

MCAT: Medical College Admission Test

Compiled from AAMC's MCAT website (www.aamc.org/mcat) and the AAMC's MCAT Essentials Booklet (2011)

- ❖ **Overview:** Adding administrative and break time, the MCAT requires over 5 hours. There are a total of four timed sections consisting of 144 multiple-choice questions and two writing topics.
- ❖ Starting in 2015, the MCAT will include a section that tests concepts of psychology and sociology.

1. Anatomy of the MCAT:

I. Biological Sciences

- **Time:** 70 minutes
- **Format:** 52 multiple-choice questions; 7 passages followed by 4-8 questions each, plus 13 independent questions.
- **What it Tests:** Basic biology and basic organic chemistry concepts, analytical reasoning, and data interpretation.
- **Preparatory Courses:** MATH 140 & MATH 215 or 241, BIOL 171/L & BIOL 172/L, CHEM 272/L & CHEM 273/L

II. Physical Sciences

- **Time:** 70 minutes
- **Format:** 52 multiple-choice questions; 7 passages followed by 4-8 questions each, plus 13 independent questions.
- **What it Tests:** Basic general chemistry and basic physics concepts, analytical reasoning, and data interpretation.
- **Preparatory Courses:** MATH 140 & MATH 215 or 241, CHEM 161/L & CHEM 162/L, PHYS 151/L & PHYS 152/L

III. Verbal Reasoning

- **Time:** 60 minutes
- **Format:** 40 multiple-choice questions; 7 passages from Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences (each ~600 words in length) followed by 5-7 questions each.
- **What it Tests:** The ability to understand, evaluate, and apply the information and arguments presented.
- **Preparatory Courses:** English, English literature, and courses in Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences that require reading and analysis.

IV. Writing Sample

- **Time:** 60 minutes
- **Format:** 2 essay questions (30 minutes each)
- **What it Tests:** The ability to develop and synthesize central ideas and concepts, and to present ideas cohesively and logically.
- **Preparatory Courses:** Composition and Writing Intensive courses.

2. Scoring:

- Each MCAT section receives its own score. Each section, except the Writing Sample, is scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 15, with 15 being the highest. The Writing Sample is scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 6, which is later converted to a letter score from J to T, with T being the highest. For each MCAT administration, the national average scaled scores for Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Verbal Reasoning sections are approximately 8.0 to 8.2 out of 15; for a total of 24 to 24.6 out of 45. On the Writing Sample, the average scaled score is an O (50th percentile).
- All multiple-choice questions are worth the same amount—one raw point—so there is no penalty for guessing. *This means you should always fill in an answer for every question, whether or not you get to that question!*
- A total score of 29-30 is considered competitive for most medical schools; top schools usually require scores well above 30.

3. Score Availability:

- Your scored report will tell you—and your potential medical schools—your scaled scores, your percentile ranking, the standard deviations, and the national mean score for each section, as well as the national scoring profile.
- Test results should be released 30-35 days after your test date; you may then view your scores online in the MCAT Testing History (THx) system.

4. Test Format:

- Computer-Based Testing (CBT)

5. Test Dates:

- The MCAT is administered over 20 times a year between January and September; test dates vary each year. Note that not all schools accept September MCAT scores for the ongoing application cycle.

6. Test Registration:

- To register for the MCAT, visit www.aamc.org/mcat.
- Registration Fee: \$235
- Payment *must* be made via an online Registration Form using a credit card (MasterCard or Visa)
- To download the MCAT Essentials information booklet, visit www.aamc.org/mcat/registration.htm.

7. Official Test Prep Material: *The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam* from AMCAS (~\$30)
Practice exams on AAMC website (One is free; ~\$35/additional)

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Hours of Operation:
M, T, Th, F: 9:00am-5:00pm (ET)
Wed: 9:00am-3:00pm (ET)