

Tips for Doing Well on the MCAT

Plan your undergraduate curriculum so that you have completed all of the required courses listed below before you take the MCAT. The recommended courses will help significantly to increase the biological sciences score:

Prerequisites

- 2 semesters of introductory biology
- 2 semesters of introductory physics
- 2 semesters of introductory chemistry
- 2 semesters of organic chemistry
- 1 semester of biochemistry at the junior or senior level

Strongly Recommended Biology Courses

- 1 semester of microbiology
- 2 semesters of anatomy/physiology
- 1 semester of immunology
- 1 semester of genetics

Begin studying for the MCAT about one year in advance using the following schedule:

6-12 months before the test: check your reading speed and make sure that you can read at least 200-300 words per minute with good comprehension. If not, take a speed-reading course. If you cannot finish the MCAT, you cannot do well on it. Many people who did not do well on the MCAT failed to finish the test or had to rush through it.

3-6 months before the test: 3 hours per week with a strong focus on taking practice tests to identify your weaknesses and review those weaker areas that were exposed by the practice tests.

1-3 months before the test: take an MCAT review course and focus on addressing weaknesses. Make sure that you make the most of the review course. If you cannot spend the time the review course, do not take it - it will be a waste of money.

TAKE THE MCAT AS SOON AFTER THE REVIEW COURSE AS POSSIBLE TO ENHANCE THE "PRACTICE EFFECT."

DO NOT TAKE THE REVIEW COURSE AT THE SAME TIME AS YOU ARE TRYING TO FINISH YOUR PREREQUISITES.

DO NOT TAKE THE MCAT DURING THE SCHOOL TERM IF YOU HAVE A HEAVY SCHEDULE.

The most effective strategy is to take as many practice tests as you can. Studying without using the practice tests to identify weaknesses and assess progress is a waste of time. If you simply start studying without taking practice tests, you will spend precious time studying things that you already know. Count on the fact that your real total score on the actual MCAT will be 3-4 points lower than your total score on the practice tests.