

How to Approach the Supplementary Application for **McMaster Health Sciences**

Experience from 1st Person Perspective: Angela Dong

ACTUAL REAL LIFE STUDENT:

- Angela Dong is a third-year Health Sciences student at McMaster University.
- Health Sciences is a particularly prestigious and difficult program to get accepted to.
- With an acceptance rate of around 5%,
 - McMaster Health Science rivals the acceptance rates of some Ivy League institutions.
 - It has a unique supplementary application.
 - The Supp App changes every year – usually it's 3 small essays (About 1500 characters or 250 words)
 - Used to assess the critical thinking skills, personal qualities, communication, & writing skills of the applicant.



****Only students who meet the course and grade requirements will have their supplementary application read and scored.**

<https://mdconsultants.ca/bhsc-application-tips/>



Hello!

I am Angela Dong.

My main interests in high school:

- business-track student
- applied to most of the business schools in Ontario
- plan to do a double degree in science-business or biotech





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About the Program BHSc

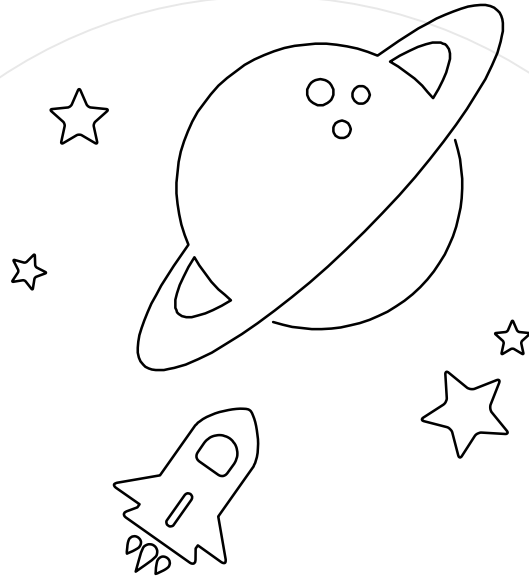


- inquiry-style teaching
- program is focused on the topics of health, illness and wellness
- unique in providing an education with a focus on self-directed, team-based and problem-based learning
- big contrast with the typical health or life science programs at most universities, where the education comes primarily from didactic lectures

Who Gets In?

- Highly competitive program with 4,000 applicants & only 200 spots, you need to be in the top 5%
- YOU NEED:
- Biology (SBI4U)
- Chemistry (SCH4U)
- English (ENG4U)
- One of:
 - Advanced Functions (MHF4U),
 - Calculus & Vectors (MCV4U) or
 - Mathematics of Data Management (MDM4U)
- One non-math, non-science, non-technology 4U/M
- One additional U or M credit to total six





**What were Angela's
marks?**

I had a 95.0% average applying

My Academics:

AP Biology

Politics, law and
debating

Exec and
provincial/national
level competitor of
Debate, DECA, Model
United Nations

EIC (Editor in Chief) of
my school newspaper
in high school

My Edge:

The strong humanities
background I had &
the analytical skills
fostered through
debate translated well
to research because
research is all about
asking questions,
defending/attacking
claims, and digging to
the truth of the matter.



My Personal Advice to You!

APPLY TO MAC – YOU LEARN:

- fluid intelligence skills like critical thinking, easily transferrable skills like professional competencies and communication
- systems-thinking analysis borne from learning cases in pharmacodynamics and anatomy

EASE UP :

- I would advise students though to not put too much pressure on themselves throughout high school to get in
- this isn't the be-all-end-all, and the human journey is long and unpredictable.

LIFE LESSONS:

