



Medical Students' Association of Notre Dame

MEDI6100

Survival Guide 2024

Originally Written by Ash Wallin
Version 1.12

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GLOSSARY

Some quick abbreviations you need to be familiar with:

A&P: Anatomy and Physiology

BCS: Basic & Clinical Sciences

CCP: Communication & Clinical Practice

CD: Clinical Debriefing

CS: Clinical Skills

EBM: Evidence Based Medicine

JAR: Journal Article Research

LOs: Learning Objectives

BLOs: Broad Learning Objectives

SLOs: Specific Learning Objectives

OSCE: Objective Structured Clinical Examination

PBL: Problem Based Learning

PPH: Population & Preventative Health

PPD: Personal & Professional Development

UNDF: The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations and welcome to first year medicine! Getting into medical school is a huge achievement in itself so take a minute to reflect on that. You are about to embark on a career that you will find both challenging and rewarding beyond anything you could have imagined.

Like many of us did, you are probably wondering what this course involves and how to best prepare for medical school and survive your first year. That's where this guide comes in! Hopefully it will provide you with some information, advice and insight from the personal experiences of students who have come before you. Keep this guide as a reference for the rest of the year as I'm sure you are in information overload at the moment!!!

This guide is the original brainchild of Ash Wallin in 2010 and has been lovingly updated and revamped every year by an ever growing number of dedicated Notre Dame Medical students and alumni. Please see the version history at the end of this document for a full list of contributors and editors.

As you are reading this guide, please note that this is a collection of *personal* opinions from MSAND members, and as such, the approaches discussed in this guide may not be the best approach for you. So take the bits that you find helpful, discard the rest and approach first year with an open mind.

MSAND

MSAND is the Medical Students' Association of Notre Dame; we are your student body and we do a lot! In Semester 1, MSAND runs the first year O-Camp and a load of social nights to help you get to know each other and your colleagues in other years. Other than ensuring your medical school journey is full of fun, MSAND offers each first year student a senior student mentor to help make the transition into medicine as seamless as possible. We also organise numerous educational events that we really encourage you to get involved with. These events include (but are by no means limited to) the First Year Survival Night and content review nights that cover important concepts like pharmacology, ECGs and clinical skills.

MSAND is a committee of about 22 wicked people who are elected by its members (you!) each year in October. We have an executive made up of our President, Vice Presidents (Internal and External), Treasurer and Secretary. The rest of the team is made up of various portfolios (e.g. Social, Sport, Wellbeing, Education etc) and year representatives (two per year). Each portfolio is responsible for different events and activities including our soccer and AFL leagues, wellness and wellbeing events, community service opportunities as well as liaising and planning with the senior medical school and university staff. Our 2024 team is almost complete, all we're looking for are our final two members... our first-year representatives! It could be you! You'll find out more about this soon enough.

Aside from our core team, MSAND also has Special Interest Groups. These explore key interests of medical students (e.g. Physician training, Global Health, Paediatrics, to name a few). There's also the Notre Dame Association of Surgical Specialties (NDASS) for those who prefer to be a bit more hands on! These 'SPIGs' will be looking for first year reps early in the year, so if you have any particular interests or a field you're keen to dip your toes into, keep your eyes peeled.

AMSA

MSAND is one of 23 Medical Student Societies across Australia that are represented by the **Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA)**. AMSA was founded back in 1959 when a bunch of students from various Queensland medical schools decided to get together for a few days to network and share a few drinks and laughs. That event - now known as the AMSA Annual National Convention - is now regarded as the largest student-run conference in the world. More than 1500 medical students from across Australia attend annually and with an event budget well over \$1,200,000, it's an event not to be missed! In 2019, the event was held in Hobart, and in 2020 the event was scheduled to take place in Melbourne until you know what came along. You will most definitely hear about this in the weeks to come but if you need any advice RE: saving up, types of tickets etc., there are many happy past-attendees willing to have a chat.

However don't be fooled, AMSA is about a lot more than just Convention. It is now the peak representative body for 17,000 medical students across Australia. AMSA represents your interests nationally, and actually lobbies politicians on a monthly basis! AMSA runs three major events a year; the Annual National Convention, the Global Health Conference and the National Leadership Development Seminar. If you're interested in knowing more about these, talk to Prem Sathiamoorthy, our MSAND AMSA rep (amsa@msand.org.au).

PREPARING FOR DAY ONE!

There are a few things that you can do over the summer break that can prepare you for your first year of medical school. These will all depend on your circumstances but we have compiled a few tips that you might find helpful!

Please also remember you are about to embark on a year that is full of a lot of change and study so remember to relax and enjoy your summer!

REQUIREMENTS

The school has sent out a bunch of information regarding first aid courses, vaccinations and the like - we recommend getting these done as soon as you can as sometimes it can take you longer than you think to get everything sorted.

TERM DATES 2024

Semester Dates & Vacation Dates	Week	Week Beginning	Public Holidays (Uni closed)	
Semester 1	1	22-Jan	MEDI6100 Commences Monday 22 January, Toolkit Week Australia Day - Friday 26 January	
	2	29-Jan		
	3	05-Feb		
	4	12-Feb		
	5	19-Feb		
	6	26-Feb		
	7	04-Mar	Labour Day - Monday 4 March	
	8	11-Mar	Wheatbelt Community Engagement Week	
	9	18-Mar		
	10	25-Mar	Good Friday - 29 March	
	Non-teaching Week	11	01-Apr	Easter Monday - 01 April
	12	08-Apr		
	13	15-Apr		
	14	22-Apr	ANZAC Day - Thursday 25 April	
	15	29-Apr		
	16	06-May		
	17	13-May		
	18	20-May		
	19	27-May		
	20	03-Jun	WA Day - Monday 3 June	
	21	10-Jun		
	Pre-exam revision	22	17-Jun	Pre-exam revision
MID-YEAR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	23	24-Jun	MID-YEAR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	
Vacation (2 weeks)	24	01-Jul	Vacation (2 weeks)	
	25	08-Jul		
Semester 2	26	15-Jul	Semester 2 commences Monday 15 July	
	27	22-Jul		
	28	29-Jul		
	29	05-Aug		
	30	12-Aug		
	31	19-Aug		
	32	26-Aug		
	33	02-Sep		
	34	09-Sep		
	35	16-Sep		
	Non-teaching Week	36	23-Sep	King's Birthday - Monday 23 September
		37	30-Sep	
38		07-Oct		
39		14-Oct		
Pre-exam revision	40	21-Oct	Pre-exam revision	
END OF YEAR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	41	28-Oct	END OF YEAR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	
VACATION	42	04-Nov	VACATION	

Subject to changes: 01/08/2023

THINGS TO DO NOW

Most people that you speak to will advise that you spend your last summer before med school relaxing; you will have plenty of time to study once the semester starts. However, for those who are particularly eager, we have a couple of suggestions for you. Three things that some students might find helpful in getting a head start on first year are:

1. Become familiar with medical language

Many people in the past have recommended "The Language of Medicine" by Chabner, and while it

is great, it can be a little on the pricey side. Others have suggested a medical dictionary, have a medical words widget/app or using trusty old Wiki (I'd recommend "List of medical roots, suffixes and prefixes"). Being able to break down words into their component parts can make the early days a whole lot easier. For example "haemochromatosis" – I know that "haem" relates to blood, "chromo" relates to colour and "osis" refers to some kind of disorder....

2. Make a start on basic anatomy and physiology

If you have time and are keen to start learning now, learn the anatomical planes (sagittal, transverse, coronary) and anatomical direction (inferior vs. superior, anterior vs. posterior, lateral vs. medial, proximal vs. distal, and dorsal vs. ventral). Going through basic anatomy and physiology may also be useful for some. However, it's not worth the stress and time trying to learn it all in great detail as these will be reviewed repeatedly throughout the year.

3. Join MSAND! [Become a Member Today!](#)

As well as producing this resource for you, MSAND is YOUR student organisation; it is run **by** Medical students **for** Medical students. Throughout the year MSAND will run events like the first-year survival night, ECG night and other great events aimed at enhancing your learning. When you combine this with all of the events on the social calendar you'll see that MSAND is there to make your life easier and help you meet and engage with other medical students across the school. MSAND membership is included in the cost of the O-camp ticket. If you can't make it to O-Camp, MSAND will post the details for membership on your cohort facebook page at some stage early in the year.

4. Buying a Stethoscope

One of the most common questions asked by first year med students is what stethoscope to buy and when to buy it? Firstly, if you are short on money, then you can get away with buying a very basic and cheap stethoscope from eBay in your first year. They're mainly used for blood pressure and demonstration purposes at first. Eventually you will need a good stethoscope and most students purchase the Littman Classic III. Other popular options include Welch-Allyn stethoscopes at competitive rates, and Littman Cardiology IV/Masters. Feel free to shop online for the best deal (e.g. www.medshop.com.au or www.medisave.com.au). The cardiology and paediatric stethoscopes are **specialist equipment** - don't feel like you need to get the top of the range now - unless you have your heart set on being a cardiologist! You definitely won't need a paed stethoscope in medical school; so save your pennies!

5. Applying for Centrelink

For some of you this may be the first time you have ever applied for Centrelink so here are some helpful tips:

- Apply ASAP - it can take a few weeks for the payments to begin
- Check back on your application prior to course commencement to ensure that it has been approved
- Rent assist for those renting
- There is a student start up loan that is available at the beginning of each semester which you can choose to apply for or not
- Ask for a health care card - this can be used to get you bulk billed healthcare and discounted medications - eligible students can also use this for any concession entitlement (e.g. transport, ambulance cover, medication, movie tickets, Rotto tickets etc)
- Semester start-up payment loans are available

CURRICULUM

The first-year curriculum spans across six domains: BCS, CCP, PPH, PPD, AH and JAR/research.

