAT exam fees
- Assistance from the program staff in securing external tuition support, and summer research experiences, if desired.
- Participation in an enrichment program throughout the duration of the undergraduate degree.

1.3 Scholarship Eligibility

The P2M Scholarship is open to anyone **graduating from a high school in Alberta who has yet to begin a post-secondary degree program**. To hold a P2M Scholarship, recipients must be accepted and enroll in an undergraduate program at the University of Calgary.

1.4 Eligibility based on Citizenship

P2M Scholarship applicants must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants (permanent residents) as of July 1, of the year they are entering post-secondary education at the University of Calgary.

1.5 How P2M defines "low-income"

Our scholarship is a "needs-based" program. At the Preliminary Application stage, we require applicants to report their average familial income over the past three years as reflected in parental/guardian tax returns. The P2M Selection Committee will use this information, the size of the community the applicant resides in, and the family size based on the chart found within the Preliminary Application to determine an applicant's "low-income" status.

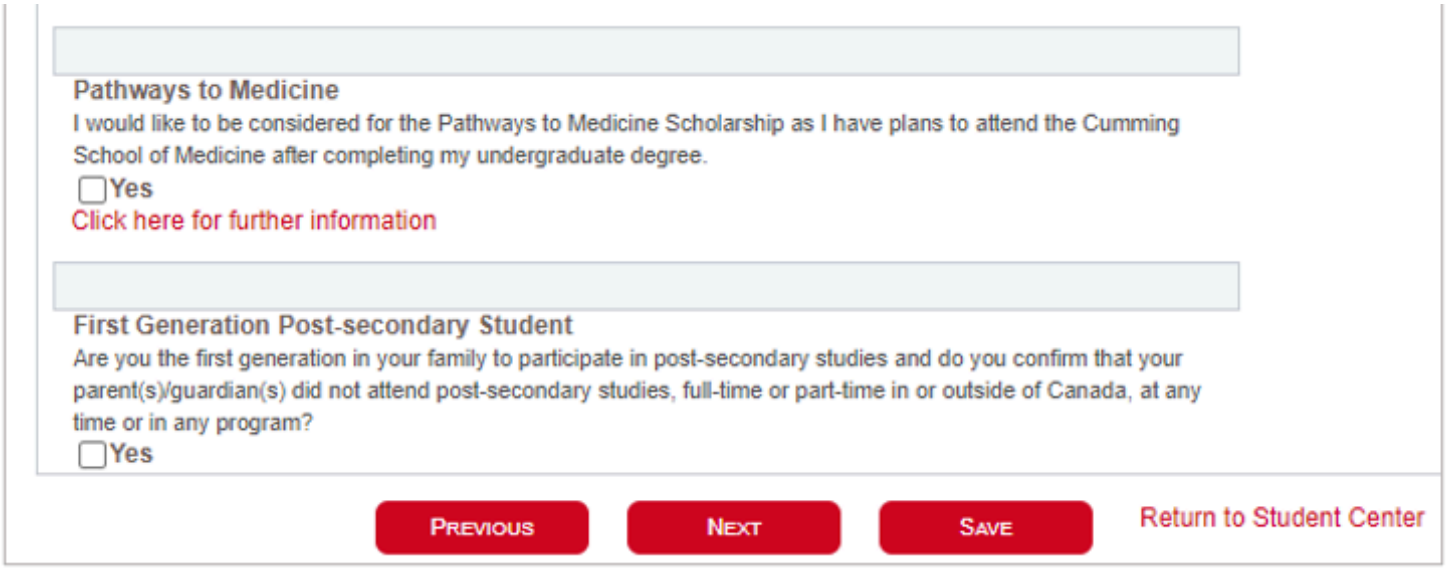
We recognize that socio-economic disadvantage encompasses more than simply financial resources. Therefore, there is no rigid cut-off regarding familial income. Applicants whose familial income is significantly above the thresholds found in the chart (1.5 times revenue Canada's "Low Income Cut Off") are less likely to be successful in their applications.

1.6 Applying for the P2M Scholarship

Applications for the P2M Scholarship are made through the **Undergraduate Scholarships and Awards application** once the student has applied to the University of Calgary. Below is a screenshot of where to find the checkbox on the awards application on your student centre (my.ucalgary.ca). When completing the form for student awards, applicants must indicate interest in a Pathway to Medicine Scholarship. Please note that it is near the end of the application form.

