Helpful Information and Resources for New International Learners

Welcome to McMaster University, Post-Graduate Medical Education (PGME)!
Check out our discover PGME video:

Welcome to Hamilton, Ontario!
Check out the discover Hamilton video:
The PGME office is located in room 3101A (3rd floor) in the Michael DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery (MDCL), adjacent to the McMaster University Medical Centre (MUMC).

If coming from MUMC, go to BLUE Section of the 2nd or 4th floors to access the connecting bridges to the MDCL building.

Contact Us:
- Residency Administrators—pgmeres@mcmaster.ca
- Fellowship Administrators—pgmefell@mcmaster.ca
- Visiting Elective Administrator—pgmeve@mcmaster.ca

Visit the PGME Office Contacts page for more information.
Getting Started

Mandatory Health Insurance (OHIP & UHIP)

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage is mandatory for all new Learners arriving to Ontario from another country. Learners must apply for OHIP as soon as possible once they have arrived in Ontario. Learners should also apply for OHIP insurance coverage for any family members who have travelled with them. Go to the Service Ontario website to apply for OHIP.

- As part of the OHIP application learners may be asked to submit a letter from their employer confirming their training details and new Ontario address, please contact the PGME office to request an OHIP letter.

- Currently, the directive from OHIP is that there is no longer a waiting period for OHIP coverage. If you are eligible, you will have immediate health insurance coverage. Go to the Service Ontario website to find out if you qualify.

- If the waiting period returns, learners must then apply for the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) to provide coverage during the OHIP waiting period. Review the OHIP-UHIP Information Form for more details. Learners who have travel insurance may be eligible to have the UHIP coverage waived, as long as the travel insurance coverage matches the UHIP coverage. To find out if you qualify for a waiver, please contact the UHIP Office.

Criminal Record Check

You will be required to submit a criminal record check to the CPSO, you must submit one of these two options:

1. A Criminal Record and Judicial Matters check (Level 2)
2. A Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) check (Level 3)

The CPSO recommends that Learners in Ontario use the Hamilton Police Service’s online option: https://www.policesolutions.ca/checks/services/hamilton/register.php for the fastest service. Click here to view the CPSO’s Guide to Acceptable Criminal Record Checks.

CPSO* & CMPA** Final Items

*CPSO—College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
**CMPA—Canadian Medical Protective Association

Once the criminal record check is submitted to the CPSO and all other outstanding items have been fulfilled, the CPSO will send you a Postgraduate Education license number.

You can call the CMPA office (1-800-267-6522) and provide them with your CPSO license number to fulfil their remaining requirements.

Please note, although your CMPA statement may state “no end date”, we require annual confirmation from the CMPA each year. Coverage runs from January 1st of each year until December 31st.
Complete Registration Requirements

- Complete MedSIS registration requirements
- Send photo headshot to PGME
- Complete and sign the Confidentiality Access Form
- Submit Mask Fit information to PGME (if valid)

Review PGME Policies

It is your responsibility to review all PGME Policies before you begin your training. All PGME Policies are posted on our PGME website, under Policies.

PEAP (Pre-entry Assessment Program) Policy

The PEAP provides an assessment of the candidate’s general knowledge and competency in the specialty and at the level in which she/he is certified, and appropriate for practice in the discipline in which the candidate is entering resident or fellowship training.

Program Directors must ensure that candidates are assessed and given written feedback on a regular basis during the PEAP. The PEAP must be a minimum of four and a maximum of twelve weeks in duration (dependent on progress made and at the program directors discretion).

The PEAP is a high stakes assessment over a short timeframe. As such, candidates are discouraged from taking vacation during the PEAP, as it may put their assessment in jeopardy.

PGME Registration Appointment

PGME Registration appointments will be available on June 27, 28, and 29, 2022.

At your registration appointment you will:
- Receive your Photo ID badge and your McMaster Student Card
- Be mask-fit tested
- Receive HHS Citrix username (for HHS computer access)
- Obtain pager & parking information

If you are a resident (this includes subspecialty PGY4-8) starting on July 1st, you must book a PGME Registration Appointment using the appointment booking system. You will need your Medportal email address to access the registration appointment system. You will be able to change your appointment up until June 7. After that your appointment cannot be changed.

If you are a clinical or research fellow, please DO NOT use the appointment booking system.

You must contact pgmefell@mcmaster.ca to schedule your registration appointment.

Learners who are starting before or after July 1st, please contact the PGME office to schedule your appointment prior to your training start date.

NOTE: Learners who start in May and June, the above information does not apply.
Living in Ontario

Accommodation

Mac Off-Campus housing connects the McMaster community with great places to live. Please visit the Mac Off-Campus Housing webpage for listings and contact information.

