MCAT Preparation Handbook

Entry Year 2021 Cohort

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# MCAT Preparation Handbook

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MCAT Preparation Handbook

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is an important standardized aspect of assessing your readiness for medical school. For many students, the MCAT can be the make-or-break point for entering medical school. To achieve a respectable score, you will have to learn to combine MCAT strategy with content mastery.

It is thoroughly important that you take heed to the test taking strategies you will learn in the coming months. The MCAT is the first of a series of examinations you’ll take throughout your medical career; the next set will be the United States Medical Licensing Examination Steps 1, 2, and 3, which will allow you to apply for a medical license. You will encounter this next set of standardized exams following your second year in medical school.

JAMP Expectations

Structure

The MCAT prep is broken into 3 Phases each aimed at providing you the necessary practice and structure to adequately prepare you for the MCAT. These three phases are:

- **Phase 1:**
  - CARS Foundations

- **Phase 2:**
  - Biology Enrichment
  - Chemistry Enrichment

- **Phase 3:**
  - Live Online Classes

Testing Requirements

JAMP participants must take the MCAT by the specified test date in April 2021*. The minimum MCAT score that must be achieved to qualify for Medical School will be a total score of 502 with no section score less than 124. Participants who fail to meet this requirement may be dismissed from the program.

**JAMP requires you to take the MCAT by the specified test date in April 2021*.**

*Warning: The JAMP council may elect to require all eligible JAMPers to take the mid-April MCAT exam or earlier.

Attendance

Class attendance, participation and completion of related assignments is required. It is not enough to show up! **You must also participate!**

If you have a conflict with any given class, you must email Dr. Joel Robles at jrobles@texasjamp.org and your JAMP Faculty Director (JFD) in as far advance as possible for consideration of an excused absence. If you become ill and are unable to login for the class, an email must be sent immediately explaining the situation. Unexcused absences will be followed up with a request for an explanation to be sent to Dr. Joel Robles (jrobles@texasjamp.org) and your JFD. Records of these absences will be kept and reported to the JAMP Council for
future consideration.

**JAMP Expectations cont.**

**Required Tests/Exams & Coursework**

Throughout each phase of the MCAT prep program, pre work, post work and full-length exams will be taken to measure your knowledge. The completion of this work and exams is required to be completed with established deadlines.

**MCAT Registration**

**You are solely responsible for registering for the MCAT.**

**Paying for the MCAT**

Please view the AAMC’s MCAT page for all info pertaining to the exam. You can find it at: [https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/register-mcat-exam](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/register-mcat-exam)

Fee: $320

This summer you were advised to save some of your summer stipend to pay for the MCAT. When registration opens, it will be crucial to have the money ready to pay for the exam when you are informed to do so to ensure you are able to get into the location and date of preference.

**Registration:** The latest news indicates that registration for the 2021 MCAT will take place in late October 2021. JAMP will notify you when registration opens and provide a deadline by which you need to register. However, it is primarily your responsibility to seek out this information. Openings fill up very quickly at certain sites in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin as well as neighboring states, so make sure you are ready to register quickly.

**Fee Assistance Program (FAP)**

You may qualify to have your fee reduced from $320 to $130.

When you are approved for the Fee Assistance Program, the approval will count toward registration for exams during that calendar year. FAP approval is not retroactive; you must receive the FAP approval prior to registering for the MCAT.

Once all documentation is received, you should be notified of the outcome of your Fee Assistance Program Application within 15 business days.

For more information about FAP, visit: [https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap/](https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap/).
**Why is this Important?**

The opportunities JAMP offers you are unparalleled, but to ensure that you are competitive enough for your top-choice medical school, your MCAT score should properly reflect the effort you’ve put into preparation for medical school.

We find it beneficial to see how current medical school applicants / matriculants fare to help you calibrate your performance to be more competitive for the JAMP Match.

Below are the average MCAT section scores for the medical school class of 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical School Entry Year 2018</th>
<th>Average CPBS Matriculated</th>
<th>Average CARS Matriculated</th>
<th>Average BBFL Matriculated</th>
<th>Average PSBB Matriculated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TMDSAS Schools*</td>
<td>127.5</td>
<td>126.8</td>
<td>127.7</td>
<td>127.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes the U.T. System Medical Schools, Texas A&M College of Medicine, Texas Tech School of Medicine, TTUHSC Paul L. Foster SOM and UNT-Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.

How to Access Your Kaplan Online Study Plan

Logging in to Kaptest.com

Go to [www.kaptest.com/login](http://www.kaptest.com/login)

Login with your email address and password.

If you don’t know your Kaptest.com account password, click “Forgot your password” to receive a password reset email.

