

# **The MCAT Exam: The Basics for Students**

Prepared by AAMC

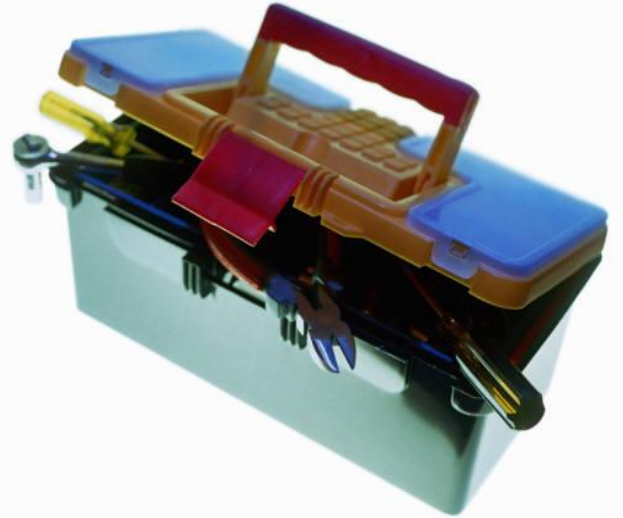
Presented by: <insert your name here>

# Here's what we'll talk about:

- MCAT is the Medical College Admission Test.
- Virtually all medical schools ask applicants for MCAT scores.
- There are lots of ways to learn about the MCAT exam.
- There's lots of available information on the MCAT exam.
- The MCAT exam is changing in 2015 and what you'll study for the current and 2015 exams is different.

# We'll also talk about:

- Things you should know if you're testing in 2013 or 2014
- Things you should know if you're testing in 2015 or 2016
- Either way, there's no "one-size-fits-all" approach to preparation
- Ways to plan ahead for preparation, MCAT registration, and medical school application



# Virtually all medical schools ask for MCAT scores

- Virtually all U.S. medical schools ask applicants for MCAT scores.
- 11 of the Canadian medical school do.
- Medical schools select students using MCAT scores and other information about applicants' academic and non-academic experiences.



# There are lots of ways to learn about the MCAT exam

- The MCAT program has a great website—[www.aamc.org/mcat](http://www.aamc.org/mcat).
- There's a good book about the exam with sample questions—*The Official Guide to the MCAT® Exam*.
- There's a free practice test—[www.e-mcat.com](http://www.e-mcat.com).
- The MCAT program sells additional practice tests too.
- And a diagnostic test to identify strengths and weaknesses—*The Official MCAT® Self Assessment Package*—[www.e-mcat.com](http://www.e-mcat.com).

# There are lots of ways to learn about the MCAT exam

- Your pre-health advisor knows a lot about the MCAT exam.
- Faculty at your school may too.
- Some universities offer MCAT preparation courses.
  - Some medical schools do too.
- Some private companies also have MCAT preparation courses.

# It's easy to get information about the MCAT exam

The MCAT website describes:

- What the exam tests
- What the questions look like
- How your test will be scored
- The scores that different medical schools typically look for
- How you should register for the MCAT exam
- What to expect on test day

[www.aamc.org/mcat](http://www.aamc.org/mcat)

# It's easy to get information about the MCAT exam

- You can ask MCAT staff members questions by emailing [mcataamc.org](mailto:mcataamc.org).
- There's a phone number too—(202) 828-0690.
- The MCAT website also answers FAQs—  
[https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/preparing/85556/preparing\\_prepfaq.html](https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/preparing/85556/preparing_prepfaq.html)



# The MCAT exam is changing in 2015

- The MCAT exam is changing in 2015 to keep pace with recent changes in what medical faculty teach
- Changes in our increasingly diverse and aging population are altering what medical schools teach
- Changes in health care delivery and new scientific knowledge are too
- These changes are shaping what admissions committees look for in future physicians

