

# PREPARING FOR THE MCAT OR DAT

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This chapter covers basic studying advice and other general information which applies to both the MCAT and DAT. For information on the individual tests, see the following chapters. The Pre-Health Peer Mentors are an excellent source of first-hand information regarding study methods, courses and “day of” information.

## **HOW FAR IN ADVANCE SHOULD I PLAN?**

On an average, most students plan eight months of studying to prepare for the MCAT and DAT, devoting more time as the test date grows near. However, you should balance your planning between these two extremes: (1) rushing to meet the application deadline and (2) waiting too long to take the test. If you have questions, please discuss this timeframe with the Pre-Health Advisor BEFORE the application cycle begins.

## **WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE TEST?**

The optimal time to take the test is the semester BEFORE you apply (i.e., January-June), however you may also take the test in either June or July of the year you apply without jeopardizing your application.

PLAN AHEAD: AMCAS and AADSAS require validated test scores which are announced approximately 30 DAYS AFTER your test date.

## **REGISTERING FOR THE TEST**

MCAT: Registration opens approximately 3-4 months prior to the test date. Register online at <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/register-mcat-exam> to reserve your seat. NOTE: The May and June dates fill up quickly, so if you plan to take the test then, reserve your spot as early as possible. See the MCAT chapter for a list of test dates.

MCAT registration material and schedule available online at [https://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer\\_public/5e/88/5e889ea0-750f-4700-8d4d-74b6c627ebe8/mcat\\_essentials\\_2016\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/5e/88/5e889ea0-750f-4700-8d4d-74b6c627ebe8/mcat_essentials_2016_-_final.pdf)

DAT: Register online at <http://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test>. Registration materials (including practice tests) are available at this same site.

## **PRACTICE EXAMS**

It's a good idea to take one of your practice exams shortly after you begin your test prep to give you a baseline score and to focus your studying on the most needed areas.

MCAT practice exams are available at <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/online-practice-mcat-exam> (available in November 2015)  
DAT web based practice exams are available at <http://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test> (\$37 per single purchase)

## **MCAT AND DAT PREP COURSES**

The decision whether to take a test prep course or to study on your own is a personal decision. One is not better than the other. It is up to you to determine the best way you study and how much structure you need to best prepare for the exam.

Many students ask whether or not to take an MCAT/DAT test prep course. Although YU does not endorse a particular course or company, in our experience, students benefit from the official course preparation in several ways:

- ✓ It forces you to study.
- ✓ It provides study materials and study rooms with rich resources and fellow sufferers.
- ✓ It provides you with tips and strategies about taking standardized tests.
- ✓ It gives you a group to study with. Students often make the same mistake again and again without realizing it. Someone working with you can help you catch this.
- ✓ It gives you the test-taking skills you will need to pass the medical and dental boards.

## **TEST PREP CONTACTS**

### **Sze Yan**

[mcatsze@gmail.com]

### **Dr. Jim Romano (“Orgoman”)**

<http://orgoman.com/>

### **Kaplan**

Ms. Marie McGrew

[marie.mcgrew@kaplan.com](mailto:marie.mcgrew@kaplan.com)

### **Berkeley Review**

<http://www.berkeley-review.com/>

### **Think MCAT**

<http://thinkmcat.com/>

Scott Roberts:

THINKMCAT@GMAIL.COM]

### **Examcrackers**

<http://www.examcrackers.com/>

### **Princeton Review**

<http://www.princetonreview.com/medical/mcat-bootcamp-course>

*YU does not endorse one particular test prep company*

## **Review Your Sciences**

Begin your review of science content early. Devote regular time each week and one morning each weekend to MCAT/DAT review. To familiarize yourself with the test, review the MCAT/DAT preparation materials at <http://www.e-MCAT/DAT.com> and buy two or

three MCAT/DAT review books. Next, get out your textbooks and course notes and review the areas covered by the MCAT/DAT. Pay particular attention to key concepts you may have missed previously. Outline and organize content by subject and be sure you have the basic concepts firmly in mind. Be sure to study every topic listed in the MCAT/DAT Student Manual.

One reason students typically perform poorly on the MCAT/DAT is that they have confused familiarity with preparation. Don't just focus on the problems you encounter in your review materials. When you go into the MCAT/DAT you should be prepared to answer ANY question about organic chemistry, not just the ones you saw in the prep books. You must be prepared to answer novel questions on the material. Prep books are useful as diagnostic tools, but they cannot replace textbooks and notes. As the test approaches, sit for at least four simulated full-length practice MCAT/DATs to prepare for the long day of the test. This is the only way to build endurance for the actual exam.

### **RELEASING YOUR SCORES**

When you take either the MCAT or DAT, you MUST release your scores to your Advisor so that we can track your progress.

### **Disability Services**

If you require special arrangements for your test, please contact Abigail Y. Kelsen, Coordinator of Disability Services at [akelsen@yu.edu](mailto:akelsen@yu.edu).

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