The deadline is **December 1.**

The registrar's office will forward a list of applicants who have indicated interest in the scholarship to the P2M Scholarship team. Our team will vet the applications, and those deemed eligible will be contacted via e-mail and asked to submit a Preliminary Application.



1.7 Application Timelines

Dec 1	Apply to an undergraduate program at UCalgary & Apply for the P2M Scholarship on the Undergraduate Scholarship and Awards form (screenshot on the previous page)
Early December	Eligible Applicants will receive the Preliminary Application
Early January	Preliminary Applications Due
January	P2M Selection Committee to review Preliminary Applications
February	Shortlisted Applicants are to be notified to submit a Secondary Application
Mid March	Secondary Applications Due
Late March	Multiple Mini-Interviews
Mid April	P2M Finalists Notified

Section 2: Submitting a Preliminary Application

Applicants deemed eligible to submit a Preliminary Application will be contacted within a few weeks of the December 1 deadline.

If you are eligible, the Pathways to Medicine team will share the preliminary application document and the due date via e-mail.

2.1 Completing a Preliminary Application

Applicants selected to submit a Preliminary Application will need to complete all four (4) sections (A – D) of the application:

Section A: Demographics

The Program Coordinator will send out a form (Word Doc) asking the applicant for basic demographic information including:

- Name, Address, Birthdate
- Financial Information (tax forms over the past two years & net familial income)
- Name, Occupation, and Education Level for each family member in the household
- Employment Experience
- Extracurricular Experience
- Living Timeline
- Declaration of Indigenous Ancestry (if applicable)

Please ensure that you accurately fill out the form. Since the form asks questions of financial nature, we recommend you sit with a parent or guardian who can share net family income and tax documents while filling out the form.

Section B: Applicants Essay

Please provide a short essay **(250 words max.)** that will assist the selection committee in better understanding you as an applicant and why you should receive this scholarship. Please try to include the following in your essay:

- The nature of the economic or social disadvantages you have overcome thus far or continue to struggle with.
- Level of engagement with your community (geographic, cultural, etc.).
- Your aspirations and strengths concerning post-secondary education.
- The resources and protective factors that have allowed you to succeed thus far in your academic journey.

Section C: High School Transcripts

Please include a copy of your most current transcripts, including scores from grade 10 to 1st semester of grade 12. The easiest way to do this is to download a DAR (Detailed Academic Record) from MyPass Alberta.

Section D: Nomination Letter

Applicants must include a Letter of Nomination from a principal, vice-principal, teacher, coach, leader of a community-based organization, or another type of “mentor or educator” related to their life. This letter should include how long the nominator has known the applicant and why they feel the student would be a good candidate for this scholarship. Please send your referee the Letter of Nomination document sent out by the Program Coordinator in the Preliminary Application e-mail.

2.2 Submitting Preliminary Application Documents

Please ensure all four parts (Sections A – D) of the application include accurate information, are fully completed, and genuinely reflect you as a candidate.

To submit your documents, send section A - C electronically as 1 (one) PDF document to pathways@ucalgary.ca

Please save the document as titled below:
Last Name, First Name – Preliminary Application

An applicant's documents and the letter of nomination **(sent in by your referee)** must be sent in by the deadline to pathways@ucalgary.ca.

Only complete applications will be accepted. We recommend submitting your applications early, as this gives us enough time to notify you of any missing components. Late submissions will **not** be accepted, and extensions will **not** be granted for incomplete applications.

2.3 Evaluation of Preliminary Application Materials

Members of the P2M Selection Committee will review documents and develop a shortlist of applicants, from whom they will request the completion of a Secondary Application. The Secondary Application follows the materials required of regular applicants to the CSM MD program. Applicants not invited to submit a secondary application will be notified of the committee's decision as soon as possible.

2.4 Checklist for Preliminary Application Submission

Please use the following checklist to ensure all parts of the Preliminary Application are complete:

1. Complete the Demographics Document
2. Complete the 250 Word Essay
3. Attach High School Transcripts
4. Attach all 3 documents into 1 PDF and submit to pathways@ucalgary.ca
5. Please confirm with the reference whether they submitted the nomination letter on time.

Section 3: Submitting a Secondary Application

After the P2M selection committee has shortlisted a series of applicants, they will send a request to complete a Secondary Application. The deadline for receipt of the Secondary Application and Reference Letters will be noted via e-mail by the Program Coordinator.

3.1 Completing a Secondary Application

Applicants chosen to submit a Secondary Application are required to complete sections A to C, as outlined below.

