

ADMISSIONS PORTFOLIO GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

2013 for 2014 Admissions Cycle

Last updated 22 April 2013

BACKGROUND

The UOW GSM Admissions Portfolio allows you to identify personal experiences and qualities that the GSM considers desirable in medical students and graduate doctors and also to demonstrate your connection with a regional, rural or remote community. This portfolio constitutes a significant proportion of the criteria required for interview selection and is the single most important component of our admissions process.

The UOW GSM requires the submission of an Admissions Portfolio for each applicant who lists UOW as a preference on their application. Only those candidates who submit a portfolio will be considered for entry into the MBBS.

Once received, the portfolio will be scored anonymously with a focus on determining the quality of experiences demonstrated. A rurality score will also be determined based on your experience of living in regional, rural and remote communities.

CONDITIONS FOR SUBMISSION

Your portfolio will be used as one of the major criteria to rank your eligibility for interview. Your portfolio must be submitted regardless of the UOW ranking on your application. It forms part of the application document and is to be submitted to GEMSAS no later than close of business on May 30th 2013. We advise applicants to be aware that this application requires thorough preparation - start early, allow sufficient time, complete all sections if possible, review the check-list and submit as early as possible so we can notify you before the closing date should there be any difficulty with your application.

All applications to the UOW GSM must be made through GEMSAS and their online application portal. If you do not complete the portfolio section of the application you will not be considered for interview.

Your portfolio should outline personal experiences and activities and your ties and commitment to regional, rural or remote communities under the specified sections listed.

TIPS FOR APPLYING TO WOLLONGONG

- Make sure you read this portfolio guidelines document in full and download the template from the same site. Feel free to use the template we have provided as an offline working document.
- Once you are ready to apply, you need to register with the GEMSAS online admissions system and commence your application. This can be navigated

from the GEMSAS webpage <http://www.gemsas.edu.au> . You can also access the 2014 GEMSAS Medicine Admissions guide from this site and I would encourage you to read it carefully : <http://www.gemsas.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2014-Medicine-GEMSAS-Admissions-Guide.pdf>

- As you complete your application online you will be asked to nominate your 6 preferences. Once you click Wollongong as a preference, the portfolio boxes will become available to you and you can commence entering your information. When you are completing the GEMSAS application it presents you with your first activity boxes for each category. Once you complete that activity, click the "MORE" button at the bottom if you wish and it will give you another set of activity boxes. It will give you space for up to 5 activities for each category, the same as on the template form.
- You do not need to write a novel – point form is acceptable and you are encouraged to be brief if it allows you to get your point across. There is a character limit of 300 characters for each activity description- use it wisely.
- Choose the most significant and relevant examples with the greatest depth of your involvement over the greatest length of time. If you think an experience is important, then include it. Remember your portfolio is a major component of your application to UOW GSM and due care must be taken.
- Provide contact information for verification of examples. It is vital that you confirm these details with all listed people prior to submission of your form. We are aware that some activities are difficult to verify - you are free to include unverified experiences however the scorers may choose not to consider them and as such they should not form a major part of your portfolio. UOW GSM will not pursue anyone for verification where we have difficulty making contact, and if so, that example may not be considered.
- Ensure that location (including postcode) and duration of experiences are included for all examples presented. If experiences occurred outside Australia, please include country.
- You do not have to complete your application in one go - the system saves your work and you can log in and complete the form at a later time.
- Remember any rurality documents must be sent directly to GEMSAS.
- Portfolios can only be submitted electronically via GEMSAS as part of your application to UOW - applications via mail or email will not be accepted.
- **Late applications WILL NOT be accepted.**

For your information, the following categories are used when scoring your portfolio. It may be beneficial to consider these definitions when completing your application:

1. LEADERSHIP

“...the capacity to lead, to be a person followed by others” (Definition from Australian Oxford Dictionary)

Leadership ability is an attribute essential to good medical practice, particularly in isolated areas where support may be limited. When considering leadership in the portfolio the applicant needs to have displayed significant decision making ability in a position, interest or area of work, or been recognised for this ability. They may have shown promotion or progression within an organisational structure, or an increase or development in duties or responsibilities.