**If you are having difficulty logging in, please reach out to [KPS_Service@Kaplan.com](mailto:KPS_Service@Kaplan.com)**
Kaplan Test Prep Resources

After logging in, you should be at the following screen. Please note, the courses you are enrolled in may be different than what is pictured below.

Click on the “Access Resources” link under the appropriate section in order to access class materials.
Online Resources and Exams

Portions of the MCAT preparation program may require you to complete a Pre-Test for CARS course and a Baseline Exam for the MCAT course (indicated below).

These tests must be completed by the due dates provided and can be accessed within the “Online Resources” section of the courses.

*Take full advantage of the class resources provided to you at all times! You have access to a wealth of information designed to help you be successful.*

First Steps

The first time you access your Kaplan resources for the MCAT course, you will be asked a series of questions that will be used to automatically create your study schedule.

Questions 1 and 2:

For question 1, you should enter your actual MCAT test date. If you have not registered for the MCAT, then you should enter the last day of the month in which you plan on testing.

For question 2, enter the approximate number of hours you expect to spend studying for the MCAT each week.

*01. When do you plan to complete your studies?

If you're not sure, make your best guess—you can always change this later.

04/08/2022

02. How many hours can you study each week?

Take your best guess at the hours you have available to study each week.

20 hours

Next
Question 3:

This one is going to take a little more effort but is still relatively easy. Block off any days you will not be able to study. This should include periods of time through the school year which you know you will not be able to dedicate time to the MCAT like midterms and finals periods. Also, be sure to include planned holidays and obligations and at least one rest day off per week. You will need to scroll through the calendar until your test date.

Once you click submit, your study calendar will be generated. This may take a few moments, but rest assured the system is doing its work. Click continue, and your personalized schedule will appear.

Once you see your personalized schedule, you will want to become familiar with the resources in your course. The first “assignment” listed will be “Get Started Here.”
The resources listed under the “Get Started Here” assignment will orient you to the various resources that are part of your course. The “How Your Course Works” video is full of valuable information that will explain the design of our MCAT program and how all the components work together. Be sure to complete this entire assignment immediately!
You will follow your schedule throughout your MCAT preparation – it is personalized to you and will populate your assignments in a pragmatic manner.

**Baseline Exam**

The MCAT Baseline exam can be found in your calendar, it will be the second assignment you see. It will say “Establish Your Baseline.” This is AAMC full length exam #1 and will mimic the official MCAT in length, question content and difficulty. It will take you ~7.5 hours to complete.

There are several reasons we would want you starting off with a full-length exam right out of the gate. The first is that it sets a baseline for your studies — it allows you to diagnose your areas of opportunity to be able to study most efficiently which is the name of the game when you're trying to fit somewhere in 300 hours of studying into your schedule.

Taking an AAMC exam as you begin your prep also allows you to get exposure to the way the test maker writes questions. The MCAT is unlike the exams most people take during their undergraduate studies. It is a passage-based exam that requires content knowledge and critical thinking skills - we want you to start practicing those skills right away.

The best way to approach this test is without preparation and in the most test-like way possible meaning you'll want to take all of the sections in one sitting sequentially. Use a mouse (not a trackpad) on the computer, if possible.

You will need to complete this assignment by January 3rd, 2022, before your first-class session.

Once you select “Establish Your Baseline,” you will see this screen. You will need to click the launch button to take you to the exam.

### Full-Length Tests and Test Review

12 Kaplan Full-length tests and 4 AAMC exams are available. The **minimum** required number of full-length tests have been scheduled and you should complete each one by the required deadline.

Test Review is an important part of your course. This provides you with crucial feedback on both your strengths and weaknesses so that you can both see your progress and focus your prep on your areas of opportunity.
Class Preparation

Before each class session, there are going to be various assignments that you will need to complete. These can be found by clicking on the live session name. You will want to complete these assignments to get the most out of your live class sessions. Be sure to complete the Live Class Prerequisites before your live instruction begins as well.
Accessing Live Class Sessions

Your live class sessions can be accessed directly in your schedule. Live classes are marked “Live Class” and will appear like this:

You can access the live session by clicking on the title of the session. You can also add the live sessions to your personal calendar.

After Class Work

After each live class session, you will want to continue to access your schedule to complete the assignments that have been personalized for your study plan.

Your Schedule Design

Your course comes with a wealth of resources, each serving a specific purpose. Here we explain the underlying learning science principles that have guided the development of this course.