Section A: References

Applicants are required to submit three (3) references utilizing the forms that will be sent to shortlisted applicants. Although many of the questions asked of referees are common in all three forms, each of the three forms is unique and attempts to specifically obtain information that is helpful to the assessment of a particular set of attributes we look for in a P2M scholarship recipient. Therefore, applicants should choose referees carefully, considering the referee's ability to comment on the characteristics in question.

The three different forms focus on the following attributes:

- Organizational, Management, and Leadership Skills
- Commitment to Communities and Advocacy
- Interpersonal Behaviours and Collaboration

The Program Coordinator will have provided three documents (one for each referee); please email the corresponding letter to your referee and ask them to submit the form in PDF format to pathways@ucalgary.ca

Applicants are advised to carefully choose referees who have substantial knowledge of the applicant and can give an unbiased assessment. Family members, friends, and peers are not appropriate referees, regardless of their position or knowledge of the applicant. Applicants should also be aware that some volunteer organizations with large numbers of pre-medical volunteers previously have submitted the same standardized form letters. Given the specific nature of our requirements for a letter of reference, applicants should confirm with their referees the referee's willingness to write a personal letter.

Section B: Top 10 Experiences

Applicants must identify their top ten (10) activities or experiences that define them as individuals. These may be employment or volunteer experiences, life experiences, awards, educational or research experiences.

For each experience or activity, the applicant must identify a **title** (e.g. " Summer Research Project with X Lab", "Working at McDonald's", "Making the Hockey Team", etc.) as well as a more detailed description of the activity and the impact that the experience has had upon them.

Each experience must also have a **verifier** who can attest to the nature of the experience and the duration. Please include the verifier's name and email address; if unavailable, a phone number will also work. If no such person is available, applicants should indicate this in their application by stating, "no verifier available."

The Pathways to Medicine Program reserves the right to communicate with verifiers at any time during the application process once an application has been submitted.

Example formatting below:

Top 10 Experiences

Title
Start Date – End Date

[roles, responsibilities and impact]

Verifier: Name | Email:

From these Top 10 Experiences, file reviewers develop a sense of who the applicant is and what they will bring to medicine. Applicants are encouraged to reflect carefully on what they highlight in this section and what it says about them.

In choosing your Top 10, applicants are encouraged to highlight the adversities they have overcome or continue to struggle with in their personal or academic journeys. Similarly, the P2M selection committee is keen to hear about applicants' involvement in and connection with their community, whether that community be geographic, cultural, religious, or defined differently.

The Top 10 Experiences section should be no more than **three (3) pages. Please use Calibri font, single spaced, size 12, with normal margins.**

An applicant's Top 10 and references **(sent in by your referees)** must be sent in **PDF format** by the deadline to pathways@ucalgary.ca.

Section C: Interviews

The interviews will take the form of several brief, structured interviews done in succession. This is consistent with the Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI) format used by the CSM Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) program. The interviewer will score each scenario, and the final score will reflect the average of these mini discussions.

The interviewers include members of the general community, physicians and P2M Students.

Interviews will be held on the CSM campus; applicants will be given appropriate notice. For those outside of Calgary, the coordinator will connect with you about accommodation and travel plans to Calgary for our interview process.

Please remember to bring photo ID to the interviews to sign in.

3.2 Checklist for Secondary Application Submission

Please use the following checklist to ensure all parts of the Secondary Application are complete:



Identified three (3) referees for Reference Letters. Ensured that they submitted their unique documents with appropriate information before the deadline (Word Document Survey).

- Organizational, Management & Leadership Skills
- Commitment to Communities and Advocacy
- Interpersonal Behaviours and Collaboration



Submitted Top 10 Experiences (maximum three pages) as a PDF document:



Received information on the Multiple Mini-Interviews and have RSVP'd to the Program Coordinator

- Practice MMI Scenarios/Interview questions
- Remember to bring photo ID

Section 4: Secondary Application Scoring

4.1 Scoring System

At the Secondary Application stage, each file is independently evaluated by each member of the P2M Selection Committee, including CSM faculty members, MD students, and community members. The entire file is reviewed holistically, with scores assigned for evidence of attributes that the MD program has previously identified as consistent with the terminal objectives of the program. As such, no discrete scores for extra-curricular activities or letters of reference are given, although these items inform the scoring in multiple areas.

