Medical School: Application, MCAT & Admission

William J. Higgins
Department of Biology
University of Maryland, College Park
Some questions for you:
Why are we here?

• Today, I plan to:
  – Review the application process
  – Examine & evaluate YOUR application
  – Review the MCAT and relevant information
  – Suggest a method of study
  – Assist you to establish a productive study schedule
  – Answer your questions
Disclaimer

No absolutes in this process,

but the data don’t lie!
Always listen to good advice...
What % of applicants matriculate?

42%
Overview of application process

You **MUST** identify the strengths and weaknesses of your application before you begin!
Homework:

www.aamc.org/students/amcas
American Medical College Application Service

www.aamc.org/students/students/mcat
Medical College Admission Test
Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR™)

The most authoritative guide to all U.S. and Canadian medical schools just got better with a complete redesign and more information than ever before.

The MSAR is the #1 source for:

- Application procedures and deadlines
- Selection factors such as MCAT and GPA data
- Medical school class profiles
- Costs and financial aid packages
- MD/PhD and other combined degrees
- Graduates’ specialty choices

Order Information

The following resources can be helpful as you go through the application process. While not exhaustive, this list provides a comprehensive overview of information available to help you make a decision about a career in medicine.

Chapter One: Medicine as a Career

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
Careers in Medicine
AAMC Curriculum Directory
Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)
American Medical Association
Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) - formerly Association of Canadian Medical Colleges
Complete list of U.S. and Canadian medical school Web sites
Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) 2008-2009

April 2007, 406 Pages

This must-have book -- often called the "bible of medical school guides" -- is the #1 source for medical school applicants. The 2008-2009 edition features more information than ever before and is designed to improve functionality and access to the information you need when applying to medical school.

The MSAR is the #1 source for:

- Application procedures and deadlines
- Selection factors such as MCAT & GPA data
- Medical school class profiles
- Costs and financial aid packages
- MD/PhD and other combined degrees
- Graduates' specialty choices
- Updated USMLE Policies

MSAR is the only resource fully authorized by medical schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSAR07</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
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Related Publications

- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 10 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 3 - Special CBT Practice Online Offer (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 4 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 5 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 6 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 7 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 8 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 9 (Web)
- Minority Student Opportunities in United States Medical (2007) (Book)
AMCAS - The American Medical College Application Service

The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) is a non-profit, centralized application processing service for applicants to the first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools. For the 2008 entering class, most medical schools are participating in AMCAS. Regardless of the number of AMCAS schools to which you apply, you submit just one application to AMCAS via the Web.

AMCAS does not render any admission decisions and does not advise applicants where to apply. Each participating school is completely autonomous in reaching its admissions decisions. AMCAS provides only the application processing service. More >>

Frequently Asked Questions

- How does AMCAS process applications?
- How much does it cost to use AMCAS?
- When is the deadline for applications to be received by AMCAS?
- I applied last year, so you already have my transcripts. Do I need to send them again?

More Frequently Asked Questions >>

AAMC Fee Assistance Program (FAP)

Those with extreme financial limitations may apply for the AAMC's Fee Assistance Program (FAP). If approved, you will reduce the MCAT fee from $210 to $85 and will receive 13 free medical school applications. More >>
Overview of application process

- MCAT
  - Sign up dates
  - No ‘practice’ attempts!
- AMCAS
  - Will be accepted beginning ~ 1 June; submit ASAP!
- Your institution’s pre-professional office
  - Letters
  - Transcripts & judicial clearance
- Secondary applications
- Interviews
Selection Criteria

• GPA - overall and science
  – Strength of transcript
  – ALL grades reported
• MCAT scores
• Application essays
• Experience(s)
• Letters
• Interview
• State of residence
# GPA for Applicants & Matriculants, 2007

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applicants (42,315)</th>
<th>Matriculants (17,759)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA non-science</td>
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<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA Total</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [www.aamc.org/students/mcat](http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat)
Selection Criteria

• GPA - overall and science
  – Strength of transcript
  – ALL grades reported
    • Repeated courses?
• MCAT scores
• Application essays
  – What do I tell the schools?
  – Are they really important?
• Experience
• Letters
### Statistics, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>42,315</td>
<td>17,759</td>
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<tr>
<td>VR</td>
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<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYS</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subject Averages**

- Applicants: 27.8
- Matriculants: 30.8

**42%**
Selection Criteria

• GPA - overall and science
  – Strength of transcript
  – ALL grades reported
    • Repeated courses?
• MCAT scores
• Application essays
  – What do I tell the schools?
  – Are they really important?
• Experience
• Letters
A word about recommendation letters........
Never underestimate the importance of your college pre-professional committee letter
Selection Criteria

• GPA - overall and science
  – Strength of transcript
  – ALL grades reported
• MCAT scores
• Application
• Letters
• Experience
• Essays
• Interview
• State of residence
Is age a factor?
Addressing weak sections of your application:

• GPA - overall and science
  – Take REAL, upper division, graded science courses!