Research has shown—and everyday experiences support—the idea that repeated exposure leads to increased familiarity and memory. That's the idea of spaced repetition, but here's the kicker: if you're going to see the content again, you don't need to focus on it as intently the first time you see it. That extra early effort does not pay off if there are going to be subsequent exposures. Your course is built around spaced repetition of the highest yield concepts on the MCAT. So the takeaway is that you should start at the beginning and keep moving forward, knowing that you'll see the content again and again.

Of course, there are nuanced ways to present the content. Learning science has shown that mixing up your studies, say by going from biology to biochemistry to general chemistry, is more efficient than simply focusing on a single subject until completion and then moving on. So you'll notice that we weave through the various disciplines on the MCAT.

The first pass at the high-yield content is what we call "content refreshers." Here the focus is a quick overview of the highest yield topics with the goal of building foundational knowledge and understanding. These lessons prepare you to answer Skill 1 type questions on the MCAT.

The second pass through the content involves using the content to answer questions—this is what we call "application." In this phase you'll see the same content again, but the content is presented in a way that helps prepare you to answer higher-order questions on the MCAT.

The third pass through the content is called "topical review." The Subject Review Notes form the core of this phase, and therefore include all of the content that could possibly be tested on the MCAT. They are emphasized at this stage so that you can read them efficiently. By this point you've seen the high-yield content and have been exposed to test like resources. Use that information—and the Placement Quizzes—to help streamline your review.
The last phase of your preparation is "simulation." This is where the strategy and content come together in increasingly more test-like practice.

Placement Quizzes

Your course breaks up large subject areas into smaller chunks. One major advantage is that we can provide targeted assessments and provide personalized recommendations, for example, to either skip some instructional components or spend more time reviewing them. That's the goal of our Placement Quizzes. Score well enough (the threshold varies based on the content) and move on! Otherwise complete the subsequent assignments before taking a Review Quiz.

Even though the Placement and Review quizzes cover the same content as the corresponding videos, you may notice that the quizzes require more than recall of facts. That's because the quizzes are designed to demonstrate the requirements of the MCAT. Skill 1 questions will require you to think critically about the basic sciences. So for example, you might need to recognize familiar content in unfamiliar contexts.

Activity Library

Your course has over 500 hours of material! But rest assured we don't expect you to complete every single assignment. Your Schedule shows the activities that will maximize the amount of study time you have available. The Activity Library contains all of the activities in your MCAT course. At any time you can search or browse by type or status. Common searches and their function are described below:

- Search “How to” (filter by "reading") to bring up articles that explain how to use your Kaplan Resources.
- Search "AAMC" to bring up your AAMC resources.
- Search "Lesson on demand" to bring up recordings of your live sessions.
- Search any chapter title, such as "The Cell", to bring up the chapter review document that outlines all the resources specific to that chapter.
- Search "Chapter Review" to bring up all 72 science chapter documents which outline all resources.
- Search “Kaplan Full-Length” to bring up all 11 Kaplan Full-Length exams.

MCAT Workshops

Your MCAT Workshops are live versions of your application lessons. They contain more than 90 one-hour sessions that go in depth on important MCAT topics. These sessions cover both content and strategy and should be used to boost your understanding of any content areas in which you need some extra help.

AAMC Resources

All of the official AAMC resources are included in your Kaplan course! We have strategically placed assignments on your schedule, but you can access all of them at any time by searching your Library for "AAMC."

Reading Effectively

Your course comes with the Subject Review Notes books, which cover every topic on the MCAT, but don't think that you must read these cover-to-cover. Instead, once you decide to review a chapter, start with the Science Mastery
Assessment. Note any topics covered in questions you got wrong and focus your reading on sections that cover that material. It is not worth your time, at least to start, to review concepts that you’re already familiar with. When you do read a section, make sure to stop periodically as you go along and summarize what you’ve read, either mentally or in the form of notes. Always try to think about how the material you’re reading connects to other MCAT topics you’ve learned about; doing so will aid understanding and recall. Finally, be sure to complete the Concept Check at the end of the section to ensure that you’ve gleaned the most important material from that section.

Your Qbank

The absolute best way to ensure that you’re prepared for the MCAT is to practice answering multiple-choice questions. Often, it’s not practical to sit down to take a full-length test or even just a section, and often you’ll want to target content that you’ve recently studied. Your QBank allows you to create quizzes that drill down to specific topics and subtopics. Want to try a ten-question quiz on Compounds and Stoichiometry? You got it. Review your results with complete answers and explanations.

How to Use the Qbank

Customize
3,000+ MCAT-style questions are at your fingertips. Create customized quizzes to strengthen weak areas, sharpen skills, and work on pacing and endurance. You may notice that each topic corresponds to a book, and each subtopic a chapter, from our 7-Book Subject Review Notes—which makes the Qbank the perfect book companion.
### Review

Be sure to review every question. Use the Step-By-Step explanations to learn how to attack questions like an MCAT expert.