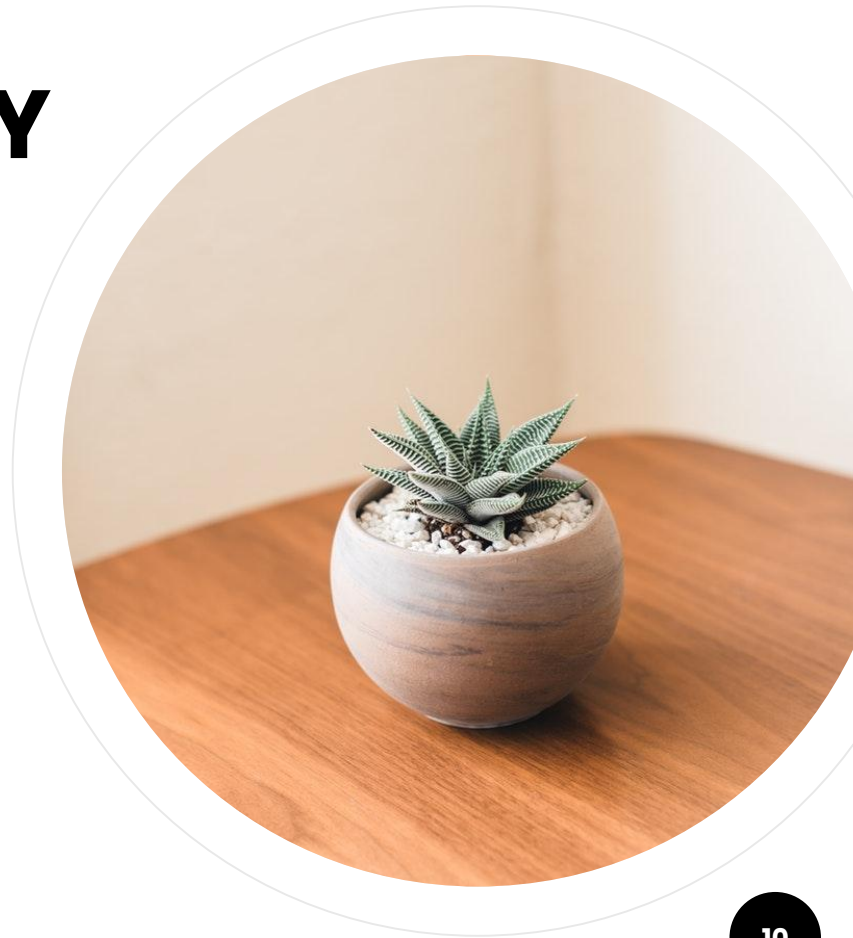
- focus on the high school experience
- learn as many lessons (life and curricular-wise) as you can
- keep an open – mind
- connect with people you usually don't connect with
- be empathetic.



The SUPPLEMENTARY APPLICATION:

For the 2014/2015 graduating BHSc class, over 50% ended up in medical school .

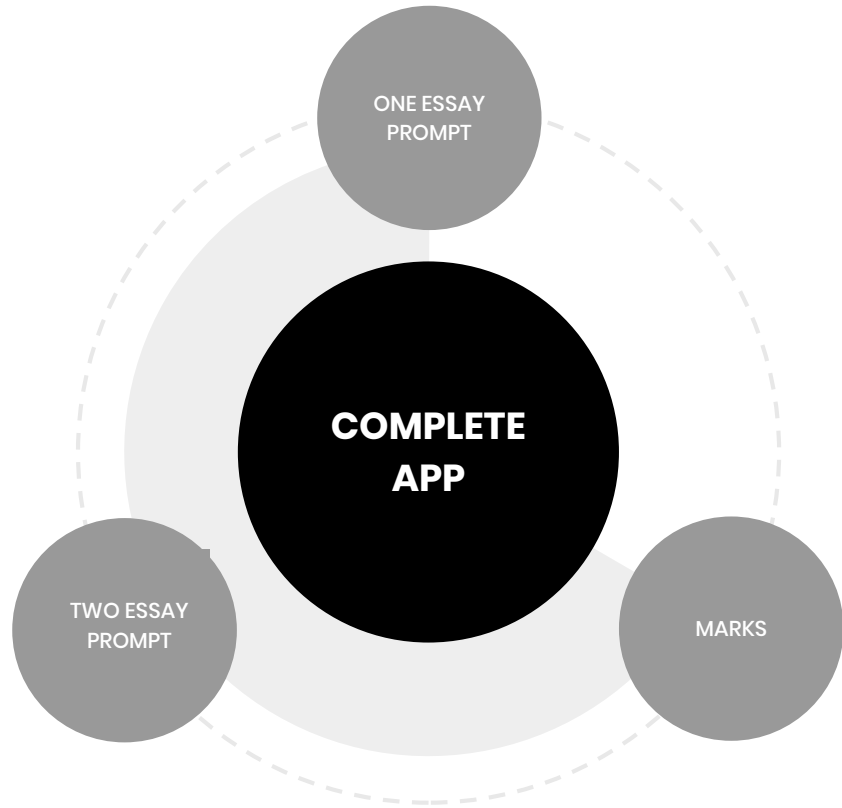
However, whether or not the McMaster BHSc program provides advantages for applying to medical school is a debate for another time.