Scores are assigned in the following areas:

- Academic Ability
- Degree of “fit” with the goals of the P2M Scholarship Program
- Evidence of specific attributes sought by the CSM Office of MD Admissions:
  - Communication Skills
  - Evidence of Excellent Interpersonal Skills and Collaboration
  - Evidence of Maturity, Insight, and Resilience
  - Evidence of Commitment to Communities and Advocacy on behalf of others
  - Evidence of Organizational/Management skills and Leadership.

Each of these subjective assessments is done by the assessors looking at the totality of the application file, including extra-curricular activities, employment, letters of reference, academic history, and any other information in the file.
This process aligns with the approach used in assessing individuals applying to the MD program through the traditional route.

4.1.1 Academic Ability

Grades are assessed using the applicant's high school grades (10 - 1st semester grade 12)

4.1.2 Global Assessment of Academic Ability

Each applicant is assigned a score based on the global assessment of the strength of their entire academic record. This includes but is not limited to the types of courses taken, grade trends over time, extenuating circumstances, and consistency. The overarching question to the reviewer is, “To what extent does this applicant demonstrate evidence of the academic skill necessary to master undergraduate studies at the University of Calgary?”

4.1.3 Degree of Fit

Applicants will be assessed based on the extent to which their personal background and individual characteristics fit with the goals of the P2M Scholarship – specifically, the desire to increase the numbers of MD students from low-income and other under-represented backgrounds. This will include a subjective assessment regarding the ability of the scholarship program to benefit the student.

4.1.4 Evidence of Specified Non-Cognitive Attributes

The question to assessors is, “To what degree does this applicant demonstrate evidence of [attribute X]?” To answer this question, assessors draw information from the application itself and the letters of reference. Assessors will consider an applicant’s life history, activities, and experiences of an applicant as they demonstrate either openness towards or proficiency in the skills and attributes in question. Applicants must note that one of the reasons for adopting an attributes-based assessment tool was the recognition that the same qualities can be manifested in many ways, some of which appear superficially more impressive but may not provide evidence of greater likelihood of success within the medical school. Applicants are encouraged to think carefully and critically about their own experiences and to highlight those things that demonstrate those abilities essential to the practice of medicine rather than compile a list of their most significant accomplishments.

4.2 Application Irregularities / Areas of Concern

Notwithstanding any scores achieved by that application, the P2M Advisory Committee reserves the right to terminate any application in accordance with “areas of concern” policy as outlined by the MD Admissions Office at the CSM. Common reasons for review at the sub-committee level include academic misconduct, misrepresentation on the application, prior criminal behaviour, and unprofessional behaviour exhibited during the interview or elsewhere. Of note, any attempts by the applicant to misrepresent familial income, parental occupation, or education history will result in the loss of the scholarship. Further, such incidents may be reported to the admissions committee of the MD program and may adversely affect subsequent MD application outcomes.

4.3 Final Ranking

The final application score will be determined after evaluating the applicant's submitted documents alongside their interview performance.

The cumulative scores will be ranked, and scholarship offers will be extended to the top 5 applicants based on this ranking.

Section 5: Contact Information

5.1 Contacting the Program

If you would like to contact the Pathways to Medicine team for clarification on how to apply or to complete an application form, you can do so via e-mail:

pathways@ucalgary.ca

Pathways to Medicine Scholarship Program
HSC 1005 - 3330 Hospital Drive NW
Cumming School of Medicine
Calgary, AB T2N 4N1



Appendix

Appendix A: Pathways to Medicine Conditions

As part of the scholarship, recipients are **guaranteed admission to the CSM MD program** upon completion of their undergraduate degree, provided that certain conditions have been met as detailed below:

- Completion of a minimum of 24 credits in each academic year (Fall + Winter terms)
- Maintenance of a minimum GPA of >2.0 during the first year of undergraduate study
- Maintenance of a minimum GPA of >3.2 during the second, third and fourth years of undergraduate study
- Achievement of an overall GPA of 3.4+ throughout their undergraduate degree, as calculated by the CSM MD Admissions Office
- Continued involvement in community and campus activities as would be expected of traditional CSM MD applicants
- Participation in 100% of the required P2M enrichment program in the first year, and at least 80% in subsequent years (2nd, 3rd and 4th)
- Completion of the MCAT during the recipients' undergraduate degree
- Completion of the CSM MD application process, including participation in the multiple mini-interviews (MMI) during the recipients' undergraduate degree program
- Achievement of a score >20th percentile on the CSM MD applicant file review
- Achievement of a score >20th percentile on the MMI
- No "areas of concern" were identified during the recipients' undergraduate studies, as outlined in section 5.2 of this manual