**Step-By-Step**

<p>| Simplify the question |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is known? Unknown?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each of the theories of language development described in the answer choices is known and can be described more fully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning theory</strong>—Explains language acquisition as being controlled by operant conditioning and reinforcement by parents and caregivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nativism</strong>—Theory credited to Noam Chomsky that posits the existence of an innate capacity for language; referred to as the LAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neurocognitive theory</strong>—Not a language development theory per se, concerned with the subjective experience of dreaming and the physiology of dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shaping</strong>—In operant conditioning, the process of conditioning a complicated behavior (such as language) by rewarding successive approximations of the behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your prediction?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use Summary explanations to quickly check your understanding, and when necessary take a deeper dive into the content with In-Depth explanations.

### Improve

Early in your studies you should create short, untimed quizzes focused on specific areas: read about a topic then create a quiz to ensure your understanding. As test day nears, create longer, timed tests to build pacing and endurance. To simulate a section of the MCAT, create quizzes with multiple topics, and be sure to review explanations and your Performance page to stay on track.

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*Scientific American* is the essential guide to the modern world for science enthusiasts everywhere, and its authoritative articles are a great resource to practice critical reading skills when preparing for the MCAT.
Digital Flashcards

How to Use Your MCAT Flashcards

We recommend starting to use the flashcards as soon as you have started reviewing content so you can reinforce those scientific concepts.

These flashcards use spaced repetition to encourage efficient and effective learning. Learning science demonstrates that reviewing content periodically helps reinforce your memory of that content, a phenomenon known as the spacing effect. Spaced repetition takes advantage of the spacing effect by serving up flashcards periodically. In spaced repetition, cards you struggle with are shown more frequently, while cards you have mastered are still shown periodically but with less frequency. Your input determines the frequency with which cards reappear. The model for this tool was Anki flashcards. These flashcards look, feel and function similarly to Anki decks. Note that mobile devices will work with the flashcards and stay synced with web usage.

Starting a Session: To start a study session, simply click the Study Now button. You will be shown cards until the cards for the day have run out. We introduce 20 new cards per topic each day. This batch size is recommended by learning science as the best way to master this type of material.
During a Session: You will be presented with a prompt. When you feel ready, click Show Answer to see the corresponding answer or definition.

In addition to the answer or definition, you will have three, sometimes four, options. Again will bring the card back up in 1 minute. Good will bring the card back up in 10 minutes. Easy means you’ve mastered the card, and we won’t show it to you again today. Once a card has been shown a number of times over several study sessions, a new option will become available. Hard will bring the card back less often than if you had chosen Again, but more often than if you had chosen Good.

Reviewing Your Sessions: Your stats are available by clicking Show More Stats. You will see a chart showing the number of cards you have mastered versus those you are still practicing or are still unseen. You will also see a breakdown of the responses you’ve chosen for cards (Easy, Good, Hard, Again) and a history of your card usage over time.
Questions for Kaplan?

Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.
In-Class | Chat questions to your instructors before, during, or after class.
By Email | Email your instructors if you have questions about content, structure, strategies. Email the Kaplan Service Team at KPS_Service@Kaplan.com with other questions or concerns.
By Phone | For Technical Support call 1-800-KAP-TEST.

Wisdom from JAMP Medical School Students

Please do not procrastinate with your MCAT preparation! In time, that will catch up with you and will leave you overwhelmed and pressed for time.

*Some modules will take longer to complete than others.* This is all very manageable if you stay on top of it. Be proactive and work through the assignments with purpose.

*Do not sabotage yourself* and allow a recording to play through muted so it checks off, or complete a quiz quickly for completion without effort, or sign into your live online class and not participate. *This will only serve to be a detriment when you take full length exams and certainly on the actual exam.*

It is not wise to purposefully perform poorly on the exam. This score will be reported by AAMC for several years and will be accessible to medical school admissions officers for all future score reports.

Get your practice in! **The number of full-length exams scheduled is the bare minimum.** Successful JAMPers take as many Full-Length Practice Exams as possible!
Your Resources

If you have any technical issues, please contact KapTest Tech Support at 1-800-KAP-TEST or at customer.care@kaplan.com.

If you have any questions or issues regarding any of your Kaplan Resources, please contact the Institutional Service Team, Kaplan Partner Solutions at KPS_Service@Kaplan.com.

For any JAMP-related questions, absence notifications, or any other issues, please call Dr. Joel Robles, Associate Director at the Joint Admission Medical Program office at (512) 499-4352, or at jrobles@texasjamp.org.