A circular frame containing a photograph of a desk. On the desk, there is a potted plant in a white pot with a lace-like top, a large black letter 'A', and a wooden block with the letter 'S'. The background shows a window with light coming through. The text 'TOP #10 TIPS' is overlaid in white, with a downward-pointing arrow under the number 10.

TOP #10
TIPS

ANGELA'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE SUPP APP:





**YOURS WILL BE
DIFFERENT!**

TIP #1

Set yourself apart.

Angela believes her essay on...



Model United Nations probably distinguished me from most other pre-meds who might be focused more on science.

One of her essay prompts was...

write anything you like!?

Total success!

TIP #2

Maximize your Semester 2 Mid-term Marks!

****MCMaster Health Sci. Rep Advises the Importance of
Maintaining Those Marks to Finals!**

TIP #3

Start your Supplementary Application well in advance!



You should:

1

BRAINSTORM IDEAS

Be transparent with your experiences and honest with your approaches. They want to see who you are!

2

WRITE A DRAFT

There is no right or wrong answer in this case. Be concise & to the point. Avoid adverbs & adjectives.

3

RE-WRITE YOUR DRAFTS

Have someone you trust & who knows you read over the draft. Maybe a couple of people would be a good idea!

Brainstorm, Outline, Write:

Question the question:

Why is the BHsc program asking me this question?

How will my answer to this question help them in the selection process?

What do I think they are looking for in an answer?

Try to dissect why they have chosen this question, and how you should approach it.

Brainstorm:

What are all of the different ways you could approach this question?

The different ideas you could use?

The different examples from your life you could draw on?

Why pick one over the other?

Figure out what all your options; how you could answer the question.

Write:

Outline the following: in roughly 5 to 6 points, outline your introductory idea, closing idea, and 3-4 main ideas or examples.

Use this as an opportunity to organize your structure for answering the question and building appropriate transitions between your ideas.



**Now
start
writing!**



Finally, start writing.

Join your ideas together, here you can build your style and put some eloquence into it.

Just make sure you brainstorm and outline your responses first.

TIP #4

Research the BHSc program & prove you are a good match!

How?

For whatever essay question you are working on, think about whether there is an opportunity to sell yourself as a candidate who fits their program.

For example, if the question was “how do you learn best?”, you may want to discuss concepts such as problem-based learning, self-directed learning, etc,

The very types of learning used in the BHSc program!

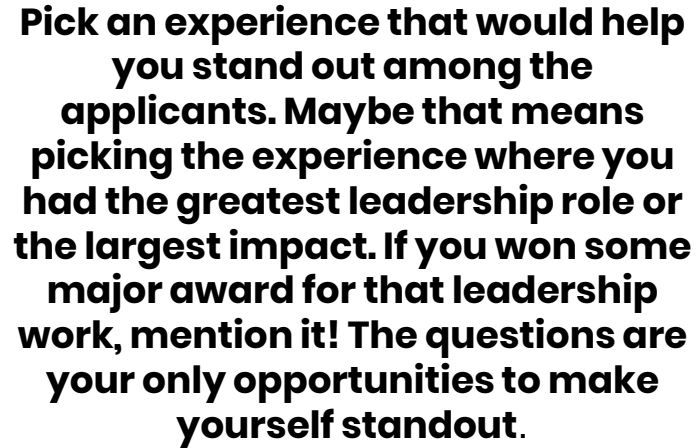
That way, you are able to hint that you would be a good fit for their program without explicitly saying so.

It would be a mistake to say you would love an education based on sitting through lectures.

TIP #5

Market yourself whenever possible!

This is Your Only Chance to Make Yourself Stand Out!



Pick an experience that would help you stand out among the applicants. Maybe that means picking the experience where you had the greatest leadership role or the largest impact. If you won some major award for that leadership work, mention it! The questions are your only opportunities to make yourself stand out.

Even when the questions are not directly asking to describe yourself, always look for ways to market yourself – just make sure it is relevant.

For example, let's say one of the essay questions was "why is it important for health care workers to be compassionate to patients?".

You could spend the whole essay speaking theoretically. However, if you were actually a volunteer with hospital patients, you could make your essay even stronger by reflecting on your experiences and what you learned.

Think about how many students across Canada have similar marks.