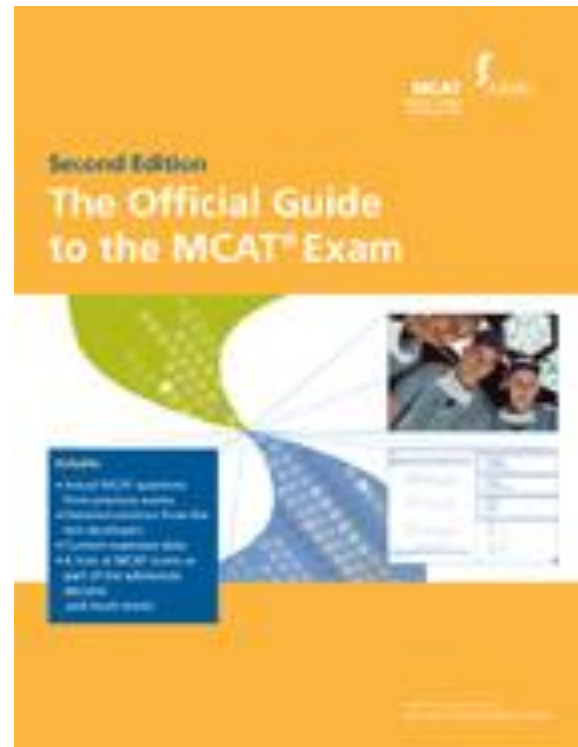
# Whether you'll take the current or new test depends on when you'll be ready to test and apply

- Knowing when you'll be ready to test and start medical school will help you decide whether to take the current or new test.
- The current MCAT exam tests concepts from introductory, year-long courses in biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics.
- The new exam tests these along with concepts from first-semester biochemistry, psychology, and sociology.

# Whether you'll take the current or new test depends on when you'll be ready to test and apply

- Applicants who want to start medical school in 2014 and 2015 will take the current MCAT exam.
- Most applicants who want to start school in 2016 and 2017 will take the new MCAT exam.
  - Note: medical schools will also accept current MCAT scores for 2016 and 2017 admission.

# The *Official Guide* describes the 2013 and 2014 exams



# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

Physical Sciences

Verbal Reasoning

Biological Sciences

New Trial Section

# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

Physical  
Sciences

Tests general chemistry and physics topics including:

- Electronic structure
- Phases and phase equilibria
- Thermochemistry
- Acids and bases
- Work and energy
- Fluids and solids
- And more

# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

## Verbal Reasoning

Tests comprehension, evaluation, and application skills using passages from:

- Humanities
- Social sciences
- Natural sciences and technology

All needed information appears in the passages

# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

Biological  
Sciences

Tests biology and organic chemistry topics including:

- Enzymes and metabolism
- Body systems
- Molecular structure
- Oxygen-containing compounds
- Biological molecules
- And more



# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

## New Trial Section

- Unlike past examinees, you won't take the MCAT Writing Sample section.
- Instead, you'll be asked to volunteer to test out questions for the MCAT<sup>2015</sup> exam.
- Building the new exam will take lots of questions, and medical schools can't get there without your help.

# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

## New Trial Section

- The Trial Section will be at the end of the day and take 45 minutes (so the day will be shorter than in the past!).
- You will get 32 questions in subjects you said you completed during MCAT registration.
- Question will cover biochemistry or psychology, or sociology concepts.

# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

## New Trial Section

- Your work on the Trial Section questions will not count toward your MCAT score (only you will see how you did).
- If you volunteer and make a good-faith effort, you will get a \$30 Amazon.com® Gift Card\* Claim Code\*\*.
- You'll also receive feedback on your performance that will allow you to compare yourself to others who participated in the Trial Section.

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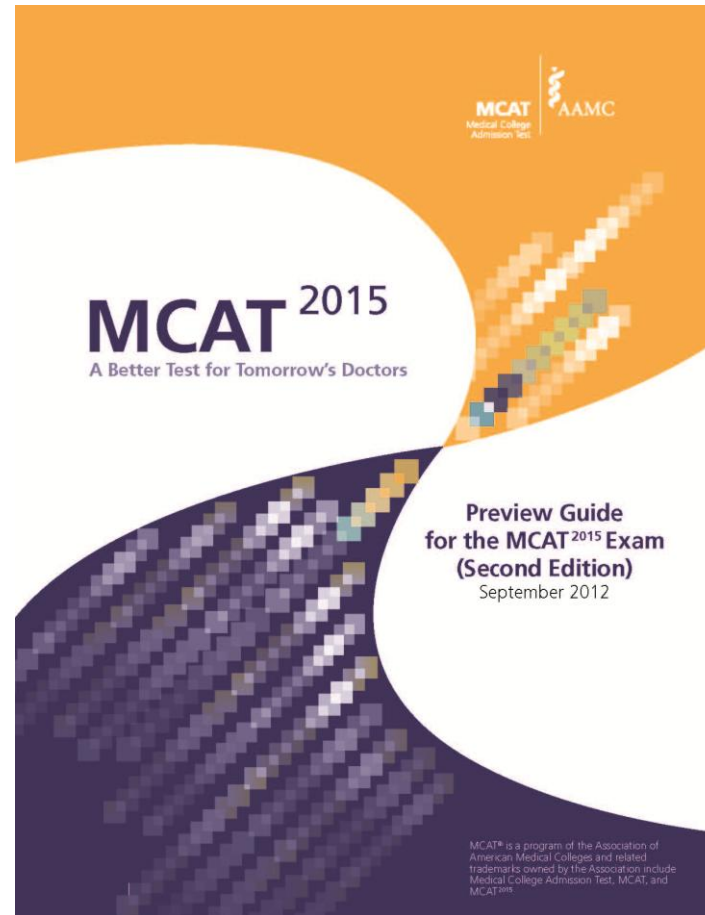
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# If you're testing in 2013 or 2014