- **Basic and Clinical Sciences (BCS):** science component and covers topics such as anatomy and physiology, human biology, pharmacology, microbiology, histology etc.
- **Communication and Clinical Practice (CCP):** clinical skills component, including patient examinations, taking patient histories, communication and other procedural skills (e.g. blood pressure, wound dressings etc.).
- **Population and Preventive Health (PPH):** covers population-based health initiatives, such as sanitation and vaccination. It also covers Evidence Based Medicine, research and statistics.
- **Personal and Professional Development (PPD):** focuses on your personal journey towards becoming a doctor, including self-reflection on your personal values, morals and beliefs (and how these will affect your practice).
- **Aboriginal Health (AH):** the AH team will run workshops, lectures, and excursions/activities to enrich your understanding of Aboriginal culture and educate you on how to deliver culturally-safe healthcare.
- **Journal Article Research (JAR):** an introduction into critical analysis and the importance of research in the clinical medical field.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

A summary of the concepts the university expects you to know from a week can be found in the MEDI6100 Study Guide posted by the University on BlackBoard. These concepts/questions are referred to as Learning Objectives or LO's and will be one of your most used phrases by the end of our years. Each is divided into Broad LO's (italicised) and Specific LO's under each Block; a Block being the body system/function you'll be covering for the allotted time (anywhere from 1 to 3 weeks). It's worth noting that LO's are not listed in any particular order with respect to the delivery of the content - you have to do a bit of sleuthing to figure out which LO's are covered in each week of the block. Most Lecturers are pretty good at aligning the LO's to their lecture, and will list them at the start of each presentation. You'll also notice not all LO's (Broad and/or specific) are covered in the labs/tutorials/lectures each week, and you will have to endeavor to cover them in your own time. Always remember: if it's an LO, they can assess you on it! Some will be easy to knock out (background dependent), and others could lead you down a bit of a rabbit hole (this will become one of your most frequently used phrases). If you're ever feeling lost in an LO, remember to use University resources and PBL to guide the depth you're going into!

TIMETABLES

Your week begins on a Monday morning with Problem Based Learning (PBL) and concludes the following Monday with the summation of that week's case. Each year of Medicine at Notre Dame is run as one big unit, and is subsequently divided into blocks. Each block is a set of 1-3 weeks which centers around a physiological theme e.g. Cardiology, Gastrointestinal Tract, Mental Health, etc. This means you don't have separate "units" as you may be accustomed to in your undergraduate degrees; first year is one big unit and all weeks of content (on any block) may be assessed in your mid and end-of-year exams.

Despite the changing timetable, you can rely on some classes occurring at a consistent time. PBL, Clinical Debriefing (CD) and clinical skills will occur at the same time each week. However, lectures and labs will vary on a week-to-week basis and your timetable for the following week will usually be released on the preceding Thursday at lunch time. This can be frustrating with work/other life commitments; it's a good idea to start thinking about how your flexibility may be reduced and how to work around this.

It is commonly a good idea to have watched the lectures directly relevant to your PBL case prior to Thursday's PBL class. Poor recording quality is fairly common and many lecturers will go over their allocated time. Sometimes recordings from previous years are used and might not be complete or have issues, if you encounter these please let Paul Noakes know so it can be fixed. This is really a matter of personal preference and **what works best for you** as some students prefer going over recordings at their own pace. I would encourage you to attend in the first few weeks and get a feel as to what you prefer. Some students only attend lectures run by certain lecturers, some attend them all and others attend none. You need to work out your personal style and realise that this may not be the same as what you've done in your previous degree. It is important to note that LOs change slightly from year to year, so if a lecture recording fails and an old recording is uploaded it may not have the same focus as the live lecture.

Lectures that are compulsory will be announced on Blackboard and indicated in the weekly timetable posted.

Finally, laboratory classes are compulsory for first and second years. More details below!

As a basic outline each week you will have:

(Note: This may change in the future but has been the general structure over the last 5 years)

- **Monday:**

- **Morning:** Every Monday there is PBL at Notre Dame (at 8:30 am) - this session is three hours long, one hour to close and summarise the previous week's case and then two hours to begin the new case for the week. This is possibly followed by a CCP or PPH lecture.
- **Afternoon:** most weeks of the year, there are also BCS lectures.

- **Tuesday:** aka BCS day

- **Morning:** Most Tuesdays will start with BCS lectures which are delivered face-to-face in 2024.
- **Afternoon:** Labs at Notre Dame. Since there are ~100 of you, you will be divided into groups, and rotated through the various lab times. The number of time slots may vary between weeks. There will be a few weeks where you may have three labs (1:30 to 7:30) - these are long days so be sure to find some time for coffee or a break! Please note though this isn't every week, sometimes there will be only one

lab and other times none! In my experience it is fairly easy to organise swaps between the different lab times as long as you let the tutors know. Also, you can look at the lab sheets beforehand to see what will be covered in the lab, and perhaps you may choose to just attend one of them.

- **Wednesday:** Wednesday may be your favourite day of the week!
 - **Morning:** You will typically start with a few lectures in the morning typically aimed at history taking or examination (clinical skills).
 - **Afternoon:** After lunch you will have clinical skills tutorials! The timetable says 1-5pm, but there are two sessions. Session A runs 1-3pm and Session B runs 3-5pm. If you are Session A in semester one, you will be Session B in semester two. Be aware that there will often be alternate rotations scheduled in the 2-hour gap while the other half of the cohort are in their clinical skills sessions. These sessions are used to teach you important skills like how to take blood pressure or for revision of things like x-rays or ultrasounds.
- **Thursday:**
 - **Morning:** PBL in the morning, with a short break and then CD.
 - **Afternoon:** The afternoon typically consists of PPH lectures. Some people find that PPH can be a little harder to grasp than other concepts, such sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV but if you spend the time it'll be your bread and butter in no time. PPH is assessed with its own online exam so don't brush it off.
- **Friday:** Aside from the occasional Aboriginal Health Field trip or Bioethics seminar (approx 30% of Fridays), this is your day off! Kick back and relax or hit the books, but definitely take some "me-time" - you're going to need it! In semester 2, you will have JAR for 1.5 hours at an inconvenient time in the afternoon, on every second friday. In 2023, JAR was entirely on Zoom and ran at 2pm-3:30pm, so you won't have to come onto campus!

MEDI6100, 2024		Week: Generic					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY		
8.30 - 9.00 am	PBL 3	BCS lectures	CCP lectures	PBL 2	Bioethics OR Aboriginal Health (various one-off days throughout the year)		
9.00 - 9.30 am							
9.30 - 10.00 am	PBL 1			Break			
10.00 - 10.30 am							
10.30 - 11.00 am				PPD (CD)			
11.00 - 11.30 am							
11.30 - 12.00 pm	PPH lecture						
12.00 - 12.30 pm							
12.30 - 1.00 pm	LUNCH		LUNCH	LUNCH			
1.00 - 1.30 pm		BCS Laboratories	CCP - Clinical Skills	PPH (EBM tute) Or JAR (S1 only)			
1.30 - 2.00 pm	BCS lectures						
2.00 - 2.30 pm							
2.30 - 3.00 pm							
3.00 - 3.30 pm							
3.30 - 4.00 pm							
4.00 - 4.30 pm							
4.30 - 5.00 pm							
5.00 - 5.30 pm							
5.30 - 6.00 pm							

Subject to Change - please check regularly for updates

You will quickly realise the timetables usually give away what the PBL topic for the week will be. The timetable may be littered with “Diabetes Medications” lectures and “Public Health Aspects of Diabetes” seminars, so it doesn’t really take a genius to work out what the PBL case will be. Lots of people try to avoid looking at lecture/lab titles until after the first PBL on Monday so they can get as much out of the PBL process as possible.

An important thing to note is that you will not have a full week every week! Some weeks may have 12 lectures and 6 hours of labs. Others will only have 2 or 3 lectures and no labs! Block to block variation occurs as well – some blocks have a large amount of content packed into a small period, others are much more leisurely. So don’t worry if you finish a week without having covered all the content as there will be time to make up, be it in a quieter week or one of the study breaks.

Wheatbelt Community Engagement week: Every year, the entire cohort spends one week in the wheatbelt for a community engagement exercise. This program continued in 2023 following COVID. The wheatbelt week is usually held during week 8 and is a nice break after the first 2 months of study.

If you haven’t already, make sure you check out the yearly academic calendar which details the weeks, semester and mid year breaks and exam periods (see above).

CLASSES

You'll encounter many different lecturing styles throughout the year and opinions are varied among previous years as to which lecturers are good and which are not so good. Many students in the years above you will give you their opinions on whose lectures you should attend and whose you should skip. I (Oli) think that it's worth checking them all out before making up your own mind. Some lecturers will give minor hints as to content they consider more important. Ultimately, it's up to you as to how you approach the lectures. Previous students have taken a variety of approaches, including going to all of them, going to ones they think might be useful for them, or going to hardly any.

LECTURES

All the lectures are recorded and accessible on the Notre Dame. As usual with these systems, faults happen and some lectures won't record. In most cases the uni will try to put up a previous year's recording if there is one available. Some lecturers put up their notes well before the lecture, some not until after, and a few don't do any. In most cases the notes from the previous year will be up on blackboard the Friday before the week (i.e. when the coming week's folder is put up). Most of the time these are similar, except where a different lecturer might be delivering the lecture. As of 2024, all lectures that are conducted by UNDF academic staff will be in a face-to-face format. This is the directive of the new Executive Dean of UNDA. Exceptions to the f-t-f format at this time (2023) include clinician lectures and presenters interstate or intrastate. Unfortunately, synchronous viewing of these lectures will only be accessible at one of the lecture theatres at UNDF preventing 'zooming' in externally.

Content: If you're coming from a non-science background or you're feeling a tad rusty, the amount of content delivered in some of the lectures can feel overwhelming at times. It is important to keep in mind that you definitely don't need to know everything you're being taught. Many lecturers are specialists in their areas and include a large amount of detail that, while important for practice in that area, you don't need to commit to memory. If you're feeling overwhelmed and confused by different cells, hormones and receptors, a good question to ask yourself is 'could I explain the broad concept in a few sentences?' UNDF loves the concept of 'spiral learning', where you will return to the same concept repeatedly throughout the degree in order to solidify your understanding (you will probably struggle with the style of spiral learning to start but you will come to love it by the time you are in second year and the penny finally drops for many complex concepts). So don't panic if you don't understand an action potential the first time it is explained. Additionally, first year is all about knowing a little bit about a lot of things! This can be difficult to accept as a high achiever aiming to ace every topic. In postgrad medicine it's *not* possible to know everything: we cover too much too quickly. Just enjoy and trust the process; if you study hard and keep up-to-date with your LOs everything will come together in the end!