There is a reason the minimum grade to apply to the BHSc program is 90% – good marks are just too common now.

The supplementary application is really your only way of standing out

Recognize that, and take advantage of it.

100%

Total success!

TIP #6

Always provide evidence to support your ideas!

Supplementary Apps are tiny little essays!

If you're trying to make a point or statement, make sure you back it up.

If you say you have strong leadership skills – prove it.

If you're making a comment about society, do some research, find real life events currently or in history that support your position.

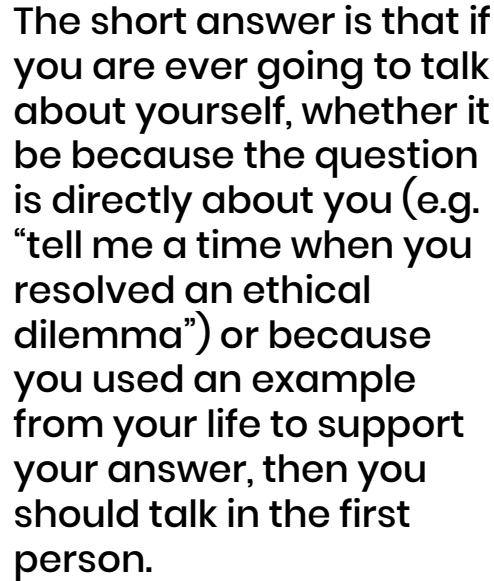
Evidence provides credibility to your ideas and adds flavour to your answers.



TIP #7

First person vs third person speech? The answer: it depends.

Depends on the question?



The short answer is that if you are ever going to talk about yourself, whether it be because the question is directly about you (e.g. “tell me a time when you resolved an ethical dilemma”) or because you used an example from your life to support your answer, then you should talk in the first person.

Use “I”, “me”, “myself”, whatever – it’s fine, as long as it’s relevant for that question.

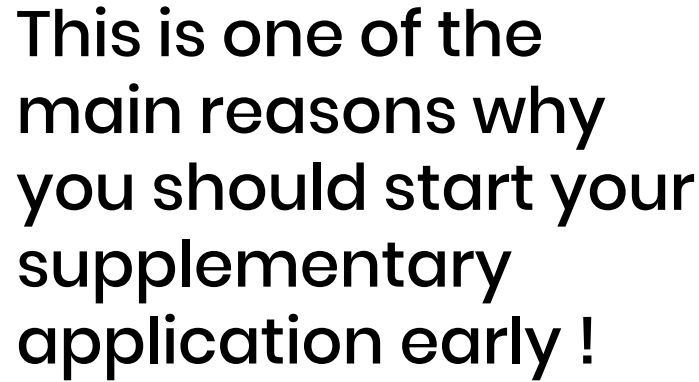
There is nothing wrong with writing in the first person for these essays.

In fact, when appropriate, I suggest you do.

TIP #8

Get feedback from others & revise!

**Get
feedback
from
others
and
revise!**



This is one of the
main reasons why
you should start your
supplementary
application early !

So you have time to get feedback from others, think about it, and make necessary changes. Who do you ask?

People you trust can make your essay better – parents, teachers, colleagues who write well.

TIP #9

Clear and concise first, style second.

Does it sound cool?

That's not super important.

Above all, your essay must be easy to understand to the reader.

Basically, that means writing clearly and concisely.

That means saying what you want to say in as few words, and as easily, as possible.

You only have 1500 characters for each essay answer. That's about 200-250 words.

Or 2 paragraphs.

Believe it or not, that's really not much.

If you want a well thought out, comprehensive answer with supporting evidence, you need to focus on being clear and concise, and getting rid of the "fluff".

TIP #10

Submit at least 1 day in advance.

Be smart! Submit your app 1 day early.

Most students end up procrastinating their essay on the last day and submitting just before midnight.

The worry is that too many students submitting at once might crash the server, or worse, your Internet suddenly stops working at the most inopportune time!

I highly doubt the McMaster admissions team will care if your neighbourhood had a blackout at 11:59pm.

Keep in mind, they still have 4,499 other applicants to choose from.





Success!

Getting into McMaster's BHSc program is tough.

Perhaps the toughest undergraduate program to get into in Canada.

But if you follow these 10 tips for success, I think you will have greatly enhanced your shot at admission.



Thanks!

Email: kammendo@hwdsb.on.ca

If you have any questions re: the content of this slide show.