In this section you should include any positions of leadership and responsibility in your community, workplace, social club, school or university you may have held. For example, have you been or are you the captain of a debating team, sports team, school captain, chaired committees or in a management role at work? Have you led a research project, taught or mentored a subject, coached a sport or lead an organisation?

See an example below:

LEADERSHIP										
1	Name & Address of Organisation	Kiama Squash Club, 30 Robinson Avenue, Minnamurra						Postal/Zip Code	2533	
	Activities	Promotion of squash as a sport								
	Position Title	Start Date	End Date	Approx Hours	Per	Week	Month	Year	Total	
	Club secretary	15-02-2006	16-12-2011	3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Gregg Rowland		Position	Club President					
	Phone No.	+61 2 4227 7680		Email	rowlandg@squash.com.au					

2. CAPACITY TO WORK WITH OTHERS

Good teamwork is essential for any modern medical practitioner, but especially for those considering primary health care. No matter what specialty field of medicine, all require the capacity to work with colleagues, health professionals, patients and their families in a cooperative and collaborative manner. In this criterion the applicant needs to demonstrate teamwork beyond being the team leader, and ideally in a variety of contexts.

For example, have you been involved in teamwork activities in the workplace, sports or church group, played music or undertaken research or study in a team? Have you worked with people of different social background, culture or age groups?

See an example below:

CAPACITY TO WORK WITH OTHERS										
1	Name & Address of Organisation	House With No Steps, Fairy Meadow						Postal/ Zip Code	2519	
	Activities	Coordinating activities with community members with disabilities								
	Position Title	Deputy Chairperson	Start Date	03-02-2004	End Date	Ongoing	Approx Hours	12	Week Month Year Total	
							Per	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Ms. L. Somadossi			Position	Regional manager				
	Phone No.	(02) 4221 9876			Email	somadossil@hwms.org.au				
2	Name & Address of Organisation	Bunnings Warehouse West Wyalong						Postal/ Zip Code	2617	
	Activities	Selling hardware as part of timber team								
	Position Title	Sales person	Start Date	27-06-2005	End Date	13-01-2007	Approx Hours	16	Week Month Year Total	
							Per	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Jo Lumberjack			Position	Manager - Timber				
	Phone No.	(02) 5645 7531			Email	hardwood@bunnings.com.au				

3. SERVICE ETHIC

“...Service = the act of helping or doing work for another or for a community

...Ethic = a set of moral principles and moral philosophies” (Definition from Australian Oxford Dictionary)

The desire to serve both individuals and a community is not only highly valued amongst health professionals, it also assists individuals to feel part of a community, especially in rural areas. These activities need not only apply to voluntary work, but to service in any form. Applicants should demonstrate involvement in activities outside usual personal interests, as this demonstrates participation mainly for the welfare or benefit of others.

For example, have you participated in fundraising activities for community service organisations, been a primary carer or contributed to aid work, or operated as a volunteer for an organisation? Have you been involved in short term or recurring activities or had an organisational role over a longer term?

See an example below:

SERVICE ETHIC										
1	Name & Address of Organisation	Anglican Youth Works - Fitzroy Falls						Postal/ Zip Code	2577	
	Activities	Leader/Helper in camp for adults with disabilities								
	Position Title	Camp Leader	Start Date	01-01-2008	End Date	10-01-2010	Approx Hours	50	Week Month Year Total	
							Per	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Joe Smith			Position	Camp director				
	Phone No.	02 4111 2000			Email	john@jomail.com.au				

4. DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE

“...Experience = a knowledge or skill resulting from actual observation or practical acquaintance with facts or events” (Definition from Australian Oxford Dictionary)

People with a broad range of experiences often communicate better and display a stronger grasp of empathy for others. They may also be more adaptive to new environments and conditions. This pertains to the accumulation of significant events and experiences (both positive and negative) outside of a person’s usual work/study routine.

For example, have you participated in any music, theatre or choir activities, or have been involved in any other area of the arts? Have you travelled extensively or lived in another country for an extended period of time? Can you demonstrate a range of interests in your work, study or social life that may allow you to relate to a broad range of people?