• MCAT scores
  – Read, read, read, and read
  – Practice tests (timed!) before study!

• Application essays
  – Get help and prepare 7 drafts over 2 weeks
Addressing weak sections of your application:

- **Experience**
  - Patient contact in a clinical setting
  - Research

- **Letters**
  - Rethink your assets

- **Interview**
  - Practice, public speaking courses/opportunities
  - Read more!

- **State of residence and choice of schools**
The role of your research experiences in your application?
Examinee Data

**Summary Data Tables and Characteristics of Examinees**

**Applicants/Matriculants Data**
MCAT scores and GPA for Applicants and Matriculants

**Retesters Data**
Tables on the percentage of score changes for MCAT retesters
Table 1: U.S. Medical School Applications and Matriculants by School, State of Legal Residence, and Sex, 2007

The numbers of year 2007 applicants and matriculants by U.S. medical schools, showing percent of in-state, out-of-state, percent of women, and percent of men, are displayed. Please e-mail us if you need further assistance or have additional inquiries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>AMCAS Year 2007</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>State of Legal Residence</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% In State</td>
<td>% Out of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1,990</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Alabama</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: U.S. Medical School Applications and Matriculants by School, State of Legal Residence, and Sex, 2007

The numbers of year 2007 applicants and matriculants by U.S. medical schools, showing percent of in-state, out-of-state, percent of women, and percent of men, are displayed. Please e-mail us if you need further assistance or have additional inquiries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matriculants</th>
<th>State of Legal Residence</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% In State</td>
<td>% Out of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
<td>546,817</td>
<td>23.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. 163 Matriculants include 16 to UC Berkeley/UCSF joint program.
2. 145 Matriculants include 24 to UC Riverside-Haider.
3. Special 6 year undergraduate/MD program at UMKC.
4. 546,817 is the number of applications from 42,315 applicants, an average of 13 applications per applicant.

\[
\frac{17,759}{42,315} \approx 42\% 
\]
Applicants and Matriculants Data

By Institution
1. U.S. Medical School Applications and Matriculants by School, State of Legal Residence, and Sex, 2007
2. Undergraduate Institutions Producing the Most Medical School Applicants, 2007

By Legal Residence, Age, Sex
5. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by In or Out State Matriculation Status, 2007
6. Age of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools at Anticipated Matriculation by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and Sex, 2003-2007
8. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Race, Selected Combinations within Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Sex, 2005-2007
9. Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Race, Selected Combinations within Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Sex, 2005-2007
10. Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and State of Legal Residence, 2007
11. Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and State of Legal Residence, 2007
12. Applicants, First-Time Applicants, Acceptees, and Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Non-Hispanic or Latino Race, and Sex, 2005-2007
15. New! Race and Ethnicity (One Race Response) of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools, 2002-2007
## FACTS - Applicants, Matriculants and Graduates

The numbers of applicants by state of legal residence are displayed below. Please [email](mailto:) us if you need further assistance or have additional inquiries.

### Table 1: Applicants by State of Legal Residence, 1995-2006

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<td>470</td>
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<td>369</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>414</td>
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<td>104</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>104</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>1,287</td>
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<td>971</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>909</td>
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<td>1,208</td>
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<td>944</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>705</td>
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<td>787</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>1,517</td>
<td>1,256</td>
<td>1,267</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>1,199</td>
<td>1,189</td>
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<td>3,917</td>
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<td>2,779</td>
<td>2,542</td>
<td>2,494</td>
<td>2,636</td>
<td>2,601</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>2,702</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1,829</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>1,365</td>
<td>1,272</td>
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<td>1,210</td>
<td>1,283</td>
<td>1,423</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>115</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>10,911</td>
<td>10,993</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>8,927</td>
<td>8,248</td>
<td>7,909</td>
<td>7,302</td>
<td>6,945</td>
<td>7,404</td>
<td>7,469</td>
<td>7,867</td>
<td>8,220</td>
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**Applicant - Matriculant Data:**

*Maryland*

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<tr>
<th>Maryland</th>
<th>922</th>
<th>845</th>
<th>820</th>
<th>876</th>
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<td>439</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>442</td>
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How many schools?
The MCAT

What is it?
Welcome to the Official Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) Web Site

About the MCAT Exam

Almost all U.S. medical schools require applicants to submit MCAT scores. Medical college admission committees consider MCAT scores as part of their admission decision process. More >>

News

Registration is open for the January through May administrations of the MCAT exam.