Short term Housing & Rental Options:

Air BNB – www.airbnb.ca

Booking – www.booking.com

Rentals – www.rental.ca

Zumber – www.zumper.com

Kijiji – www.kijiji.ca

Trip Advisor – www.tripadvisor.ca

Rentals in Hamilton – https://rentals.ca/hamilton

Trovit – https://property.trovit.ca/for-rent-house-hamilton

Pad Mapper – https://www.padmapper.com/apartments/hamilton-on

Here’s a list of Realtors for those wishing to buy property

Preparing for the Canadian Winter Season

1. A Good Winter Coat—well padded, long in length with a large hood is best.
2. Good Quality Winter Boots—warm boots with a good grip is best.
3. Winter Hat or ‘Toque’ - A fleeced interior is best.
4. Warm Gloves—fleeced interior with water resistance on the outside is best.
5. Scarf or Muffler
6. Wear Layers underneath to keep your core warm

Visit prepareforcanada for more information.

In case of an emergency call 9-1-1. This number is the same no matter where you live in Canada.

Depending on the emergency, you can ask for Police, Fire department or Ambulance.
Living in Ontario

Canadian Banking
There are a number of chartered banking institutions available to enroll with, including the following (to name a few):

- TD (Toronto Dominion) Bank
- BMO (Bank of Montreal)
- CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce)
- Scotia Bank
- RBC (Royal Bank of Canada)

The BEST 10 Banks & Credit Unions in Hamilton

Average cost of living in Hamilton

Here’s a quick monthly breakdown (estimated):

- Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre: $1,557.14
- Basic Utilities (Electricity, Heating, Cooling, Water, Garbage): $164.26
- Internet: $82.20
- Transportation Monthly Pass: $110.00
- Car Finance: $350
- Car Insurance: $160
- Gasoline (1 Litre): $2.04
- Child Care (full days for 1 child): $1,133.33
- Groceries: $400
- Restaurants (mid range, 3-course—once a week): $160
- Fitness Club: $48.21
- Movie Theatre (no snacks): $15
- Clothing (one dress, jeans and sneakers): $202.99

Moving2Canada.com is a great resource for newcomers to Canada, who are looking to get a cell phone network plan, and addresses some of the most frequently asked questions.

WARNING: Canada is notorious for having some of the most expensive cell phone plans in the world, especially when it comes to data.

Cell Phone Plans
There are a number of cell phone network providers in Ontario. You can visit Planhub.ca to compare plans or you can visit network company kiosks (many are located within our shopping malls).

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Sources: Numeo, Rate Hub
Living in Ontario

Places of Worship

A full comprehensive list of places of Worship in Hamilton can be found on the McMaster University Multifaith Resources page.

Childcare and Local Schools

For a comprehensive list of childcare/day care options, please visit the Hamilton Childcare Registry website.

The Hamilton Childcare Registry makes finding licensed childcare providers simple. You can browse childcare options by location and age group. You can also view details about a childcare program, hours and type of care being offered.

Elementary & Secondary Schools

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

Burlington/Hamilton Private Schools

Post-Secondary Schools

Colleges & Universities in Ontario

Extended Health Care Insurance

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) only provides coverage for necessary medical health services. Extended health coverage such as dental and vision coverage is not included.

If you are not eligible for extended health insurance benefits through your employment contract, there are many Institutions offering private extended health insurance plans including:

Family Physicians/Primary Health Care Providers

Please contact the PGME office to obtain a list of physicians who typically take on Postgraduate Learners as patients.
Living in Ontario

Transportation

**From the Airport**

The most popular international airport is Toronto Pearson Int’l Airport (YYZ).

There are plenty of Car Hire options available at Pearson Airport.

Aeroport taxi service offers a flat rate $88 (CAD) for a single trip between Toronto Pearson Airport and Hamilton Downtown.

Hamilton Cab (taxi service) offers a flat rate of $95 (CAD) for a single trip between Toronto Pearson Airport and Hamilton Downtown.

**Around Hamilton City**

Travel within downtown Hamilton is easy with the use of the Hamilton Street Railway (Bus) service for a flat rate of $3.25 per direction. For information on all routes, please visit the Hamilton Street Railway website.

Uber and Lyft ride-share programs are also available.

Hamilton Cab taxi Service.

**Around the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)**

Go Transit offers train and bus services which cover the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton.

**Around Canada**

Via Rail is Canada’s National Railway Service; connecting City-to-City and Coast-to-Coast.

Additional Airports

John C. Munro International Airport (Hamilton)
Region of Waterloo International Airport (Waterloo)
Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (Toronto)
Niagara Falls International Airport (Niagara)

**Ontario Driving**

If you want to drive while you are training in Ontario, you can visit the driver’s licensing information found on the Ontario Ministry of Transportation website.

Postgraduate medical learners from outside Ontario are considered temporary residents of Ontario for licensing purposes.

For the full list of the driving rules in Ontario, please visit the Safe and Responsible Driving Guide.
Living in Ontario

Things to do in Hamilton

- Hiking Trails
- Waterfalls
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- African Lion Safari
- Beachfront
- Treetop Trekking
- Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum
- Dundurn Castle
- Art Gallery of Hamilton
- Canadian Football League (CFL) Tiger Cat games

- And much more...