See an example below:

DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE																
1	Name & Address of Organisation	Orange Youth Theatre Group, 1234 Somewhere Street, Orange, NSW						Postal/ Zip Code	2800							
	Activities	Theatrical productions - not for profit group														
	Position Title	Stage & Props Manager	Start Date	23-04-2009	End Date	26-11-2010	Approx Hours	25	Week Per	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Month	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Mary Smith		Position	Theatre Group Coordinator		Phone No.	02 6249 9956		Email	mary_smith@email.com.au				
2	Name & Address of Organisation	Taiwan English College, 356 Hu-Chow Road, Taipei, Taiwan						Postal/ Zip Code								
	Activities	Spent about a year in Taiwan, travelling and teaching English as a foreign language to university students														
	Position Title	English teacher	Start Date	07-01-2002	End Date	20-12-2002	Approx Hours	35	Week Per	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Month	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	John Chen		Position	College Director		Phone No.	+886-2-1234 5678		Email	jchen@tec.edu.tw				

5. HIGH LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE IN AN AREA OF HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

Many applicants to medical school are individuals who are talented in other fields. This criterion is designed to recognise achievement by means of exertion, skill, practice and perseverance. The criteria will be judged to demonstrate the investment of skill, time and effort.

For example, do you demonstrate excellence in representative sport, do you speak a language, play music, dance or art? Have you been involved in Defence reserve or cadets, do you hold a pilot’s licence or martial arts qualification or a Duke of Edinburgh award? Have you written a book, starred in play or won an award for your skill? We are interested in any of your skills in this section.

See examples below:

HIGH LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE IN AN AREA OF HUMAN ENDEAVOUR										
1	Name & Address of Organisation	Thirroul Seaside Festival, C/O PO Box 47, Thirroul						Postal/Zip Code	2515	
	Activities	Artist and prize winner abstract modern oil and sculpture - mixed media								
	Position Title	Artist	Start Date	01-01-2007	End Date	01-01-2007	Approx Hours	6	Week Month Year Total	
									Per <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Ian Brown			Position	Adjudicator				
	Phone No.	02 4221 3590			Email	browni@seaside.com.au				

6. ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Many applicants to medical school are individuals who have had academic experiences beyond the required bachelor's degree. This criterion is designed to recognise academic achievements that may have shaped your experiences, but may not be otherwise seen on your calculated GPA.

Have you more than one bachelor's degree, hold a diploma, Honours, master's or PhD? Have you undertaken research, won academic awards, published papers or presented at conferences? Were you a dux, Dean's merit list or academic prize or scholarship winner?

See examples below:

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE										
1	Name & Address of Organisation	Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong						Postal/Zip Code	2522	
	Activities	Completed PhD - research in the area of visual literacy in education								
	Position Title	PhD Student	Start Date	30-01-2002	End Date	16-12-2005	Approx Hours	18	Week Month Year Total	
									Per <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Who can we contact to verify?	Full Name	Prof. L. Lockyer			Position	Academic supervisor				
	Phone No.	(02) 4221 9876			Email	tomysuper@uow.edu.au				

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do we have to submit the portfolio to both GEMSAS and the university? Or just GEMSAS?

No, you are not required to submit anything directly to UOW at this stage, everything will go to GEMSAS.

What do I do with my transcripts and rural evidence? Do I email them to UOW?

No. Basically you should only need to provide transcripts to GEMSAS if you studied at an Australian university not on the ARTS system or at any university not in Australia. All rurality documents must go to GEMSAS by the dates described in the guide. See the GEMSAS admissions guide for more information.

<http://www.gemsas.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2014-Medicine-GEMSAS-Admissions-Guide.pdf>

I don't have any rural experience. Is there any point in applying?

Yes! While a majority of our students are from a rural or regional background, many of our students have no rural experience at all. As long as you are interested in rural and regional medicine, and happy to undertake rural placements in the programme, you are welcome to apply regardless of your background.

I have lived in a rural area (or had rural experiences), but not for a total of five years, is there any way this will be recognised in the portfolio?