LABS

Labs as of 2024 are moving to compulsory format, so they will impact on the 90% attendance rule. The labs are a fantastic resource for first year for many reasons. Firstly, there are many things that are hard to teach without actually seeing them. Anatomy is the prime example; the anatomy models are an excellent teaching aid. There are also fantastic demonstrators that will take the time to explain difficult concepts or give you incredibly useful tips and tricks to learn anatomy. Many of the other labs can also be very useful in terms of understanding some of the basic physiology, histology and biochemistry. Keep in mind that the labs follow a "flipped classroom approach" whereby the tutors will not be running the stations, rather answering questions you may bring to the lab. It may

be a good idea to watch the lectures beforehand and bring along queries! Most of the answers can be found in an anatomy physiology text and the answers will be uploaded to blackboard after the completion of the learning block. I (Alex) believe that completing the lab worksheet as a 'pre-lab' and coming to the lab is most beneficial. Despite the different approaches it is best to at least glance over the material before attending the labs so that you have some idea what's going on when you are going in.

Attendance is tracked. While you won't be penalised for missing them, they do consider it a measure of how hard you're trying. If you're not doing well on the formative assessments and not attending labs the school will want to know why. More importantly, if your results are borderline come the end of the year, the university looks much more favourably on those who've put in the work and the hours.

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

How it works:

The UNDF curriculum is based around the PBL system. There is a new case each week, beginning on Monday. You will receive a number of triggers via Blackboard, which provide increasing amounts of information about your patient and their symptoms/presentation. The idea is to work through each trigger in your PBL group before moving onto the next one, identifying the important parts of the problem and the current gaps in your knowledge. Students record these ideas on a whiteboard and/or Google doc as they brainstorm with each other. Each PBL room contains at least two whiteboards, one for first year and one for second year. Each PBL does it slightly differently but there are 5 areas you need to cover and record on the whiteboard and/or Google doc. These are:

1. **Cues:** the important information you are given in the triggers
2. **Hypotheses:** the different ideas you will have about what the patient's problem could be
3. **Mechanisms:** the biological mechanism behind the illness/diseases that you've hypothesised
4. **Need to Knows:** what further information do you need about this patient?
5. **LOs:** where you formulate questions based on the knowledge you would need to gain a full understanding of the case (e.g. person has a bacterial infection of the upper respiratory tract – what kind of things could infect the URT? What is the anatomy of the respiratory tract? What sorts of immune defenses fight bacteria? What medications might you treat these with?

Most groups organise these into columns on the whiteboard like this:

Cues	Hypotheses	Mechanism	Need to Know	LOs

It sounds complicated but once you've done it a couple of times you get the hang of it, and you have a tutor to guide you through the whole process. You may have access to notes from previous years, however it may be best to wait until after the first PBL to read these. Having the answers before the case ruins the PBL process. Students that rely on these notes without undertaking the proper PBL procedure generally struggle to formulate answers in the Case Based Exam. It is important to remember that the PBL process is really a way of simulating real scenarios that you would encounter in real medical practice, helping you establish a method for dealing with such

presentations. It's designed to teach not just what you need to know to be a doctor, but also how to think logically and apply your knowledge.

Making it work:

PBL will comprise a large part of your time at med school. If you do the work and contribute to the group then you will find you get a lot out of PBL. It is a great chance to share your knowledge and also learn from others, especially with subjects in their area of expertise. Try to be prepared for PBL sessions; working out where your weaknesses are will help you harness the brilliance of others. Your tutors will be evaluating your efforts in PBL as a part of your overall MEDI6100 mark, so it's definitely worth putting the time and effort in.

Most PBLs work well, however there may be times that you don't see eye-to-eye with your colleagues. Try to make the most of your PBL experience, no matter what your personal feelings about the group are. Some groups set a time for regular feedback sessions to discuss how each member is feeling, how they had found the last case and how they functioned as a team. This gives groups the opportunity to play around with different styles and approach any problems within the group head on. If you're not satisfied, try talking to your tutor. It's important to remember that these people will be your colleagues, so it's important to remain professional and respectful. The reason why medical education is heavily reliant on PBL is because it teaches you important coping strategies and future behaviours for your clinical and practicing years - you will meet plenty of doctors, allied health staff and other students that you don't get along with; you need to be able to work as a functional team despite your personal differences.

If you have a bit of knowledge about an area, try to step up and teach your classmates who don't – not only will it really help them, it can also help consolidate your knowledge (especially the musculoskeletal labs – follow the physios around!). On this note, if you do come from a strong science background, please be mindful not to “over-do” this or attempt to “dazzle” your peers with your knowledge. In the first few months of medicine, everyone is really trying to find their feet. Help from peers is *always* welcome but be wary of the line between helping your peers and instilling fear or a sense of inadequacy within them. For those who come from a largely non-science background, fear not! More often than not, the top students in first year often come from Arts or Humanities backgrounds.

Each PBL group will have different methods. This is normal, and you may find that what works well for some groups does not suit others. There's no harm in trying. It is advisable to read the PBL policy that the school sends to you before or once you've started – the booklet contains vital information with respect to what PBL is and how it differs from other learning approaches.

You stay with your PBL group for one semester and change groups and tutors each semester. Functional PBL groups are integral to the learning process – both for knowledge and for enjoyment! These people will be your uni family for the first year, so treat them kindly and do your best to help each other out! You'll soon notice that many close friendship bonds develop from PBL, it's an exciting place!

CLINICAL SKILLS

Clinical Skills is where you get to learn the skills and procedures that are essential to being a doctor. It also gives you the opportunity to apply the knowledge you are learning in a clinical context.

Make sure to read through the required chapters and protocols in your Clinical Skills Handbook before the class (available online via Blackboard - Course Content). Familiarise yourself with the basic outline of what is to be covered and look up any words/procedures that you do not understand. Many people find Talley and O'Connor's Clinical Examination textbook a fantastic resource. Although outstanding, do not fret if you don't understand the information presented in this book just yet. It is a vital resource in second year but often above first-year level. In the first year, priority is given to being comfortable with the protocols presented in the clinical skills handbook. Also be mindful that the school has produced a variety of clinical skills videos to assist you in your practice; be sure to check these out under the Clinical Skills section of Blackboard.

Clinical Skills starts with learning how to take a thorough and respectful history. From day one you will be told that 90% of your diagnosis comes from the history, with your examination and tests as confirmation. History taking can be overwhelming to start with as there are seemingly endless questions to memorise. However, you will quickly find that the basic backbone of all history taking is more or less the same and once you have mastered the basic structure the only challenge is learning the specific questions for different systems.

Many people like to find a buddy or study group to practice clinical skills with right from the beginning. This will allow you to stay on top of the clinical skills protocols, saving you from last minute panic come exam time. It's important to note that these skills are the ones you'll take with you into hospital, so they really are worth learning. Clinical skills are typically disregarded as the cohort is not properly examined until the OCSE in November and there is such a BCS focus. One piece of advice I would give is practice the protocols as much as possible. Practice on family, friends, partners or anyone willing whilst you poke prod and move them.

BIOETHICS

Bioethics has replaced the requirement for medical students to do the traditional Notre Dame core units of Philosophy and Theology. This was a new unit in 2017 and runs as a 2-year unit covering the preclinical years (1st and 2nd year).

As of 2023, bioethics delivery changed to 4 half day sessions from a series of 10 lectures. They have some really great speakers and delve into some interesting topics. It is only in second year where bioethics is assessed.

These lectures are delivered mainly by the School of Philosophy with some guest lecturers. Their content centres on epistemology and ethics with respect to the medical profession. Contrary to what you might believe, Notre Dame isn't particularly interested in pushing any opinions onto its medical students. They do have a preference towards virtue ethics as a system, which not everyone may agree with. Overall however, especially in the PPD component of the course, the Notre Dame School of Medicine encourages open discussion about 'controversial' ethical topics (and we probably have more time to talk about these issues than many of the other medical schools). Remember to always be respectful when discussing sensitive issues or ethical dilemmas. Everyone has different life experiences and is entitled to their opinion and it is a marker of professionalism and maturity to be able to have difficult conversations in a calm and appropriate manner, even if you disagree.

ASSESSMENT

Throughout the year you are assessed in three ways: through your attendance and through formative and summative assessment.

- **Attendance:** in 2019 the Dean implemented an attendance requirement of 90% across all compulsory classes as it reflects that of interns within the WA health system. This caused a fair bit of anxiety within the students but it didn't end up causing much of a problem. When you add it up over the year 10% of classes is a fair chunk to miss and there are special circumstances where this requirement is waived. As always it's best to let someone know at the school if there is something going on that will affect your attendance and the school will do what it can to work something out for you.
- **Formative assessment:** formative assessment makes up part of what is called the learning assessment - it is marked but does not contribute to your overall grade.
- **Summative assessment:** summative assessments make up your final grade. These include your learning portfolio and exam results.

EXAMS

Throughout the year there will be two sets of exams. The first is the mid year exams, which take place around June, and the second set are the final end of year exams, which take place at the end of October. The mid semester exams are only worth ~16% of your overall grade and are really there to gauge how you are doing with your studies. It also gives you a chance to adjust your study habits before end of year exams, which are then worth about ~60%. The rest of your assessment is made up of the continuous assessment which is explained below.

EXAM TYPES

There are four types of exams:

1. The MCQ/SAQ Exam:

Covers BCS, CCP, and AH domains and contains multi choice and short-answer questions. These are done on your own computer (or a university device if you don't have your own) in the drill hall. Some people recommend earplugs to reduce the distraction of other people typing.