New Trial Section

- You'll also get a chance to preview content medical schools find important.
- Volunteer and help medical schools select students who will be great colleagues for you and great health care providers!

# The *Preview Guide* describes the 2015 and 2016 tests



# If you're testing in 2015 or 2016

Biological &  
Biochemical  
Foundations of  
Living Systems

Chemical &  
Physical  
Foundations of  
Biological Systems

Psychological,  
Social, & Biological  
Foundations of  
Behavior

Critical Analysis &  
Reasoning Skills

# Chemical & Physical Foundations of Biological Systems

- Asks you to combine your knowledge of foundational concepts in the chemical and physical sciences with your scientific inquiry, reasoning, and research and statistics skills to solve problems that demonstrate readiness for medical school

# Chemical & Physical Foundations of Biological Systems

## Concept 4

- Complex living organisms transport materials, sense their environment, process signals, and respond to changes using processes that can be understood in terms of physical principles.

## Concept 5

- The principles that govern chemical interactions and reactions form the basis for a broader understanding of the molecular dynamics of living systems.



# Critical Analysis & Reasoning Skills

- Asks you to critically analyze, evaluate, and apply information presented in a passages from humanities and social sciences disciplines, including ethics, philosophy, cultural studies and population health
- All needed information will appear in the passages

# Biological & Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems

- Asks you to combine knowledge of foundational concepts in the biological and biochemical sciences with your scientific inquiry, reasoning, and research and statistics skills to solve problems that demonstrate readiness for medical school.

# Biological & Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems

## Concept 1

- Biomolecules have unique properties that determine how they contribute to the structure and function of cells, and how they participate in the processes necessary to maintain life.

## Concept 2

- Highly-organized assemblies of molecules, cells, and organs interact to carry out the functions of living organisms.

## Concept 3

- Complex systems of tissues and organs sense the internal and external environments of multicellular organisms, and through integrated functioning, maintain a stable internal environment within an ever-changing external environment.

# Psychological, Social, & Biological Foundations of Behavior

- Tests knowledge and use of the concepts in psychology, sociology, biology, research methods, and statistics that provide a solid foundation for learning in medical school about the behavioral and socio-cultural determinants of health and health outcomes

# Psychological, Social, & Biological Foundations of Behavior

## Concept 6

- Biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors influence the ways that individuals perceive, think about, and react to the world.

## Concept 7

- Biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors influence behavior and behavior change.

## Concept 8

- Psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors influence the way we think about ourselves and others.