Summer 2008 Graduate Student Research Program details are now available.

An extensive listing of Writing Sample items have been posted for student use.

Prepare to Register

2008 MCAT Essentials (PDF, 24 pages)

Required reading for all MCAT registrants: Includes information about the MCAT refund policy, registration opening dates, and much more.

MCAT Exam Schedule FAQ

Schedule of 2008 MCAT Exam Test Dates and Times (PDF, 1 page)

Please note that 2007 MCAT appointments may not be rescheduled into 2008, as registration periods do not overlap from year to year.

2008 Registration Deadlines and Score Release Schedule (PDF, 1 page)
About the MCAT Exam

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is a standardized, multiple-choice examination designed to assess the examinee’s problem solving, critical thinking, writing skills, and knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. Scores are reported in Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, Writing Sample, and Biological Sciences.

Medical colleges consider MCAT scores as part of their admission process. Almost all U.S. medical schools require applicants to submit MCAT scores. Many schools do not accept MCAT scores that are more than three years old.

The Testing Experience

Testing Experience FAQ
Schedule FAQ
Testing Center Regulations and Procedures
Transition to the Computerized MCAT Exam
Miscellaneous FAQ

Related Resources

Preparing for the MCAT Exam
Includes detailed information on each test section.

2008 MCAT Essentials
(PDF, 24 pages)
Required reading for all MCAT exam registrants. Provides information about registration, preparation, and administration.

Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR™)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST SECTIONS</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Disclosure Agreement</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial (Optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
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<td>52 Questions</td>
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<td>2 Essays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break (Optional)</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey (Optional)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total “Seat” Time*</td>
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Preparing for the MCAT Exam

Preparing for the MCAT FAQ
- Schedule FAQ

The Testing Experience
- Testing Experience FAQ
- Testing Center Regulations and Procedures
- Transition to the Computerized MCAT Exam FAQ
- Miscellaneous FAQ

Test Sections
- How do I prepare for the Science sections?
- What is in the Biological Sciences section?
- Topics for Biological Sciences Sections of the MCAT Exam (PDF, 25 pages)
- What can I expect in the Physical Sciences section?
- Physical Sciences—General Chemistry Topics (PDF, 10 pages)
- How should I prepare for the Writing Sample?
- Examples of MCAT Writing Sample Prompts
- How is the Writing Sample scored?
- How do I get ready for the Verbal Reasoning Skills section?
- Verbal Reasoning Skills Topics (PDF, 1 page)
Topics for Biological Sciences Section of the MCAT

Biology
Molecular Biology: Enzymes and Metabolism
A. ENZYME STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION
   1. Function of enzymes in catalyzing biological reactions
   2. Reduction of activation energy
   3. Substrates and enzyme specificity

B. CONTROL OF ENZYME ACTIVITY
   1. Feedback inhibition
   2. Competitive inhibition
   3. Non-competitive inhibition

C. BASIC METABOLISM
   1. Glycolysis, anaerobic and aerobic, substrates and products
   2. Krebs cycle, substrates and products, general features of the pathway
   3. Electron transport chain and oxidative phosphorylation, substrates and products,
      general features of the pathway
   4. Metabolism of fats and proteins
Oxygen Containing Compounds

A. ALCOHOLS
   1. Description
      a. nomenclature
      b. physical properties
      c. infrared absorption of OH group
   2. Important reactions
      a. substitution reactions: $S_N1$ or $S_N2$, depending on alcohol and derived alkyl halide
      b. oxidation
      c. pinacol rearrangement in polyhydroxylalcohols; synthetic uses
      d. protection of alcohols
      e. reactions with $\text{SOCl}_2$ and $\text{PBr}_3$
      f. preparation of mesylates and tosylates
      g. esterification
      h. inorganic esters
   3. General principles
      a. hydrogen bonding
      b. acidity of alcohols compared to other classes of oxygen-containing compounds
      c. effect of chain branching on physical properties
Physics
Translational Motion
1. Units and dimensions
2. Vectors, components
3. Vector addition
4. Speed, velocity (average and instantaneous)
5. Acceleration
6. Freely falling bodies

Force and Motion, Gravitation
1. Center of mass
2. Newton’s first law, inertia
3. Newton’s second law \( F = ma \)
4. Newton’s third law, forces equal and opposite
5. Concept of a field
6. Law of gravitation \( F = \frac{K_G m_1 m_2}{r^2} \)
7. Uniform circular motion
8. Centripetal acceleration \( F = \frac{mv^2}{r} \)
9. Weight
10. Friction, static and kinetic
11. Motion on an inclined plane
12. Analysis of pulley systems
13. Force
The MCAT