2. The Case Based Exam (CBE):

The format for this exam is a series of cases, each based on a block (e.g. cardiology) or a PBL case (e.g. diabetes). You run through a series of questions as the case unfolds (you can't go backwards as you're given answers as you progress!). This exam covers mainly content from the BCS domain, although it can also contain PPH, PPD and AH questions. You'll also find that many of the cases start off testing your CCP knowledge – there are easy marks to be had if you know your history questions! This exam is also done on your computer in the drill hall. Again the earplugs are a popular choice in this exam.

3. The OSCE:

This happens at the end of the year only (however the school does run a mock exam in mid semester). The OSCE is a practical exam that mainly covers clinical skills but may also include minor elements of PPH and even BCS in the questions that follow the practical skills. The exam is marked according to the protocols in the clinical skills manual. It involves a series of patient histories and physical exams that you must perform on patients (actors). The patient or examiner may ask some

related questions following the practical skills that sometimes include BCS or PPH material (e.g. after a gastro exam they may ask 'what are the different causes of diarrhoea', or after a breast exam 'why do I have a mammogram done every two years').

4. PPH open book assessment:

PPH content was delivered throughout the whole year, however, the only assessment was the community engagement week reflection (marks aren't typically high) and an open book exam in September of semester 2.

Mid year Exams: 1 x written paper + 1 x CBE exam

End of year exams: 1x written exam + 1x CBE + 1x OSCE (10 stations + 2 rest stations)

During semester 2 a Mock OSCE or MOSCE will most likely take place. This is a formative assessment that aims to expose you to how the real deal will run at the end of the year.

STUDY STYLES

Figure out your study style as early as possible. Do you learn best through taking notes, drawing diagrams, discussing it with others, or some other way? There are a whole raft of approaches and the earlier you can figure out what works for you the more you will get out of the course. Some people took notes from printed lecture slides, some did their own summary notes for each lecture whilst others used reading and/or online content to cement their learning. A lot of people can easily become stressed out when discussing study strategies with other students, but remember: you are studying for you and not studying for someone else. If it works for you then stick with it. Keep in mind, your style might change from what you used to do in undergrad, and may also change throughout this course! Don't be afraid to change it up and keep improving your technique! Moreover, ask the people who have gone before you; some of the best advice is from older students who have already been through what you have.

TIPS FOR EXAMS

- We all understand that exams are a highly stressful event. The best advice here is to make sure you understand the topics every week before coming up to exam time. By exam time, you should have already understood the concepts and simply be revising the material. Medicine is not the type of course you can get away with cramming everything last minute, there's just too much content.
- Study hard, but make sure you remember to take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat properly and make sure to take time out for whatever it is that helps you. Watch a movie, catch up with friends for a coffee, go for a run – whatever you need. If you find that you're struggling, **please ask for help**. Get in contact with the uni counsellors, go to your GP, talk to the School of Medicine, a fellow student or find a friendly face from MSAND who will be able to point you in the right direction. Your health and wellbeing is the most important thing, so do whatever it takes to protect it. One of the unique things about Notre Dame Fremantle is how keen the staff are to help you – there is no faceless bureaucracy here. If you need help with any topic, talk to your year coordinator, PBL tutor or CD tutor and they will get it for you.
- Study groups are an excellent way to revise. Find people with a similar approach to learning from a broad range of backgrounds. This means that everybody can contribute something different and lead the group in that area. Teaching others is great revision!
- The best advice we can offer is to focus on the big picture. The three main things to be guided by when revising for your exams are **your labs, formative assessments and LOs/Lectures**. At the end of the day, make sure you **aim to know a little bit about a lot**.

This will serve you much better than knowing one system in great detail. With this approach, you will be able to answer 90% of the questions, and when you don't know the answer you will be able to venture a reasonable guess based on your knowledge of how the systems work. Whatever you do, don't try to predict what will be in the exam because the exams cover EVERYTHING and medicine is very broad. Those who only stick to so-dubbed "high yield" topics may find themselves in a spot of bother if those topics don't come up.

- Start revising early! Making a revision plan can sound menial and boring, but it can save you a lot of headaches in feeling under the pump when exams approach. People often write these in small groups (as a good way of staying accountable), or independent revision plans to revisit previous topics over the weeks leading to exams. A lot of people in the years above have honed the skill of mapping one out, so always feel free to reach out to other years for guidance and support!
- **Make sure not to neglect your PPD topics!** A large amount of the short answer style questions are about PPD. If you know these domains well you can really pick up a lot of extra marks, which is especially useful for non-science students who may find the BCS portion of the exam more challenging.
- Get used to typing an exam, especially if you're a visual learner, make sure you can explain a concept in written form and don't get carried away with excessive detail or lured by the infinite amount of space to answer questions. The question spaces do not have a word count cut off, so you can easily end up spending large amounts of time giving long winded answers to the detriment of other questions. Be guided by mark allocation not space!
- Enjoy your OSCEs! They are a great chance to show what you have learnt throughout the year and are actually really fun. This is where you get to dress up and play doctor! **Don't forget to wash your hands.** It's a part of your marking criteria, however silly it may seem. The best advice for OSCEs is to practice, practice, and practice! Make use of the clinical skills videos that ND uploads on blackboard. These are found under course information and then clinical skills resources. It is hoped more videos will be made available for you to watch before your clinical skills sessions so take advantage of these. YouTube, geeky medics, Talley & O'Connor online also have a great range of OSCE/MSAT type examinations. These really help to consolidate your learning.
- For all the end of year exams, make sure that you revise first semester content, even if it has already been examined. The second semester exam is definitely not restricted to second semester content, and has often contained a lot more from 1st semester!
- Finally, surround yourself with people who are supportive and kind. For most people, exams are an emotional rollercoaster and you will need people to vent to. Sometimes it's good to know that you are not alone, that you are all going through the same thing and that you can support each other through.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The continuous assessment tasks are what make up your learning portfolio. These tasks include: reflections on activities you have done, Aboriginal health reflections, end of block assessments, mentor meetings. There are also assessments that look at your performance and participation within your classes. Some of these tasks are formative and others are summative and contribute towards your end grade. They are usually worth quite a small part of your overall grade but over time good results in these can add up. One piece of advice is to get onto these tasks early, often they have small word counts and the temptation to do them last minute is there but you will soon find that there's a fair bit of work you are doing every week so it's much more manageable to do them a little bit at a time or smash them out early.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

UNDF do not publish an official book list but provide first years with a list of “good texts.” Your best bet is to obtain a few essential textbooks that cover Anatomy and Physiology, Pharmacology and Clinical Medicine. To help you save some money, you can also borrow books from the library or get the information online. Most textbooks can be viewed for free online via the university library website. It is a good idea to try before you buy by borrowing one from a mate or acquiring a PDF from somewhere. You’ll find that many of the clinical year students will be selling books throughout the year – try the UNDF med classifieds facebook page to see if there’s any available (they get snapped up quickly though!). Be sure to check out the Free Books trolleys that are often just inside the entrance to St Teresa’s Library - some fantastic finds to be had there! Otherwise Book Depository or Amazon can be a good place to look.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

Any basic A&P book is fine, but **Human Anatomy and Physiology by Marieb**, **Anatomy and Physiology** by Saladin or **Fundamentals of Anatomy and Physiology** by Martini are all excellent textbooks that are pitched well for first year. Other students used **Principles of Anatomy and Physiology** by Tortora, **Textbook of Medical Physiology** by Guyton and Hall or **Clinically Oriented Anatomy** by Moore and Dalley. Have a flick through and see which one you like the style of. **Marieb is probably the most widely used**, although the others are fine.

PHARMACOLOGY

You will find a lot of lecture content comes directly from **Pharmacology by Rang and Dale**, which is a great resource if you’re struggling with Pharmacology, although it can be quite detailed. Sometimes a condensed overview such as that in **Pharmacology At A Glance** or the free **Pharmacology In One Semester** can be invaluable. Some students also find the **Australian Medicine Handbook** a useful resource. In first year, most of the focus is on the mechanism of action of the major classes of drugs used in practice today. For example, you’ll want to know how the different types of antihypertensives lower blood pressure, or how different classes of antibiotics work. You might also want to understand why drugs affecting the autonomic nervous system produce the side effects that they do. But you won’t be expected to list all the different drugs within a class, their indications, or dosage levels.

CLINICAL SKILLS

Clinical Examination: A Systematic Guide to Physical Diagnosis by Talley & O’Connor. Many people consider this book absolutely essential and you will find most doctors refer to this and expect you to follow the processes outlined from it. UNDF publishes a **Clinical Skills Handbook** which contains all the protocols for what you will cover in the first two years of medical school, and this is available at the Co-op bookshop. **ND OSCEs are marked based on the protocols from this handbook so it’s an essential resource.**

CLINICAL MEDICINE

Clinical Medicine by Kumar and Clark is a really helpful text if you want to look up a condition and see the investigations, differential diagnosis, treatment, prognosis and prevention, however you may find that it provides too much detail for the first year. It helps to consolidate your knowledge

on the different conditions presented in the PBL cases. Pathology textbooks like Robbins' Basic Pathology can also be extremely useful for understanding both normal and abnormal physiology. There are a bunch of different textbooks available on each subject area. Most of them are too detailed for first year, although the ones aimed at a basic audience can be useful.