Visit The Tourism Hamilton website for more information.
Things to do in Ontario

Toronto
- Royal Ontario Museum
- Ripley’s Aquarium
- Major League Sports
- Theatre & Musicals
- Concerts
- St. Lawrence Market

Niagara Falls
- Niagara City Cruises
  - Journey behind the falls
  - Clifton Hill

Greater Toronto Area
- Canada’s Wonderland Theme Park
- Niagara on the Lake—Wine Region

Ottawa
- Guided tour of Parliament
  - 7 National Museums
### Lifestyle & Recreation—Popular Gyms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gym</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Common Amenities</th>
<th>Joining Fee</th>
<th>Monthly Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good Life Fitness</strong></td>
<td>200+ across Canada</td>
<td>Group Fitness, Personal Training (offered at an additional cost), hot yoga and virtual training, some locations offer 24 hour access</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td>from $34.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit 4 Less</strong></td>
<td>20+ across Ontario</td>
<td>24 hour gym, very spacious and plenty of equipment, virtual classes, massage bed and tanning bed options are available (for $23.98 per month, gym access included in this price)</td>
<td>$49.99</td>
<td>from $13.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crunch Fitness</strong></td>
<td>20+ across Canada</td>
<td>24 hour gym, very spacious and plenty of equipment, group classes, virtual training and Personal Training (offered at an additional cost), massage bed and tanning bed options are available (at an additional cost)</td>
<td>$49.99</td>
<td>from $14.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anytime Fitness</strong></td>
<td>200+ across Canada</td>
<td>Group Fitness, Personal Training (offered at an additional cost), 24 hour access, worldwide access, community</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>from $49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F45 Training</strong></td>
<td>150+ across Canada</td>
<td>NOT a Gym but a group High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) plan. 45 minute sessions of functional HIIT with a group. Regular 8-week challenges. High sense of community.</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>from $260 ($65 per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orangetheory Fitness</strong></td>
<td>100+ across Canada</td>
<td>NOT a Gym but a group High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) plan. Focus on cardiovascular health. Regular transformation challenges. High sense of community. Fees—multiple plans available and fees vary.</td>
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For a full comprehensive list of Provincial Sport Organizations, please visit the Ontario Provincial Website

**Golf Ontario**
- Golf course locations, tee times, memberships
  - 2022 Competitive Schedule

**Tennis Ontario**
- Find a Club
  - 2022 Tournament Calendar

**Ski Ontario**
- Find a Ski Resort
- Ski events

**Soccer Ontario**
- Find a Local District
- Ontario Soccer Events

**Cricket Ontario**
- Members Leagues
- Current Statistics
The YMCA (often referred to as “the Y”) offers multiple Programs and Services, for Adults & Children including:

- Health & Fitness Classes
- Personal Training
- Sports & Recreation (pick-up games are regularly available)
- Swimming Classes (Aquatics)
- Swimming Lessons
- Day Camp for Kids
- Family Camp
- Getaways
- Retreats
- Child Care
- Newcomer Youth Centre
- Youth in Transition programs
- Adult Learning
- New to Canada Assistance & Resources
- EarlyOn Family Centres
- Outdoor Education
Resident Affairs

Resident Affairs provides confidential support for all residents and fellows, and assists Learners as they manage issues with or within their program, hospital, university or home. They will act as an advocate, and will support or represent the Learner requiring workplace accommodations or further support.

The Resident Affairs Office is confidential, functioning at an arm’s length to the PGME office, Program Directors, and hospital administration. Learners may contact the office at any time.

You can make an appointment through the online booking site.

McMaster Health Sciences Library

The McMaster Health Sciences Library (HSL) is located on the 2nd Floor, purple section, of the McMaster Children's Hospital (Health Sciences Centre). Besides a large collection of information resources, they offer many services to make it easier for trainees to access the literature needed for learning and research. Trainees must have an active MacID account/email that allows access to e-books, e-journals and databases. When accessing services in person the McMaster Student card is mandatory (not to be confused with the McMaster PGME Photo ID card).

English as a Second Language

The McMaster Office for the Development of English Language Learners (MODEL) is a free service designed to help both undergraduate and graduate students who may be struggling with the English Language.

MODEL offers English-language training, workshops, and support, developed by certified ESL and EAP experts, to meet the needs of McMaster students of all academic backgrounds and levels of English language proficiency.

MODEL also has an on-site student advisor with experience in both ESL and counselling who is available to meet with students to discuss personal, social, and academic concerns.

For more information please visit the MODEL Webpage.

MedPortal

On MedPortal, you will find information regarding:

- Registration
- Certificates
- Letters
- Orientation
- Policies
- Payroll, Benefits, Stipends & Tax Forms
- Hospital & Regional Campus Information
- And much more...