

WC4BL MCAT WORKSHOP

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WC4BL JMP CHAPTER

We are a group of medical students at the UC Berkeley-UCSF Joint Medical Program dedicated to strengthening pathway connections across the lengthy pre-medical preparation and medical school application timeline for students who are underrepresented in medicine.

To achieve this goal, we host a series of events focused on supporting URM premedical students. This includes our medical school application workshops, a 1:1 mentorship program, advocacy efforts, and more!

Follow us on Instagram @[wc4bl_berkeley](#) or find us on our website at [wc4bl-berkeley.org](#) for more updates!

AGENDA

- ◆ Exam Structure & Resources
- ◆ General Philosophy
- ◆ Timeline, Finances, & More
- ◆ Content Review
- ◆ Practice
- ◆ Test Day and Beyond

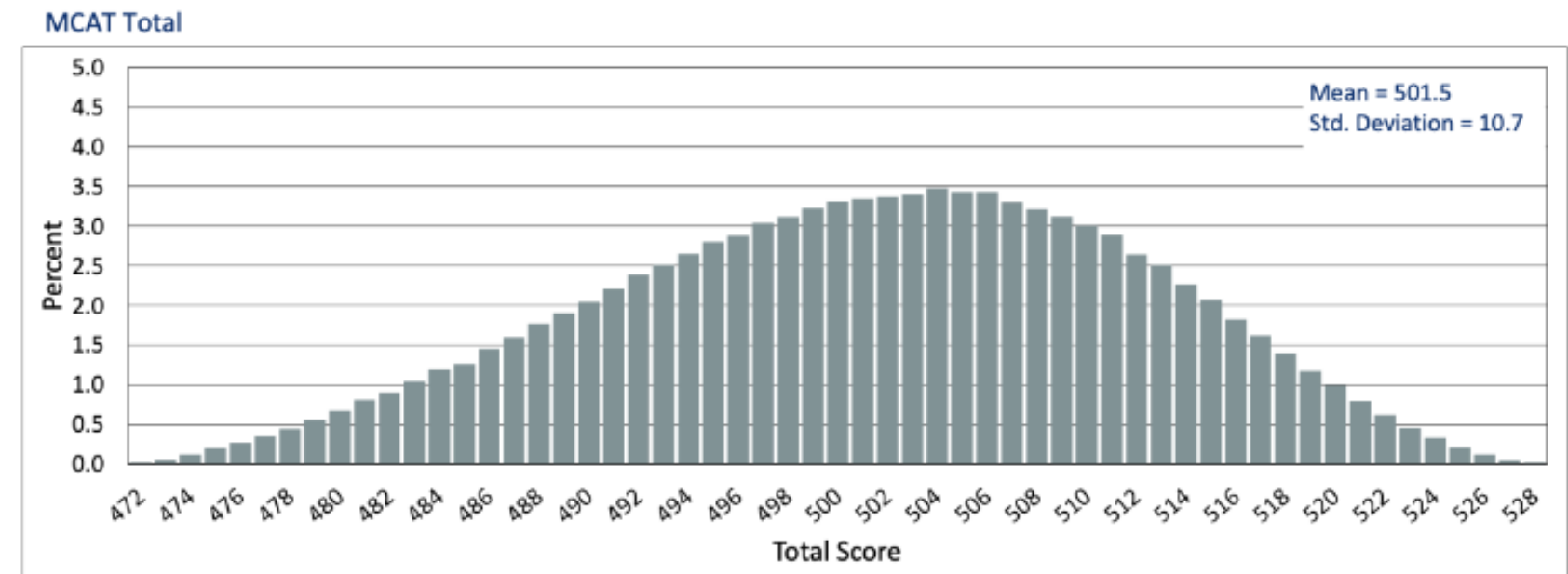
WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE MCAT?

- 4 sections, each 85m long (+ two 10m breaks and one 30m break) - total length 7h15m
 - C/P: general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics, math (59 Qs)
 - Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS): reading comprehension (53 Qs)
 - B/B: biology, biochemistry (59 Qs)
 - P/S: psychology, sociology (59 Qs)
- Each section is scored on a scale of 118 to 132
- Total score is the sum of your four sections (between 472 and 528)

Summary of MCAT Total and Section Scores

Percentile Ranks in Effect May 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022

N = 281,468



Total Score	Percentile Rank
472	<1
473	<1
474	<1
475	<1
476	1
477	1
478	1
479	2
480	3
481	4
482	4
483	6
484	7
485	8
486	9
487	11
488	13
489	15
490	17

Total Score	Percentile Rank
491	19
492	21
493	24
494	27
495	29
496	32
497	35
498	38
499	42
500	45
501	48
502	52
503	55
504	58
505	62
506	65
507	69
508	72
509	75