INTERNET

Most students use the Internet far more than any of their textbooks. The following is by no means a comprehensive list of websites that previous first years have recommended:

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

- http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072507470/student_view0/
 - Online anatomy textbook with labeling exercises, flashcards, quizzes and MCQs. Each chapter has a LOT of practice questions that are very similar in difficulty to the UNDF multi choice exam questions.
- www.academic.pgcc.edu/~aimholtz/AandP/PracticeQuestions/ANPquestions.htm ○ Practice questions on A&P
- www.teachmeanatomy.info
 - Easy to learn, clinically relevant anatomy (**I highly recommend this**)

GENERAL

- www.khanacademy.org
 - Contains a number of biology videos, basic but very easy to understand and a new section on healthcare and medicine.
- www.youtube.com
 - Surprisingly YouTube is a fantastic resource when studying medicine. There are some excellent videos on physiological processes, medical procedures and a comprehensive collection of videos from OSCE/MSAT exams. Be sure to check out **Armando Hasudungan's videos, Osmosis videos and Handwritten tutorials - these are med student favourites.**
- The Language of Medicine (Chabner)
- <https://www.osmosis.org>
 - This site provides videos that explain important anatomy and physiology concepts as well as pathology and pharmacology - you can get some access with a free account and further access if you pay for a premium account
- <https://www.amboss.com/us>
 - You need to pay to gain access to this site but can try it out with a free trial

MEDICINE

- British Medical Journal – BMJ Best Practice
 - BMJ best practice is a professionally curated encyclopaedia for medicine. Log on via the Notre Dame library website (medicine section). **Highly recommended for understanding cases**
- UpToDate:
 - Very like BMJ best practice, they are both essentially the same thing with different styles. Again, log in via the ND library website
- www.ecgteacher.com
 - Tutorials on understanding and interpreting ECG's
- www.youtube.com/DoctorNajeeb
 - A series of medical lectures available on YouTube covering a broad range of subjects.

- <https://geekymedics.com>
 - **Geeky Medics:** very clinically oriented website run by junior doctors and students and contributed to from all over the world. Has a large quiz platform and lots of helpful articles that debunk some particularly confusing subjects for students, also really good to get a sense for how to perform some OSCE protocols (through videos and explanations)
- <https://litfl.com>
 - **Life in the Fast Lane** is a medical blog that also has some good information on all aspects of emergency medicine. For the first year it will likely be most helpful in helping learn how to read ECGs. There are also a lot of practice questions.

PHARMACOLOGY

- www.pharmacologycorner.com
 - Very thorough website covering pharmacological principles, drug classes, practice questions as well as lots of diagrams, flowcharts etc.
- www.youtube.com/PHRM203
 - The complete lecture series from the University of Hawaii's pharmacology course

HISTOLOGY

- www.austinctt.edu/histologyhelp/
 - Tissue and organ slides and explanations on how to identify them
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVQpqWYGdk8
 - Shotgun Histology – a fantastic series of histology videos on YouTube
- <http://www.lab.anhb.uwa.edu.au/mb140/>
 - UWA Blue Histology slides - a fantastic series of slides and also some practice quizzes.
- <https://webpath.med.utah.edu/webpath.html#MENU>
 - Has a selection of normal and pathological specimens with annotations

PUBLIC HEALTH

- www.publichealth.gov.au
 - This is where you will find the information for your population studies

EMBRYOLOGY

- https://embryology.med.unsw.edu.au/embryology/index.php/Main_Page
 - A one stop shop for embryology

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Osmosis:** Osmosis is an online subscription-based website that is home to a large catalogue of biomedical science videos that are very comprehensive and typically go into appropriate depth. Osmosis also has notes that you can download as well. I would suggest waiting until there is a 50% sale on (pretty much always) and go in with some friends you meet. It says only one person can login but ive seen 4-5 people login and use the site no worries.
- **Anki:** Anki is an electronic flash card program with a built-in, evidence-based spaced repetition algorithm. It's free for computers and android and you can create your own custom decks and cards. There is also a web version which can be accessed here: <https://ankiweb.net/account/login>, you can set it up so the app on your computer can be linked to your web account. There are also many previous student decks available on dropbox. They vary in terms of depth and style. Again, be aware that LOs may change from year to year or the decks may not cover all of them. Most of the people who use Anki tend

to find that the act of making the cards is important in the study process, so don't rely just on other's decks.

- **RemNote:** RemNote is a platform which combines Anki and a note-taking system. As you write up your notes as dot points, RemNote will automatically turn your notes into flashcards, which also uses a spaced-repetition algorithm, although it differs from the Anki algorithm. RemNote has grown in popularity in the last year or two, as it is efficient and navigation-friendly.
- **Formatives:** a series of quizzes uploaded by the uni at the end of each block. They are usually written by someone with a lead role in the block topic, so can be a bit hit and miss in comparison to the actual exam questions. Some blocks are better than others, so don't be disheartened if you feel like your knowledge level is much less than that expected in the answers. Definitely **do not** neglect doing them in your exam preparation, there are often word-for-word questions in the exam from the formatives that you may have never even looked at had you not done them! Exam questions can be *slightly* different from the formative questions, so again, do not memorise the answers, but use them to study up.
- **Med School Quiz:** <https://medschoolquiz.com> was created by four ND first year students in 2017. The online quizzes cover a massive amount of content specifically tailored to the ND curriculum. The website is extremely useful for checking knowledge gaps and practice exam style questions.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Graduate entry medicine is a little different to the undergrad courses you are used to. You will find that a lot of the time you are left to figure out what to learn and in what depth to learn it. Remember that many major concepts will be repeated throughout the year, and that there is no need to panic.

You may not get lectures on everything you need to know or all the LOs you need to learn. It's expected that you'll do your own research in answering the LOs set every week. It's important to remember that as well as lectures, UNDF utilises a collection of electronic resources each week (articles or links to web pages), which are placed up on Blackboard under 'Electronic Resources' or linked on Prudentia. These are really handy. Other methods of learning include: using ANKI flashcards on your computer, textbooks, watching youtube videos, purchasing access to learning platforms such as Osmosis or AMBOSS and a combination of the above.

Don't put pressure on yourself to cover every single LO every week, as sometimes this is just not possible. Over time you will become more comfortable in identifying which LO's you really need to know and which you can afford to skip if you are low on time (or brain space). Again, things will be repeated throughout the year. However, in order to spare yourself some last minute exam stress, it is advisable that you try and complete as many as possible each week. Many students find that in the lead up to examinations, when you're attempting to commit your notes to memory, having chunks of LOs missing can be somewhat alarming.

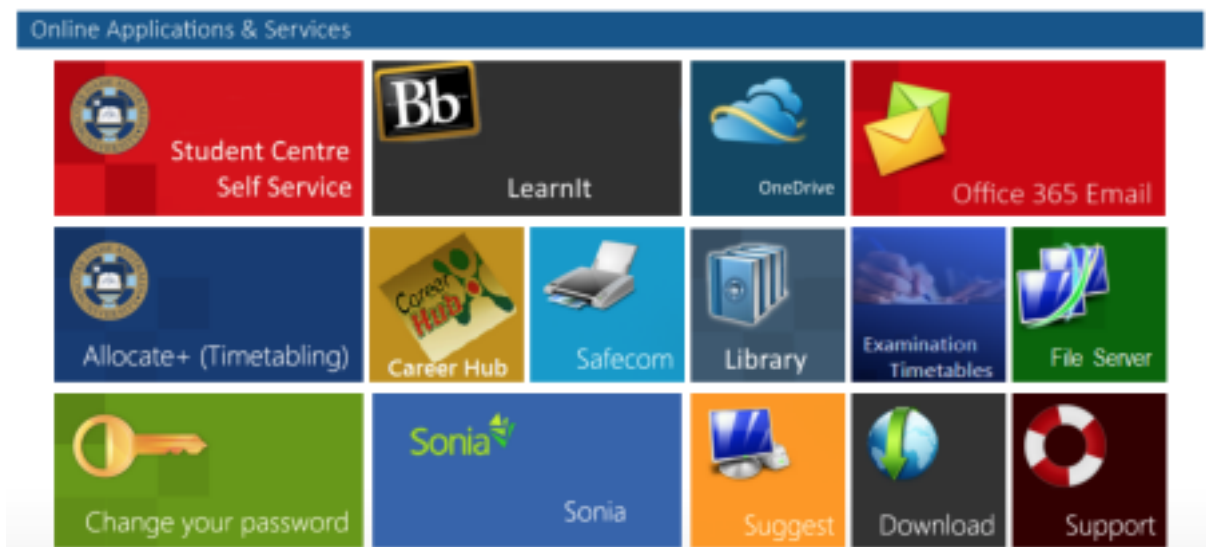
Medicine requires a huge commitment of time and energy, so it's important to be as efficient as possible. If you look over the lecture notes and don't understand any of them, it may be better to skip them and learn about the topic through a textbook or online video. Alternatively, only so much can be gleaned from merely **reading** the lecture notes; listening to the lecturer explain the content (be it in person or via the recording system) is incredibly useful. Also bear in mind that some of your lecturers are responsible for writing your examination questions. More often than not, they take material from their lectures, the labs or the formative quizzes. Although lectures should not be your **only** point of reference, certain lectures (i.e. Luke Torre's Antibiotic lecture) you would be remiss to ignore.

It is important to start with the basics and work up so you can actually understand the content. Don't feel guilty or pressured by other people's ideas of what and how you should learn. You need to do what works for you, be that reading, watching, listening or writing. Peers in higher grades are an excellent source of study techniques that may or may not work for you...don't hesitate to ask!

PRACTICALITIES

TECHNOLOGY

To log into the MyND portal (found at: <https://my.nd.edu.au/LogonPage>) you will need your username and password. Your username is your student number and your default password is Nd followed by your birthday in the DDMMYYYY format (e.g. Nd10081996). You can and should change this via the portal. Once you have logged into your portal you will have the following options:



BLACKBOARD

Once you have clicked on the Blackboard icon you will need to log on once again. UNDF uses Blackboard to upload things like announcements, timetables, lab timetables, PBL triggers, lesson plans and preparation material. Blackboard is also where you will find your bioethics material (via community sites), details about your exams and access to prudentia. You'll need to check blackboard regularly.

SONIA

Sonia is accessed through the MyND portal page (see above). It is where you will find your placements, locate details about continuous assessment, upload continuous assessment and

upload your “checks” (more on this later). It is also where you will submit your leave of absence forms (also more on this later).

ND EMAIL

All students are allocated an ND email that can be accessed via the MyND portal (see above). Some people prefer to access it via the homepage, and keep uni emails separate. Others prefer to set up a forwarding system to their own personal email account, just don't forget to check your actual uni email from time to time!

FACEBOOK AND MSAND WEBSITE

Each year group has a shared Facebook page and many PBL groups will have a Facebook page. Facebook can be useful to share information about social events and other networking, but it can also be a really useful place to share the resources that you've discovered or created yourself...sharing is caring!

