

How Do I... Prepare for the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam?

Why is the MCAT® exam changing?

In standardized testing, periodic reviews are considered a best practice, especially in fields with a rapidly-changing knowledge base like medicine. As the standardized test required by the majority of medical schools in the United States and Canada, the MCAT exam provides admissions committees with important information about their applicants' readiness for success. Therefore, periodic updates help ensure that the exam is keeping pace with changes in the study and practice of medicine, such as new and innovative treatments, health care system reforms, and the challenges that come with serving an increasingly diverse population.

The new MCAT exam will begin administration in the spring of 2015.

What does the exam test?

The MCAT²⁰¹⁵ exam is a computer-based exam that tests your knowledge and use of concepts from the natural, social, and behavioral sciences, plus your critical analysis and reasoning skills. The four sections of the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ exam, in order, will be:

1. Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
2. Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills
3. Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
4. Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior

How are scores used?

There are many factors considered in the medical school admissions process that provide a holistic view of an applicant's likelihood of succeeding in medical school. MCAT scores are one of the factors considered. When admissions officers look at MCAT scores in conjunction with undergraduate GPA, rather than grades alone, they are better able to predict who will be successful in medical school.

How important is the MCAT exam?

Taking the MCAT exam is an important step in the application process, but the exam alone does not make or break your chances of getting into medical school. Admissions committees consider many other factors when you apply, such as: academic strengths, exposure to health care and medical research environments, personal experiences and interests, potential contributions to the campus and community, and personal attributes, such as maturity and drive to help others.

When should I take the MCAT exam?

In most cases, you should take the exam in the calendar year prior to the year in which you plan to enter medical school. That means students applying to enter medical school directly after undergraduate studies will take the exam during or after their junior year.

Which exam will I take?

Ask yourself two key questions before making your decision: 1) When do you want to start medical school, and 2) When will you be ready to take the exam. If you want to start medical school in 2014 or 2015, you will take the current MCAT exam. If you want to start school in 2016 or 2017, you will probably take the new MCAT²⁰¹⁵ exam. To learn more visit: www.aamc.org/mcat/whichexam. Please note that current MCAT scores will continue to be reported through the 2019 application cycle. However, please review **MSAR Online** for information about individual medical school's admission requirements.

How do I prepare?

The knowledge and skills you will be responsible for knowing on the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ exam are outlined in the *Preview Guide for the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam (Second Edition)*. Since course content differs between schools, and some colleges have innovative, interdisciplinary courses, it is a good idea to compare the content of the courses you plan to take with the content lists in the *Preview Guide for the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam (Second Edition)*. This guide also indicates the courses in which content is typically taught according to survey data. These courses include: introductory courses in biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, and in first-semester biochemistry, psychology, and sociology. Pre-health advisors and other faculty at your

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES, PLEASE SEE:

- **MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam Site:** www.aamc.org/mcat2015
- **MSAR Online:** www.aamc.org/MSAR
- **The Preview Guide for the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam (Second Edition):** <https://www.aamc.org/students/download/266006/data/2015previewguide.pdf>
- **Fee Assistance Program:** www.aamc.org/fap

school are also great resources for helping you plan which courses will best prepare you to do well on the exam.

To help you prepare for the content on the new exam, AAMC joined with The Khan Academy and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Khan Academy to create original video tutorials in the areas of biochemistry, and the social and behavioral sciences.

Are practice materials available?

There are sample questions in the *Preview Guide for the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam (Second Edition)* for each section of the exam. In 2014, the Official Guide to the MCAT²⁰¹⁵ Exam and a sample test will be released. In 2015, a second practice test will be released.