Total Score	Percentile Rank
510	78
511	81
512	84
513	86
514	88
515	90
516	92
517	94
518	95
519	96
520	97
521	98
522	99
523	99
524	100
525	100
526	100
527	100
528	100

Helpful Resources

- AAMC Content Outline (list of exam topics)
- Kaplan FL (3) – free using code found in all books
- Blueprint/Next Step FL (6) – \$149
- Blueprint/Next Step Half-Length Diagnostic – FREE
- Altius Half-Length – FREE (and more available for purchase)
- Princeton Review FL (1) – FREE (but not very representative of the real thing)
- UWorld Question Bank – Gold Standard, read explanations!
- Khan Academy videos
- AAMC Official Test Prep Bundle (\$240)
 - FLs, QBank, Section Bank

Helpful Resources

- SDN Free Study Plans - ex: 100-day study plan
 - <https://www.studentdoctor.net/3-month-mcat-study-schedule/>
- Jack Westin Daily - AAMC Daily CARS Practice
 - <https://jackwestin.com/daily/mcat-practice-passages/cars-practice...>
- Testing Solutions' 30 Day Guide to MCAT CARS Success
 - <https://forums.studentdoctor.net/threads/testing-solutions-30-day-guide-to-mcat-cars-success.1131850/>
- Reddit /r/MCAT
 - Use sparingly; mainly use for question explanations
- Kaplan 300-page Sociology and Psychology sheets
- Anki

MCAT PHILOSOPHY

- This is an exam, and you've taken exams before -- you can do this!
- Take the time to identify your study style, and know that there is no singular study formula
- You already know a lot from your science classes, so don't reinvent the wheel
- This is a marathon, not a sprint -- practice to build stamina, incorporate breaks and rest days
- The MCAT is just *one* part of your overall application -- it's not make or break
- Recommend setting a "minimum viable score" at or above which you will not retake the exam
- Do the best you can!



SCHEDULING YOUR EXAM

Follow AAMC on Twitter for Registration: [@AAMC_MCAT](https://twitter.com/AAMC_MCAT)

or subscribe with your email [here](#)
(Twitter is more up-to-date)

Example: January - June 2024 MCAT dates will open October 24th and 25th at noon ET



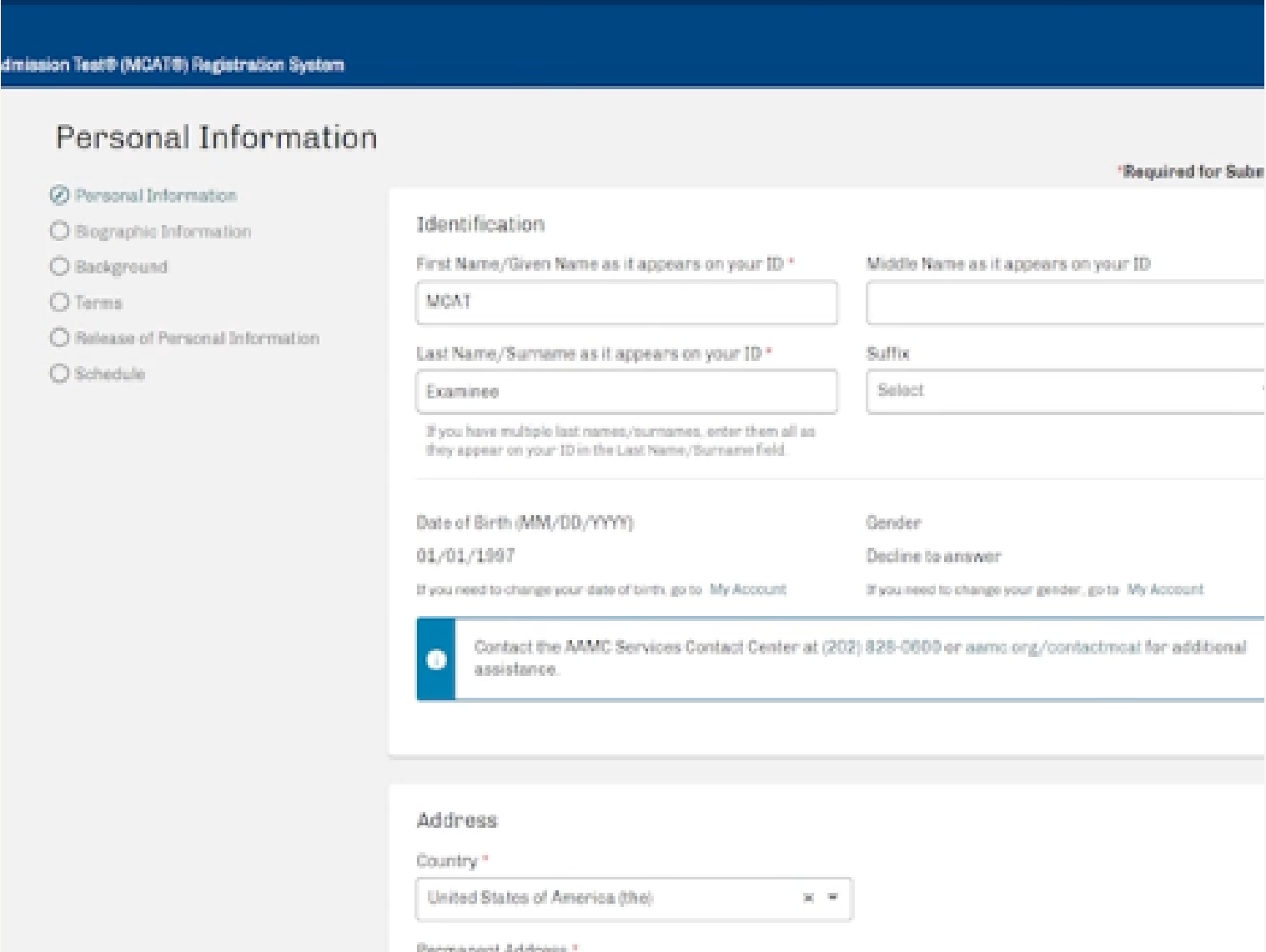
Prior to Registration:

Fill out your MCAT registration information to save time!

Day of Registration:

- Have your government ID ready
- Depending on your location, you may wait in a waiting room
- Video demonstration

Check out the 2024 Testing Calendar here!



The screenshot shows the 'Personal Information' section of the 'Admission Test® (MCAT®) Registration System'. The page has a dark blue header with the system name. On the left, a sidebar contains a list of sections: 'Personal Information' (selected with a checkmark), 'Biographic Information', 'Background', 'Terms', 'Release of Personal Information', and 'Schedule'. The main content area is titled 'Personal Information' and includes a note '*Required for Submission'. The 'Identification' section contains several fields: 'First Name/Given Name as it appears on your ID *' (with 'MCAT' entered), 'Middle Name as it appears on your ID', 'Last Name/Surname as it appears on your ID *' (with 'Examinee' entered), and 'Suffix' (with a 'Select' dropdown). Below these fields is a note: 'If you have multiple last names/surnames, enter them all as they appear on your ID in the Last Name/Surname field.' The 'Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)' field contains '01/01/1997' and the 'Gender' field contains 'Decline to answer'. Both fields have links to 'My Account' for updates. A blue callout box contains the text: 'Contact the AMC Services Contact Center at (202) 828-0000 or [amc.org/contactmc](https://www.amc.org/contactmc) for additional assistance.' The 'Address' section is partially visible, showing a 'Country *' dropdown menu with 'United States of America (the)' selected and a 'Permanent Address *' field.

MCAT STUDYING TIMELINE

- Summer: 2-3 months
 - 1 month content review + 2 months practice questions + exams
- Fall/Spring (with school or job): 4-6 months
 - 2 month content review with questions + 3 months pure practice
- Recommend reserving 1 month for intensive studying



MCAT FOR NON-TRADS

Taking the MCAT with a job:

- Can you ask your workplace to work part-time?
- Are there local quiet spaces where you study and take practice exams?
- Where is the MCAT on your priority list?

Taking the MCAT as a caretaker or with other life responsibilities:

- Are there ways to maximize learning on the road? (Podcasts, question reviews, etc.)
- Do you have a support network?



FINANCES

- **MCAT registration fee:** \$330
- **Test Center Reschedule Fees*:** \$50-\$200 depending on # of days away from the exam
- **Cancellation Refund**:** \$165 before 29 days before the exam
- **Travel Costs to get to exam:** varies
- **Class-based test prep:** \$1,200+

**Fees are reduced for students eligible for the Fee Assistance Program.*

***If you cancel the exam, this is how much you get back.*

- Fee Assistance Program (available until the end of the next calendar year)
 - Reduced test registration fee: \$140
 - MCAT Official Prep Online-Only Bundle (\$268.80 value)
 - AAMC Practice Exams and Question Packs
 - MSAR Access (\$36 value)
 - AMCAS application fees (\$1,030 value)
 - Need a U.S. address (no citizenship)
- Application
 - List of items you need to apply
 - Need your parents' financial information only under the age of 26