- **MSAND facebook page and website:** This should be your first point of contact for all things student related at UNDF.

<https://www.facebook.com/undfmsand/>

www.msand.org.au

- **Facebook:** UNDF Medicine - Class of 2027. If you haven't already joined, request to do so ASAP! A lot of important information is communicated from MSAND via the year facebook pages. There are also a couple of other groups that may be relevant, a UNDF Med classifieds page, and a UNDF Med Parents Group. Be aware that the facebook group, while secret, is accessible to the whole of your year group, MSAND, and SPIG reps. It is not a wholly private forum and should be treated as such. This means acting professionally is paramount!

MONEY

Some people will struggle with money at different times throughout university/med school. There are various avenues that can provide help and support through these times.

● Centrelink

- **MSAF:** The School has commenced a Medical Student Assistance Fund for circumstances of acute/short-term severe financial crisis for individual students. Students in those circumstances are asked to contact the School through their year coordinators or Head of Student Matters (Susie Stewart) to discuss their situation, suitability and application for a once off payment for support.
- **University scholarships:** the university offers various scholarships and hardship assistance grants/funds to students. If money is stressing you out, there are many members of staff who can help. Get in touch with your head of year (Paul Noakes) or your MSAND representatives so as to point you in the right direction.
- It's usually not too difficult to pick up some paid employment in first year. This may be hard to believe but ***it is the year when you have the most free time***. Most Fridays are free and many people choose to work evenings/weekends.
 - Babysitting and tutoring are good, flexible employment options for medical students.

Interstate students - keep an eye out for flight sales. You often have to commit to dates well ahead of time, but the savings can be immense. Please note, ***never book flights during your year level exam period even if your exams finish before the period is scheduled to end***. The school expects

you to keep the exam period free. If there happens to be a computer glitch or exams don't save properly, exams may have to be re-sat on another day during this period.

SUPPORT/WELLBEING

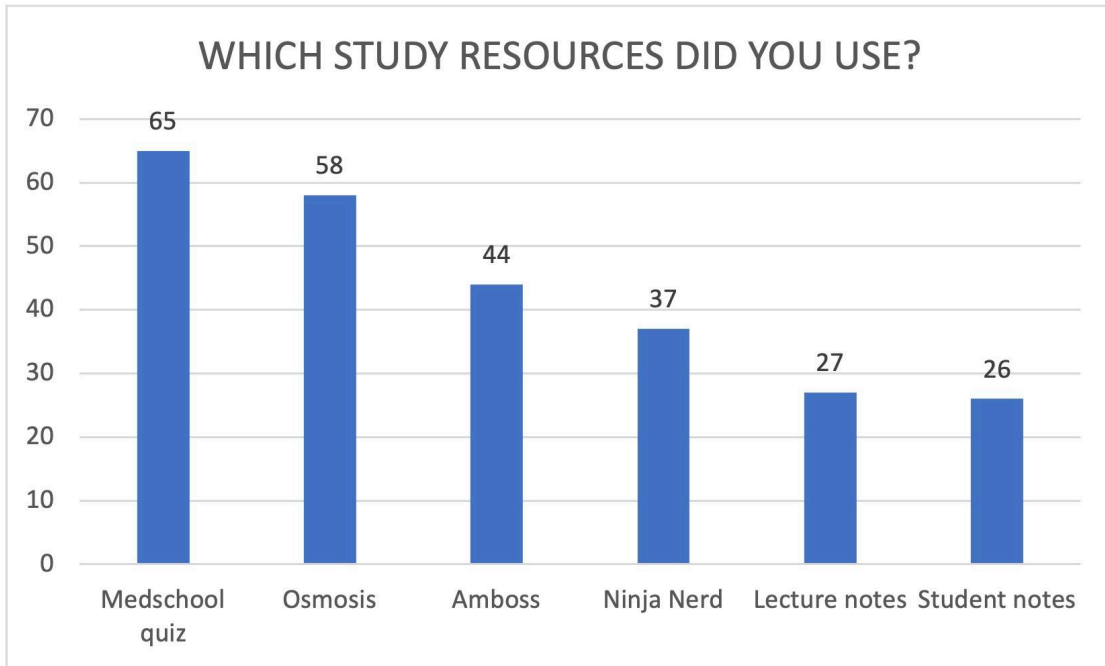
Please note, adjusting to medical school is a HUGE process, and a lot of people find that they can feel a bit of imposter syndrome as they make this transition. THIS IS NORMAL, and by no means do these feelings mean you are not cut out for medicine / don't deserve your place. Trust us when we say that the little voice of doubt gets smaller every day and is slowly replaced with a self-assured internal dialogue that says, "I do deserve to be here". The best advice we can give is to be consistent with your studies, while making sure you're giving yourself time off to exercise, do other hobbies, get outside, and relax. It's easy to let these things go a bit when you first start as everything can seem overwhelming while you adjust - but they really do make all the difference! Remember, if you need help please reach out - there are so many people here to support you ♥

There are times in med school where you may feel you need some extra support - whether it's due to academic or personal reasons. Below are some key places you can go for support:

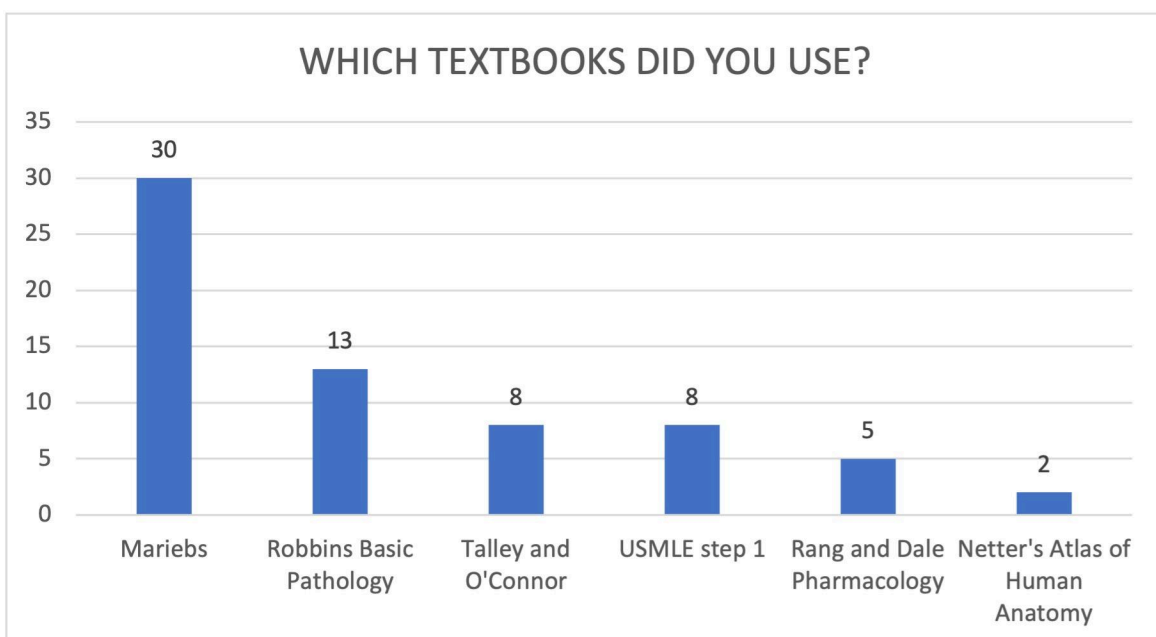
- Your Year Coordinator is always an invaluable source of support and perspective. They above and beyond for every student and are someone you can always turn to.
- **PBL/CD tutors:** You'll be spending a lot of time getting to know your tutors which creates an incredibly supportive environment as you navigate first year. Be sure to exchange contact details at the start of the semester.
- **GP:** it is really important to find a good GP you can relate to early on in Medical school. They are not only a great source of support but are very useful when it comes to vaccinations, blood tests etc. that you might need. There are obviously many GP's in Fremantle and the broader Perth Metro area to choose from. However, many students choose to attend the following clinics as they bulk-bill medical students and have a strong focus on student welfare.
 - West End Medical (<https://westendmed.com.au/>)
 - A two minute walk to uni
 - Ellen Health (<https://www.ellenhealth.com.au/>)
 - Have appointments from 8-9 weekdays and have weekend appointments
 - Beware they only bulk bill within business hours (9-5)
- **Headspace:** headspace is a Youth Mental Wellbeing service. They have an office just behind uni in the heart of Fremantle. If you're under 25 and experiencing any symptoms of distress and/or not coping, Headspace is a great point of contact:
- **Susie Stewart:** SoMF's in-house psychologist, a wonderful source of support and guidance. Her office is in the medical building and she ensures that all meetings are confidential. She will tell you if she needs to report anything under her mandatory reporting obligations (harm to self or others). Her number is made available to all students - you can call/message her at any time.
- **Your MSAND team:** we are always more than happy to help when we can or point you in the right direction if we can't.

