Creating your MCAT study guide can be one of the most important but challenging aspects of preparing for the MCAT. We recommend that the average pre-medical student should spend 300-350 hours preparing for the MCAT across several months. Even with three months to prepare, you will need to put aside a significant amount of study time per week in order to attain a competitive score on the MCAT. This is a week-by-week plan designed to help you achieve this in approximately 1 month.

**MCAT Study Guide: Week One**

Start by taking a practice test or question set that covers all the topics from the MCAT to familiarize yourself with the test and establish your baseline performance. The MCAT Sample Test is a great resource for this.

Use your initial test results to determine which content areas you need to work on. Modifying the study plan below accordingly. For example, if you did well on all molecular biology questions, you might only study those topics briefly and spend more time on a Biology subject you didn’t do as well with, such as anatomy and physiology.

Proactively fill in your calendar with study blocks, planning to study at minimum for three hours per day, six days per week. Take one day off from studying each week so you have time to recharge. Put specific topics to study into each block so that you ensure that you have sufficient prep time set aside.

Devote one full day this week to each of Biochemistry, Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, and Behavioral Sciences.

- **Biochemistry**: amino acids; proteins; enzymes and lipids
- **Biology**: cell biology; reproduction; embryogenesis and development; genetics and evolution
- **General Chemistry**: atomic and molecular structure; the periodic table and periodic trends; bonding and chemical interactions; stoichiometry
- **Organic Chemistry**: nomenclature; stereochemistry; bonding
- **Physics**: basic mathematics and dimensional analysis; kinematics; force, energy, and work
- **Behavioral Sciences**: biological basis of behavior; sensation and perception; learning and memory; cognition, consciousness, and language
For test-like practice, use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections and choose passages based on the content areas you have reviewed. In addition, study for the Critical Analysis and Reasoning (CARS) section on a daily basis. Use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections to read passages and work on passage-related questions.

Take a full-length practice test at the end of the week. Consider taking it in a library or similar location that will provided test-like conditions: no snacks or drinks during the test except for during breaks, no music, a quiet—but not silent—environment, and a test taken all in one sitting.

MCAT Study Guide: Week Two

Devote one full day this week to each of Biochemistry, Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, and Behavioral Sciences.

- Biochemistry: lipid and amino acid metabolism; biological membranes; DNA structure, replication and repair; RNA structure, transcription, and translation
- Biology: the nervous system; the endocrine system; the respiratory system; and the cardiovascular system and blood
- General Chemistry: chemical kinetics; equilibrium; solutions; acids and bases
- Organic Chemistry: substitution reactions; oxidation and reduction; organic acids and bases; spectroscopy and separations; amino acids, ATP, and other biochemical compounds
- Physics: hydrostatics and fluid dynamics; waves and sound; light and optics; atomic and nuclear phenomena
- Behavioral Sciences: motivation, stress and emotion; identity and personality; psychological disorders; social processes, attitudes and behavior

MCAT Study Guide: Week Three

Devote one full day this week to each of Biochemistry, Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, and Behavioral Sciences.

- Biochemistry: carbohydrates; glycolysis and glucose metabolism; oxidative phosphorylation and the electron transport chain; bioenergetics and regulation of metabolism
• Biology: the immune system; the digestive system; homeostasis and the excretory system; the musculoskeletal system
• Gen Chemistry: thermochemistry; gases; oxidation and reduction; electrochemistry
• Organic Chemistry: alcohols, aldehydes, ketones and carboxylic acids and reactions
• Physics: thermodynamics; electrostatics and magnetism; circuits
• Behavioral Sciences: social interaction; social thought processes; social structure and demographics; social stratification

MCAT Study Guide: Week Four

Once again, start the week by reviewing your practice test, looking over every question and using the results to modify your study plan if needed. Spend extra time reviewing CARS, re-reading the passages to determine what information you actually needed and what you didn’t.

Early in the week, take the AAMC Practice Test available from aamc.org. Set aside time to review the test as well.

For your remaining few days, spend time reviewing the content areas that were your biggest opportunities on your last full-length test. If you’ve never truly mastered a topic, though, now is not the time to attempt to learn it. Instead, focus on the material that you struggled with the first time through but that you think you can master given just a little more time.

Take the day before the test completely off; your brain needs to rest before the marathon of test-taking to come! Eat healthy, balanced meals and get a full night of rest so you are mentally and physically prepared for Test Day.