STRUCTURING YOUR STUDYING

PHASE 1: CONTENT REVIEW

- Begin familiarizing yourself with the content
 - You are not going to learn everything in one go!
 - Just try to absorb what you can
- Read textbooks – I recommend Kaplan, but you don't need the latest edition so buy them secondhand to save \$\$\$!
- Do not recommend taking notes at this point
- A note on Anki (a spaced repetition flashcard app)
 - Helpful for long-term recall and highly favored by med students
 - You can find premade flashcard decks on Reddit that correspond to the books
 - They are very time intensive and it's okay to skip them!
- Start doing practice tests ASAP to get a feel for the test (use third-party resources first)

REVIEWING EXAMS

- Reviewing your practice exams thoroughly is super important for your learning
- Create a spreadsheet/notebook to keep track of scores and missed questions
 - Why did you get it wrong, and what will you do differently next time?
- Give yourself a day to review each test

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Q	My approach	Correct Answer	Why I got it wrong	Strategy for Future	Content Review
2	C/P					
3	9**	Literally chose heats of combustion first but then wasn't sure what mass spectroscopy represented	D - heats of combustion -> less heat = greater stability	Mass spectroscopy measures mass-to-charge (m/z) ratio - calculate molecular weight of sample/isotopic signature (figure out identity)	Don't second guess urself dummy :(lab techniques

PHASE 2: PRACTICE

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Recommend using UWorld's MCAT QBank for this - 2,000 questions divided by topic
 - More content-heavy than the actual exam, but great targeted practice
 - Make sure to review your mistakes!
 - Continue reviewing content based on your weaknesses - watch videos, take notes, make flashcards
- Can also use Khan Academy's questions (pretty difficult)
- Continue doing FLs!

PHASE 3: AAMC MATERIAL

- Save your AAMC material for the end (~ 1 month)
- This AAMC bundle (\$240) has the following resources
 - Question Packs – more content oriented
 - Section Bank
 - 1 half length exam
 - 5 FLs (one is not officially scored) – most similar to the real exam and therefore more representative of your real score
- Review the AAMC content outline to assess any weaknesses and cover “low-yield” topics you may have missed

TEST DAY!

- Visit the test center the day before to familiarize yourself
- Eat before and pack snacks!
- Wear layers since the test center can be cold
- Don't have anything in your pockets since you will have to empty them each time you go in and out of the room
- You will have to do biometric scanning of your veins each time you go in and out, which comes out of your break time
- Practice relaxation techniques -- don't let your nerves get the best of you!

PUSHING YOUR MCAT DATE

Pushing your exam

- Be aware of rescheduling fees and testing center capacity
 - Deadline is 10 days before your exam
- You can put yourself on a waitlist for a particular center while still registered for your test date

2024 Testing Calendar:

Test Date	60 Day Deadline	30 Day Deadline	10 Day Deadline	Score Release Date
January 12	Nov. 13, 2023	Dec. 13, 2023	Jan. 2	Feb. 13
January 13	Nov. 14, 2023	Dec. 14, 2023	Jan. 3	Feb. 13
January 18	Nov. 19, 2023	Dec. 19, 2023	Jan. 8	Feb. 20
January 26	Nov. 27, 2023	Dec. 27, 2023	Jan. 16	March 1

Rescheduling and Cancellations (in USD)

Standard Change Fees	Date and/or Test Center Reschedule Fee	Cancellation Refund
60 or more days before exam	\$50	\$165
30-59 days before exam	\$100	\$165
10-29 days before exam	\$200	\$0

Fee Assistance Program Change Fees	Date and/or Test Center Reschedule Fees	Cancellation Refund
60 or more days before exam	\$20	\$70
30-59 days before exam	\$40	\$70
10-29 days before exam	\$80	\$0


MCAT RETAKES & VOIDING

- Lifetime Limit: 7
 - Per year: 3
 - Every 2 years: 4
- Do not schedule for a retake before you get your score
- Admission committee opinions on retakes
 - There's even a study on this!
 - Try to keep the # of retakes < 3
 - Aim for a significant increase (5-10 points)
 - Talk to school admissions - different approaches to looking at scores

- If you have an emergency on test day or if you absolutely feel the need to, you may void your exam on the day of
- MCAT Voids will not show up on your AMCAS application, but *will* count towards your lifetime limit
- Don't let retakes define you
- When you apply to schools, highlight...
 - your dedication and perseverance through retakes
 - the path you took to get a higher score
 - circumstances that were obstacles, but be careful of framing



A NOTE ON SELF CARE

- The MCAT does not test your intelligence!
 - It is scary, but doable -- if we can do it, so can you!
 - Be realistic with how much you can study in a day
 - Find a schedule that works for you
 - Take breaks -- including at least 1 day of a week
 - Remember that this is just ONE part of your application
- 



THANKS FOR COMING!

Follow us on Instagram *@wc4bl_berkeley*
Sign up for our newsletter on our website to learn
about more events!