Basically, the major rural score will go to people who can demonstrate residency for more than 5 years and/or education in a rural area in Australia as defined by the RA scores in the rural residency section of the application. This is our major criteria. However, we will award bonus points for students who have had some rural experiences in the activity sections of the portfolio - even if they don't meet the strict criteria of residency (so if you lived somewhere for 3 years and not 5 or if your rural experience was overseas you may still receive bonus points). Make sure you include postcodes and accurate addresses for all portfolio activities and the scorers will assess rurality accordingly.

I have rural experience overseas - can I put that on the rural residency form? (e.g. New Zealand, UK, South Africa etc.)?

No, as it states in the guidelines, the section is only for Australian experiences. In the activity part of the portfolio your experiences will be assessed and bonus points will be given for rural experiences of any sort but only Australian experiences should be included in the questions regarding rural residency and schooling.

The form asks me for my campus preference but it doesn't ask me if I have any special reasons for my choice? Also, last year you could change your preference up till interview, is that still the case?

Once all applications are closed we will contact you via email and ask you to supply any special consideration reasons and supporting documentation regarding your campus preference via email. You will have until early October to finalise your campus preference.

It seems that a lot of my activities for the portfolio fit in multiple categories (the categories do seem fairly broad), what's the best way to combat this? Do you put the same activity in multiple sections or in the description mention how it involved aspects of the other categories or just to let it sit under the one heading?

Please feel free to include an experience under more than one category if required, however we recommend you use your 300 characters wisely to explain to us why it is relevant, rather than just cut and paste in the different sections.

Does the 300 character limit apply to each individual activity/ example provide within the categories or to each category (e.g. leadership) as a total? The sample portfolio uses just a few words to describe activities so I am unsure of how much detail I should go into.

The 300 character limit applies to each activity so you can say as much about that as you can fit in 300 characters! We are currently working with GEMSAS on a new prototype of the form so you can see the whole entry in one text box which should make the editing easier.

In the case of the subsection Academic Experience, some candidates may have certificates/diplomas/experience which they've completed which won't have a human reference, but rather the certificate itself as proof. What do we do in this case?

It is always advisable to have a person to verify if possible. The easiest solution if you can't find a human verifier is to write "document available if required" or something along those lines in the slot for verifiers name. If we need to see them we will contact you (so have a scanned copy handy!)

I was told that during the assessment of the portfolio, that they don't look at names or GAMSAT IDs and they rank the applicants according to the content of the portfolio. But I believe the GSM rings up some of the references to back up what we have put in our portfolio. How do you do this without actually looking at our names?

The scorers and verifiers are different people. Scorers score portfolios anonymously with no access to your identifying details. Later a different group will send out

hundreds of emails and/or phone calls to verify. The verifying team have your details. The scoring team do not.

I'm not sure exactly which section to put a certain activity in. Will I get marked down if I put it in the wrong place?

Certainly not. Your application is scored by a human being not a computer, and that person reads your portfolio in entirety. If it makes better sense to the scorer for your activity to be included in a different section we will shift it. We will always work in the student's best interests and move things if they score better in a different section.

How do I decide what to include if I have lots of activities?

We look at quality more than quantity so don't feel the need to fill every space if you are not sure what to say. If you only have 3 things to tell us about then use them all and tell us why. You will never get marked down for putting in an irrelevant activity. If you have more activities to include than spaces then choose the activities that are the most in depth, the longest, the most rural or that show the most diversity, commitment, or achievement.

Any more questions about your portfolio?

Contact us on gsm-admissions@uow.edu.au and we'll try to help!

Useful links:

- **GSM** website: <http://www.uow.edu.au/gsm>
- **GEMSAS** website: <http://www.gemsas.edu.au>
- **GEMSAS** online Admissions portal: <https://gemsas.ablecom.net.nz/admis>
- **WUMSS** Wollongong University Medical Students' Society: <http://www.wumss.org.au>
- **Paging Dr** forum (not affiliated with UOW but great information source and online community – register and get involved!): <http://pagingdr.net/forum>