When?
### When do I take the MCAT?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST DATE</th>
<th>REGISTRATION OPENS</th>
<th>REGULAR REGISTRATION CLOSES 11:59 PM EASTERN</th>
<th>LATE REGISTRATION CLOSES 11:59 PM EASTERN</th>
<th>TENTATIVE SCORE RELEASE DATE AFTER 5 PM EASTERN</th>
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Spring & Summer 2008 Testing Dates
Schools accepting September MCATs?
The MCAT

How well must I do?
How to do well?
The MCAT

- Biological Sciences (1 - 15)
- Physical Sciences (1 - 15)
- Verbal Reasoning (1 - 15)
- Writing Sample (J - T)

*Note: these scores are scaled, not absolute.*
<table>
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<th>Percent Achieving Score</th>
<th>Percentile Rank Range</th>
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Scaled Score:
75th Percentile = Q
50th Percentile = O
25th Percentile = M

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Biological Sciences

Mean = 8.6
Std Deviation = 2.5

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Example: Physical Sciences

- 52 Total Questions in 70 minutes
- 42 related to passages
  - ~250 words in each of 7 - 9 passages
- 10 questions unrelated to each other or to the passages
- ~39,000 test takers earning scores of 1 - 15
Scaled Scores

10 = Top 27.4 %

source: www.aamc.org/students/mcat
Question: How many questions (out of 52 total) separate a score of 10 from a 9 or an 11?
The Messages

http://go.to/funpic
Writing sample

1. Developing a central idea
2. Synthesizing concepts and ideas
3. Presenting ideas cohesively and logically
4. Writing clearly using good grammar, syntax and punctuation consistent with a timed, first draft
You are given a statement expressing an opinion.

First, explain what you think this means.

Second, explore the meaning by considering a circumstance in which the statement might not apply or be true.

Third, discuss ways in which the conflict might be resolved.
Writing Sample

• Two scores for each of two sections
  – Each evaluator awards a score of 1 to 6
• Sum of scores on two questions is converted to J to T scale (11 units on scores from 4 - 24)
• For example:
  – 3 & 3 on Part 1 and 5 & 6 on Part 2
  – Raw score of 17 converted to alphabetic to give distribution
So how do I begin to study?

1. Download Content!
2. Set up study schedule
3. Analyze Practice Tests
4. Textbooks !!!
5. Sample problems !!!
The most beneficial, helpful, and useful thing you can do to prepare........

Take practice tests under game conditions!
Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) 2008-2009

April 2007, 406 Pages

This must-have book -- often called the "bible of medical school guides" -- is the #1 source for medical school applicants. The 2008-2009 edition features more information than ever before and is designed to improve functionality and access to the information you need when applying to medical school.

The MSAR is the #1 source for:

- Application procedures and deadlines
- Selection factors such as MCAT & GPA data
- Medical school class profiles
- Costs and financial aid packages
- MD/PhD and other combined degrees
- Graduates’ specialty choices
- Updated USMLE Policies

MSAR is the only resource fully authorized by medical schools.

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Related Publications

- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 10 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 3 - Special CBT Practice Online Offer (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 4 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 5 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 6 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 7 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 8 (Web)
- MCAT Computer Based Web Practice Test 9 (Web)
- Minority Student Opportunities in United States Medical (2007) (Book)
Practice MCATs at

- www.e-mcat.com
  - Online
- www.aamc.org
  - Online and paper for sale
- Sample questions in PDF manual
Higgins’s Recipe for MCAT Study

• Allow 3 to 4 months before MCAT
• Have a weekly schedule that makes sense
• Spend 10 - 12 hours per week
• Allocate 40% of your study time for taking practice tests
• Allocate 40% of this test taking time for Verbal Reasoning
Do I need a review course?
What is the value of review course material?
Study groups or solo?

When do you finally learn and understand something?
When are you sure?
Avoid bad habits...
AMBITION

The Journey of a Thousand Miles Sometimes Ends Very, Very Badly.
Be determined in achieving your goals...
Homework for next session.....

• Download & read MCAT info from Web
  – at least *MCAT Essentials* !
• Examine data & determine desired state of residence
• Identify potential letter writers
• Begin to identify times and places in your schedule
• What do you need to study?
Homework for next week.....

Email your questions to me at:

higginsconsult@gmail.com
At our next session,

- Answer questions about process & the MCAT
- Review of specific types of questions
- Strategies for attacking different types of questions
- Using those practice tests
- Leave time for individual consultation