WORDS OF WISDOM

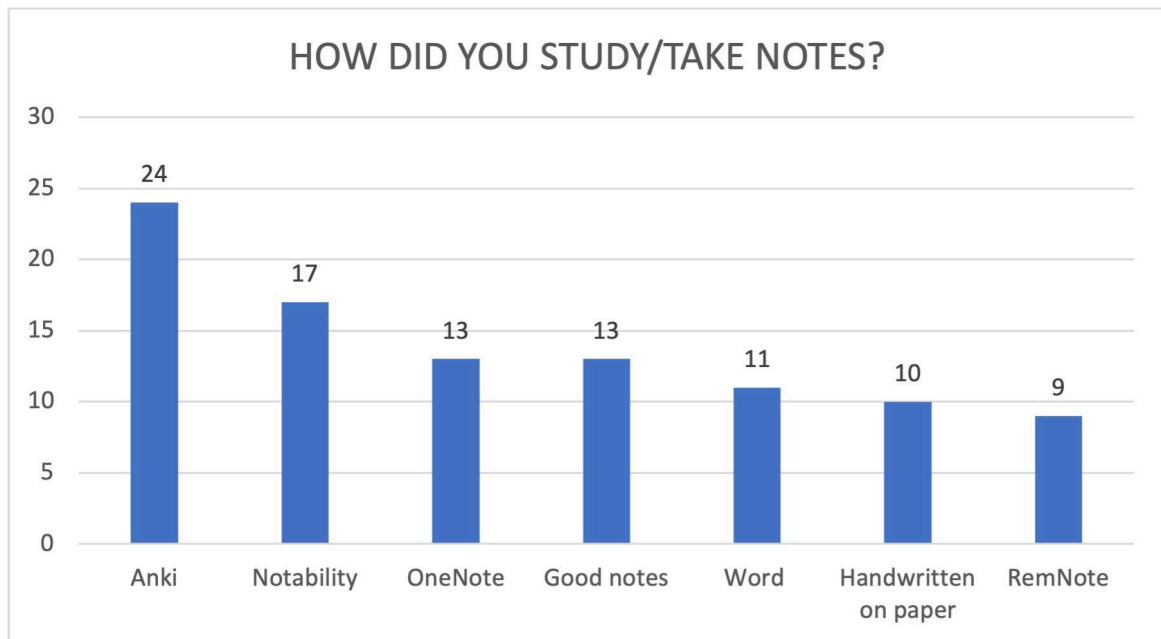
We asked the 2022 first years questions about how they studied:



This graph shows responses from 2022 MEDI6100 students when asked which study resources they used throughout the year. Most students use multiple different resources so it's a good idea to try different ones out and see what suits your learning style best. Medschool quiz is a great revision tool which has thousands of MCQs which align with the Notre Dame curriculum and is free to subscribe. Osmosis and Amboss are paid subscription online learning platforms that help students understand concepts through each block. The student notes are passed on by previous students and are accessible through dropbox. Other resources recommended by students include: Armando Husudungan (who actually studied medicine at UNDS), Geeky Medics, Teach Me Anatomy, Dr Matt and Dr Mike podcast and Essential Anatomy 5 app.



There is a plethora of textbooks available but Marieb is by far the most popular BCS textbook for first year and is a great introductory physiology book. The level of content closely matches the level of expected knowledge for 1st year (you might say they are high-yield...). Other books can be excellent but the depth of many is a bit beyond the expected knowledge for 1st year, however sometimes it is necessary to learn the details to understand the big picture. Talley and O'Connor and the school's CCP handbook are considered by most to be the only textbook you need for CCP. There are two main versions of Robbins available: Robbins Basic Pathology aka "little Robbins" and Robbins Pathologic Basis of Disease. Most students prefer Robbins Basic Pathology in first year because it offers enough detail without being overwhelming, whereas Robbins Pathologic Basis of Disease is very detailed and is more of a second year textbook.



It took many people weeks (if not months) to figure out which study style suited them best, so don't feel discouraged if what you do at the beginning of the year isn't quite right. Anki is a flashcard app you can have on your laptop or phone and uses spaced repetition to effectively test your recall. Notability and Good Notes are note taking apps for iPads - if you like handwriting your notes, this could be a great option! On RemNote you can type notes and then they are automatically turned into flashcards. It might be a good idea to look into some of these, but again, these are just suggestions and everyone works differently!

If you're ever feeling stuck when wading through the tides of study resources/methods, just remember you can always phone a friend (AKA a friendly face in 2nd year and beyond)! Notre Dame MD is a community, and there are plenty of friendly faces around more than happy to offer advice. Not sure who to ask? Reach out to the MSAND Education Rep, MSAND Year Reps, or really anyone roaming the halls of ND35!

QUOTES FROM PREVIOUS FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT THE WAY YOU STUDIED?

- "Trust that changing my study approach regularly would work out fine"
- "Start revising earlier"
- "Wish I discovered Amboss sooner"
- "Start making Anki cards and work on my summaries earlier in the week!"
- "Writing out a weekly summary page of the content covered"
- "More group study!"
- "Don't watch lectures, just summarise lecture slides into your own notes. Start drawing out notes on my iPad earlier in the year!"
- "Learn more anatomy and start revising it earlier"
- "Less Reliance on previous student notes"
- "1) I would have sought a tutor earlier. 2) I would have joined a study group earlier."
- "Try the lab handouts before the lab sessions."
- "Learn the basics really well first"
- "Trying to become more efficient, worrying less about formatting of notes by creating an LO document template to save time, prioritising clinical skills, prioritising learning of main concepts that are high yield, taking a day off on the weekend for self care and to avoid burnout!!"
- "Be more religious about anki - best way to study!"
- "study more frequently and on the weekends!"
- "Make sure you spend time learning the notes you take instead of doing all the LOs and calling it a day."
- "Getting a functional and disciplined study group"
- "Collaborating with peers at the end of a week or block to help consolidate past teachings and concepts"
- "Focus on broader concepts and principles before focusing on the tiny details. Also get Osmosis"
- "Focus on more efficient study techniques. Study habits that I used previously weren't sufficient to deal with the amount of content that needed to be learnt. Spaced repetition, Feynman technique, testing effect work. Re-reading/highlighting, cramming, poor note taking don't."
- "Incorporate Anki earlier into my study because I started in semester 2. For me it was a great tool to help me memorise content which is something I personally struggled with it in semester 1."
- "Sticking to something that works for me and not second guessing my methods based on what my peers were doing/using."
- "Stay up to date with summarising each week as you go. It gets much harder if you fall behind"
- "Don't pick up advanced textbooks (E.g Robbins - far, far too much detail for first year). Also, it would have been better to make more notes more concise"
- "Do weekly summaries from the start of the year"
- "Seeking help earlier"
- "Watch YouTube Vids more"
- "Use ANKI from day 1 ; stop making notes and go straight into making ANKI cards"
- "Worry less about what others are doing"
- "Anki from the start, smaller Anki cards. Use other people's notes from the start."
- "Put more effort into what method is most efficient early"
- "Invest the time to make better anki cards rather than using just anKing at the start"
- "Get onto Medschoolquiz sooner"
- "Be more consistent, consistently less is better than weeks of 100% followed by weeks of 0%"
- "Find a resource that works for you to help you visualise anatomy in a 3D orientation as opposed to memorising textbook diagrams"
- "Don't bother trying to watch every lecture. Use LOs and key points from the lectures and use it to self directed study around high yield concepts."
- "I would have done more quizzing/testing throughout the semester rather than cram it right before exams. Using testing as a formative more than a summative way of testing yourself is a game-changer. I often found I learnt a lot from doing practice questions."
- "Do more study group sessions, way more med school quiz questions and less reading general books. Also be more consistent with anki early on."
- "Hit the textbooks earlier."
- "Active recall and spaced repetition is the best study method. Took me till the end of the year to figure it out but it's worth it. I think Remnote is the best app for this."
- "I should have figured out a study method/plan earlier and just stuck with it rather than obsess over the best way to study and take notes etc."
- "Schedule time off"
- "I wish I didn't compare my study methods or knowledge to other people"
- "Spend less time on labs and lectures and more time learning the key concepts with third party resources. Commit more time to learning micro and pharm early."
- "Write more precise key high yield notes on key concepts"
- "Better time management"
- "Increase study efficiency, write less ad verbatim notes and more time with active recall"
- "Commit to anki earlier on and use a premade deck doing a a few q's from a block the week before to get myself to signpost key concepts and words that appear in lectures"

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT THE WAY YOU STUDIED?

- “Completing quiz questions and consulting LO notes”
- “Being consistent with study but keeping up with regular exercise”
- “Group study (Max 4 people) and setting goals”
- “Amboss...life line”
- “Thorough review of all topics (made LO summaries similar to Jess’ notes each week)”
- “Spaced repetition (ANKI) put so much information into my brain it was incredible”
- “Actively learning summarised content instead of reading/making notes”
- “Condensing lectures into notes on goodnotes (iPad), it made it so clear, concise, and easy to understand.”
- “Closing out each set of LO’s each week can finalisation for the next week’s content”
- “Textbooks give greater detail than you need which ultimately makes life easier”
- “Getting a tutor and joining a great study group.”
- “Didn’t put pressure on myself if I didn’t get enough done, my main priority was to try and do something at least everyday”
- “Spaced repetition and active recall”
- “Videos on osmosis and anki”
- “Making a schedule and sticking to it!”
- “Weekly summaries, good organisation, Finishing LOs every week came in handy for exam time!”
- “Online resources which summarised info”
- “Staying up to date with lecture materials and talking through concepts with friends.”
- “Didn’t waste time writing my own notes”
- “drawing stuff out”
- “Spaced repetition is evidenced based, which made me feel more secure that the way I was learning actually works.”
- “Making mindmaps”
- “Detailed notes for each week were handy to refer to”
- “Incorporating different modes of learning (videos, audio, photos etc) and adding these resources/links to my notes. I also think it’s a really good idea to download a Anki deck (MEDI6100 deck) and use these every day.”
- “Mindmaps!!! Having a visual summary of each week on just the one page not only helped trim the fat of the week but helped cement the teaching into something manageable and easy to revise with when it came to exam time.”
- “Taking everything one week at a time and pushing myself to stay on top of my notes for that week. That way not rushing to catch up later.”
- “Gave myself time to find out what worked for me. Anki, for life!!!!”
- “Making sure that I understood the content each week rather than copied someone’s notes just to ‘complete’ an LO in my notes.”
- “Removing any notes and forcing myself to explain the material that’s in front of me. This will help ensure you actually understand the content, and you’ll be on your way to explaining things in front of a whiteboard for PBL’s or group study as well.”
- “Go through all lectures and labs... even if you don’t go to them live make sure you go through the documents on lms as that’s the stuff they put in the exams”
- “Drawing concepts out and using whiteboards”
- “Did group study and individual study. Defs recommend 1st year find a group they study well with and keep track of what you’ve gone over together for exams.”
- “Practiced protocols early, and briefly revised the previous week whilst on the train. Made it much easier to remember content that I was exposed to over two weeks rather than one.”
- “Being part of a study group was great for seeing if you were covering topics in the right amount of detail and whether you were missing any important information”
- “Drawing pictures and explaining them to other people”
- “Reading Marieb chapters in advance and reinforcing with that week’s lecture notes was a game changer for me (non-health science student)”
- “Being strategic about which LOs I learnt thoroughly and letting go of the LOs you just don’t have time to cover. Work smart not hard.”
- “Committed to anki and trusted in other people’s notes for sem 2.”
- “Group study”
- “Time efficient and spaced repetition”
- “Studying with a buddy, explaining concepts/LOs to someone else, drawing things out and practice questions”
- “Not being afraid to try new study methods or programs if something isn’t working for you. It’s ok to change your methods to try find something that works well for you even if no one else is doing that.”
- “Use repetition (Anki) from day one, stay consistent. I also like to make my own cards instead of writing notes”
- “Big ticket items and concepts will get the lion’s share of marks. Fill your knowledge jar with rocks, then pebbles, then sand to fill the gaps #wloveametaphor”
- “Doing a to-do list for each day before starting to study, along with using the pomodoro technique. It meant I could stay motivated and track what I needed to do.”
- “Study groups early on where you quiz each other”
- “Kept up to date & studied in a group.”
- “Every week I learnt something about the human body that just blew my mind. I’m not one who sets schedules which I follow strictly. Instead I’m motivated to study by what I am studying. And the human body is just incredibly amazing so it kept me motivated.”
- “Physically writing stuff down - doing Look cover write check and scribbling Anki answers down on scrap paper etc. This seemed to solidify information better than just recalling information in my head.”
- “Using Emma’s notes & boards & beyond”
- “Covered the content at the beginning of the week which allowed me to relax towards the end of the week”
- “Anki anki anki”
- “Keeping up to date each week”
- “I really liked using my gut feeling to focus on what I was not confident in. Trust your gut.”
- “I went with my gut and didn’t force myself to use popular study techniques others were using (Anki etc), and I did well. I trusted the tried and true stuff that worked for me in undergrad.”
- “Using anki (wish I started from the get go)”

