

How to Create a Study Plan for the MCAT[®] Exam



Preparing for the MCAT exam takes time. While you are trying to find a balance between your coursework, extracurricular activities, and social life, you also need to find time to prepare. It's no surprise that one of the most frequently asked questions is, "What is the best way to prepare for the exam?"

There is no right or wrong way to study and prepare for the exam, but knowing where to start can be challenging. To help you, the MCAT team has developed this five-step guide to creating your own study plan. The best study plan is one that is tailored to your personal learning style and schedule. Following the steps in this guide can help you make the most effective use of your MCAT study time.

1
Understand

2
Establish
a Baseline

3
Study
Targeted Areas

4
Practice

5
Simulate
Actual Exam



1 Understand

Learn about the MCAT exam: what it is testing, how it is scored, and more.

- Start by watching this [two-minute video](#) for a brief overview about the exam and what it tests.
- Explore the content outline of the exam and the necessary skills you will be tested on by using the interactive tool [What's on the MCAT Exam?](#)
- Get a complete introduction to the exam, including important information on registration, scoring, exam content, and holistic admissions, in [The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam](#). This guide also provides 120 MCAT practice questions and answers and an option to get online access to the practice questions.
- Read the [MCAT Essentials](#), required reading for all examinees, to get registration instructions, test-day policies, scoring details, suggestions to help you prepare for the exam, a list of contacts and online services, and other helpful information.

2 Establish

Establish a baseline of knowledge by taking a pretest to help you begin your studying.

- Watch the [Sample Test Video](#) to learn more about how to use the Official MCAT Sample Test and the feedback it provides.
- Take the [Official MCAT Sample Test](#) to help you identify the sections that you need to focus on the most. This is a full-length practice test with the same type and number of questions as the actual MCAT exam. Plus, the Sample Test allows up to 20 "starts," which gives you multiple times to retake the test.





3 Study

Focus your studies according to your pretest results.

- Use the [Khan Academy MCAT Collection](#) to brush up on familiar topics or expose you to new material not yet covered in your courses. This free and open-access collection includes more than 1,100 videos and 3,000 review questions on all the content areas the exam covers. You can customize how you study by digging deeper into the content categories on which you want to focus.
- Use the resources already available to you: textbooks and class notes from completed courses, your campus library, academic support, and study groups.
- If you need additional resources in psychology or sociology, the [Roadmap to MCAT Content in Sociology and Psychology Textbooks](#) lists introductory psychology and sociology textbooks (many of which are open access) that contain MCAT concepts and content. The publishers of these textbooks have identified where in their publications the MCAT content is located.



4 Practice

Practice your skills by taking MCAT test questions in different ways.

- Test your knowledge with the [AAMC MCAT Section Bank](#) and the [Official MCAT Question Packs](#). You'll have access to more than 1,000 questions with these test prep products.
- Take advantage of enhanced practice features, including "Why did I miss this question?" and detailed solutions to help you focus your studies. Plus, all MCAT practice question products allow up to 20 "starts," which gives you multiple chances to retake the questions.
- Refresh your knowledge as needed by going back to the Khan Academy MCAT Collection and the resources already available to you, such as your textbooks and class notes from previous coursework.



5 Simulate

Simulate the exam-day experience as a final step and to gain confidence.

- Take the [AAMC MCAT Practice Exam \(Scored\) One](#), by selecting the “Simulate Actual Test” setting, to get an idea of how you might perform on test day. This option lets you take the practice exam with the same timer as the actual timed exam.
- Review your scaled score report and use your 20 “starts” to repeat the test using other options. For example, you can choose to see the solutions as you answer the questions.
- Ask your advisor to hold a [Mock Exam](#) Day for you and your peers (or hold one yourself). This will simulate the experience of taking the real exam, including preparing for the logistics of test day, effectively using the test features, and testing your endurance during the exam.

One Final Note

Don't forget to take care of yourself! This means eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep, especially right before test day. You might be tempted to cram the night before, staying up late to get that last chance to study and practice. But you will perform better on test day if you get at least seven to eight hours of sleep.

We wish you the best on your path to a career in medicine!

