

## **FAQ – Is MCW-Central Wisconsin a Good Fit for Me?**

**1. Would it make sense for me to consider MCW-Central Wisconsin (MCW-CW)?**

If you think you would like to practice in a smaller community, want to learn in an accelerated curriculum or you are leaning toward family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine or psychiatry, the MCW-CW three-year program may be a good option for you.

**2. What if I don't know what specialty I am interested in yet? Will MCW-CW be a good place to explore my options?**

Many people starting medical school are unsure of their specialty choice. Our curriculum provides early primary care clinical experiences and an opportunity to experience some specialty practices prior to most clerkship experiences. Students have ten weeks of core clerkship experiences the summer after their M1 year, an opportunity to spend six half-days in four different clinical specialties during their M2 year and up to six weeks of electives early in their M3 year to help inform specialty choice decisions. Students who have not settled on a specialty by this time may need to complete a fourth year. Those who want more time may find more flexibility at other institutions.

**3. I know I want to stay in the Midwest to practice. Does that make MCW-CW a great choice for me?**

MCW-Central Wisconsin's mission is to develop community-focused physicians who will meet the healthcare needs of Central Wisconsin and the surrounding regions. If you like what smaller towns and cities have to offer, MCW-CW could be a great fit. There are many outdoor activities, arts, dining, entertainment and local sports opportunities in the region. If you prefer the hustle and bustle and a multitude of options that a large city provides, MCW-CW is probably not the best option for you.

**4. I want to be an Emergency Room Physician. ER doctors are needed in rural Wisconsin. Is that possible at MCW-CW?**

MCW-CW can prepare most students in three years for family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine and psychiatry. Preparing for a career in emergency medicine and some other some other specialties will require a fourth year, which we can accommodate on our campus.

**5. Are there research opportunities at MCW-CW?**

MCW-CW requires all students to complete a community-based research project through our Physician in the Community Scholarly Pathway course and other partnerships. Our students work with community organizations to accomplish research and service-learning projects. MCW-CW students may participate in other research projects during their time on our campus; however, time is limited in our accelerated curriculum. MCW-CW does not have lab facilities for biomedical sciences research, and local clinical trials are limited. More information about our community partnerships and examples of student research projects can be found here: [Physician in the Community Scholarly Pathway](#)

**6. I'm worried about the pressure and demands of completing medical school in three years. What kind of support is available?**

Medical school is a lot of work and takes a lot of time. Our campus actively works to support students through the rigors of medical school, including hosting student groups and organizations, wellness activities, social activities and providing academic support systems. There are limited summer vacations and shorter breaks compared to many medical schools. Days will be long. It will be like working a demanding job; however, academic support, wellness opportunities and mental health resources are available to help you succeed. We're in this together! Students may opt into a more traditional 4-year program due to specialty choice, life circumstances, personal preference or academic difficulty.

**7. Will I have enough time to study for boards and interview at residencies and the other things that normally happen during the fourth year in a traditional program?**

Yes! We have Step Prep tools available for our students. We also have a dedicated study time for USMLE Step built into our curriculum schedule and protected time for residency interviews in the M3 year. The turnaround time between taking Step 1 and Step 2 is highly shortened in the 3-year program. MCW-CW student Step scores and match results are comparable to other medical schools.

**8. Will I have any free time to decompress or connect with my family and the community around me?**

We take student wellness very seriously at MCW-CW. We plan fun campus activities and help you get connected to the community in addition to offering a number of mental health support options. Free time is an important part of wellness and we make unstructured time a part of our curriculum and programming.

**9. I am Hmong, Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ+ or haven't been in school for a while, will I fit in?**

As a campus we strive for a diverse student body and an inclusive environment where all people are welcome and supported. MCW-CW actively partners with local Latino/Hispanic and Hmong community members as well as the local LGBTQ+ community to improve health. Our community and campus are highly supportive of our students and their partners/families. MCW-CW has developed [Advocates in Medicine Pathway](#) (AMP) to assist students from underrepresented backgrounds prepare for medical school. Many of our students are returning to medical school as a second career or after time away from undergraduate studies. We encourage non-traditional applicants to reach out.

**10. What if I have other questions?**

Please reach out to any of the following if you have other questions:

- **Lisa Dodson, MD, Founding and Sentry Dean.** 715.870.0919, [ldodson@mcw.edu](mailto:ldodson@mcw.edu)
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