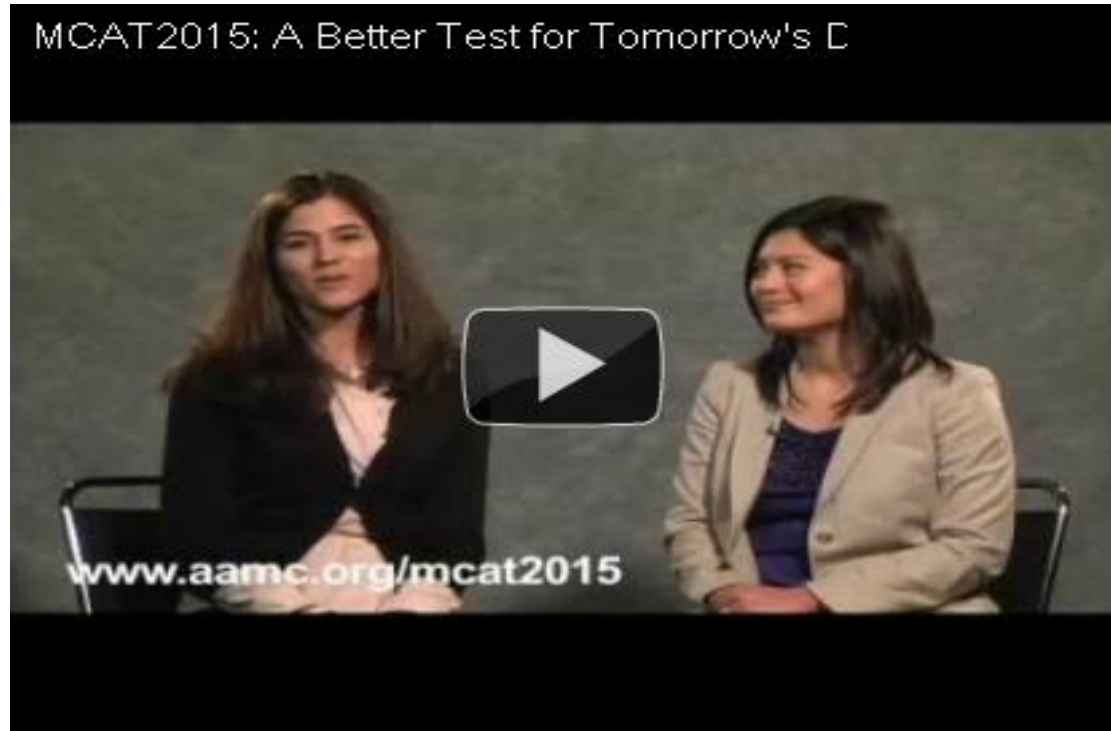
## Concept 9

- Cultural and social differences influence well-being.

## Concept 10

- Social stratification and access to resources influence well-being.

# Learn more by watching this video



[www.aamc.org/mcat2015](http://www.aamc.org/mcat2015)

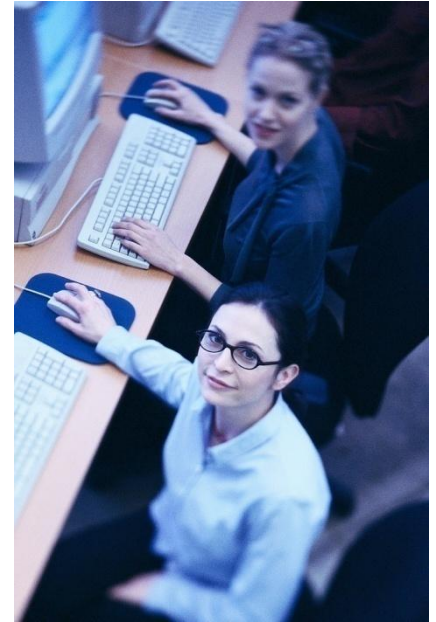
# There's no “one-size-fits-all” preparation approach

Know yourself and prepare for whichever MCAT exam you take in the way that suits you best:

- Understand your likely strengths and weaknesses on the MCAT exam
- Know how you like to prepare
  - Using your own plan or with the structure of a course
  - Alone or with a study group
  - By taking a couple (or many) practice exams

# Plan ahead for preparation, registration, and application

- Give yourself plenty of time for test preparation
- Register early for the exam so you—
  - Get the testing date and location you want (registration opens in October)
  - Have time to retest if you don't like your first scores
  - Can submit your medical school applications on time





# Apply for fee assistance if you need it

- For families at or below 300% of poverty level
- Application released in January each year
- Online application

[www.aamc.org/fap](http://www.aamc.org/fap)

## 2013 Benefits:

- Fee reduction for exam \$100
- 14 free AMCAS applications
- Free copy of *The Official Guide to the MCAT<sup>®</sup> Exam and Medical School Admissions Requirements<sup>®</sup> (MSAR<sup>®</sup>) tool*

# Plan ahead for preparation, registration, and application

Be organized on test day—

- Know where the testing center is and how long it will take you to get there
- Have the right ID with you
- Bring something to eat and drink during breaks
- Dress in layers in case the center's cold (or hot)

Planning ahead will (or may!) make the test day less stressful

**I wish you the best of luck!**

**Questions?**