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR ONLINE LEARNING?

- “Coffee, split LO’s and devise an interactive presentation”
- “Follow the suggested timetable for lectures so you don't get behind”
- “Small breaks away from the computer”
- “If you can change up your spot, even just watch lectures on your RV rather than always sitting at your desk”
- “Try and connect to people in real life and don’t pause the lecture constantly to write everything down”
- “Set up a systematic method and stick to it.”
- “Try to maintain a set, consistent schedule. Figure out which lecturers you best engage with online and which content you would prefer texts/ other videos for”
- “Make sure you message people in your cohort so you stay in touch and organise catch ups!”
- “Snacks are ok during online PBL”
- “Keep away from your phone and be present, don’t go for 2x speed - 1.5x is fine”
- “Get into a routine”
- Treat your day like you would going to uni, get up and get dressed and have a sense of purpose”
- “Take Regular Breaks”
- “Look out for each other amongst students. Utilise the School’s Zoom for informal communication with fellow students for support.”
- “Pomodoro technique”
- “Choose which lectures to watch. Do not waste time on lectures that are low yield. My studying improved when I stopped watching.”
- “Let your PBL tutor know if you are struggling with online learning”
- “Put your phone in a different room”
- “Make a schedule and stick to it. Don’t treat it like a holiday”
- “Take time away from the computer by sitting outside, going for a walk etc. to improve concentration, having a comfortable study environment (comfy chair, good lighting, two computer monitors!)”
- “Stick to your timetable!!”
- “Keep to a routine!”
- “Use YouTube”
- “Find out quickly what works for you, whether it’s having Zoom study seshs or small group study to help consolidate learning”
- “Be consistent, ask questions, keep in touch with peers.”
- “make a schedule and keep to it - don't get too laid back”
- “Have a designated space and take a break when you’re not in that space”
- “Don’t stick to the time table for lectures. Finish them all asap”
- “Find a study buddy and learn by teaching/ talking about LOs”

ANY OTHER COMMENTS, TIPS OR THOUGHTS?

- “Don’t be afraid to ask for help from tutors or second years!!”
- “There’s always time for self care”
- “Don’t get overwhelmed by what everyone else knows. Hard work and the program the school has set up will get you there”
- “First year can be really stressful, but only as much as you make it out to be. Try not worry about doing everything in the one week, just focus on learning the important information and add the extras if you have time.”
- “Don't overstress about failing”
- “Pharm study needs review and attention.
- “Practising clinical skills regularly throughout the year instead of concentrating it towards exam season, don't worry about using anki if its not working for you!, form a small study group and meet regularly, exercise and prioritise sleep!!!”
- “It’s a grind!! But you will get through. Reach out if you’re struggling early on before it gets too much”
- “you wont learn everything - just try to remember 50%”
- “It will take some time/practice to optimise how you study best. At the beginning of the year, try different techniques but then once you have found a technique that works best for you, stick with it. Don’t worry what other people are doing if you are confident with your approach. Also really recommend taking one day off from study a week (e.g take every Sunday off).”
- “Be broad with your study resources and don’t just rely on lectures for your learning. We all learn in different ways and it will take some time for you to figure out what works for you but using online services like Amboss, Osmosis, Uptodate etc, textbooks and fellow peers were all an amazing help.”
- “Don’t get carried away with what works for other people! Don’t get intimidated by what people seem to know, everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. A good study group will see you through, and they don’t necessarily have to have all your best friends in them either.”
- “Don’t be afraid to reach out for help. You may feel like you are the only one struggling, or that your situation is unique but there are 100 other students in your cohort, 100 in the year above who have just been through what you are about to go through and a thousand from our school alone that have all been in the same place as you. Ask for help, and ask early.”
- “Study groups are essential it allows you to gage whether you have enough information on an LO and go through the content at a slower pace than PBL. Anki is great to assist in memorisation of content but it's only useful once you actually understand the content. Osmosis for me was also a huge help as I prefer pictures and step out diagrams than words.”
- “1. Don't be overwhelmed by the buzzwords (Anki, Osmosis, Marieb) unless they actually work for YOU! 2. Next, after you find a compatible resource, critically ask yourself if you understand what's being presented in the lectures and, more importantly, if you could explain that material to someone who isn't familiar with the content i.e do you truly understand it, or do you just regurgitate what's in front of you? The sheer amount of memorisation makes regurgitation incredibly

difficult if there's no baseline understanding"

- "Don't rely on your Thursday PBL session to help you through LOs, make sure you're putting in the time and going through them yourself so that Thursday can just consolidate everything.
- Don't forget to utilise the drop box! If you can't be bothered to make your own anki cards (does take time) downloaded others cards and can edit them/ customise content/wording to your learning style. I would also say don't forget about textbooks - I found it helpful to try to read the chapter of marieb related to the week/block, takes a while but helps put everything in context as the course does go through content in random bits and bobs sometimes"
- "Don't expand too far out from Marieb. If you need a bit extra to solidify CONCEPTS (not rote learning) then open Guytan. Trust me, make life easy on yourself; don't even touch the advanced textbooks."
- "Don't get lost in the detail"
- "Don't feel the pressure to jump on the Anki bandwagon"
- "Get to know the MED200's...they are a fountain of knowledge...and attractiveness"
- "Do the work and you will pass. Look at the formatives, questions were very similar!"
- "Don't waste time on bad lectures"
- "Buckle up"
- "Stop writing notes, watch videos on 'best ways to study med' etc, use Notion to organise everything"
- "Do some clinical skills practice each week with a friend! You'll thank yourself when end of year and OSCEs hit"
- "Don't stress and burn out! Have fun with it!"
- "Take enough time each day to look after yourself and your health. Enjoy the year!"
- "Run your own race, everyone will find different things easy and hard, but it's up to you to stick to your guns and trust that you have put in the effort throughout the year."
- "In terms of 'work/life balance', I found it was extremely helpful to put boundaries on my time to study. Treat med like a 9-5 job and fill your schedule with other things that are meaningful and fun outside of these hours."
- "Have faith in yourself. You've worked hard to get here, work hard and stop procrastinating haha"
- "Since medicine requires a lot of memory work, I just can't stress the usefulness of active recall and spaced repetition enough. Doesn't matter how you do it (there are plenty of apps out there like Anki, Remnote and more) but definitely try it out. It takes some time to get used to (and some time to learn the apps) but it's all worth it in the end."
- "Start reviewing for exams early and don't neglect the OSCEs.. the histories in particular can be challenging to memorise if you leave it to last minute."
- "Get Anki and get your cards done. Don't give up your life for med school"
- "Find something that works for you early and stick with it, try not to focus too

much on what other people are doing."

- "Keep on top of the load, try to stay on track week to week."
- "Questions are the best way to study. But only do them after you've done a bit of content first, or you may get discouraged."
- "Everyone has a different style, so don't feel pressured to conform or like you have to use a million different resources based on what others are doing! Be flexible, try stuff out, and just stick with what feels right."
- "Getting to grips with anki a week before starting, that way you can hit the ground running with the content rather than playing catch up"
- "getting to study in a group so as to be able to ask dumb questions amongst friends. Pbl can bring out the best and worst in people as a result of their insecurities and a safe space with friends or people who think similarly to you can be far more productive."

FINAL REMARKS

After your first long day at uni you may feel that you've made the biggest mistake of your life and even question if you could manage studying Medicine. Don't worry, this is normal and you will get through the year! Most medical students have this so-called "imposter syndrome" but rest assured; Notre Dame doesn't make "mistakes" with who it selects. You are the product of multiple different people lamenting over your application, crunching the numbers to compute your GPA and carefully considering your interview responses. A team of eminent doctors chose **YOU** for a reason; try not to forget it.

Finally, just remember that with medicine you get out what you put in. Work hard, be fascinated by what you learn and enjoy everything else that comes along with Medicine – making new friends, socialising and the opportunities for new experiences. A Fourth Year student once said "if you feel like you are struggling, just remember that out of the hundreds of people who were interviewed for a spot and of the thousands who sat the GAMSAT, Notre Dame chose you and had a reason to believe that you are able to do this course, and you can."

Good luck, you will all be GREAT!

CREDENTIALS

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