



# Preparing for the MCAT

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# Objectives

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- General structure of common pre-health exams
- When to take your test
- Study Schedule
- Study tips
- MCAT in the context of your application

# MCAT Structure

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- Different MCAT structure since 2015
- Reasoning-based exam
- 230 Questions in 7.5 hours (including breaks)
  - Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
  - Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS)
  - Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
  - Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
- Each section scored from 118-132
- Total: 472-528                      80th percentile: 509-510

# DAT Structure

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- Dental School entrance exam
- 280 Questions in 4.5 hours
  - Survey of Natural Sciences
  - Perceptual Ability Test
  - Reading Comprehension Test
  - Quantitative Reasoning Test
- Scaled Score: 1-30                      Average Dental School admission score: 19-21

# PCAT Structure

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- Pharmacy School entrance exam
- 192 Questions and 1 Essay in 3 hours and 40 minutes
  - 1 Essay
  - Biological Processes
  - Chemical Processes
  - Critical Reading
  - Quantitative Reasoning (Math)
- Total: 200-600                      Median: 400
- Average PCAT at top ten school: 75th percentile

# Undergraduate Classes

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- General Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry 1 + 2
- General Biology
- Biochemistry

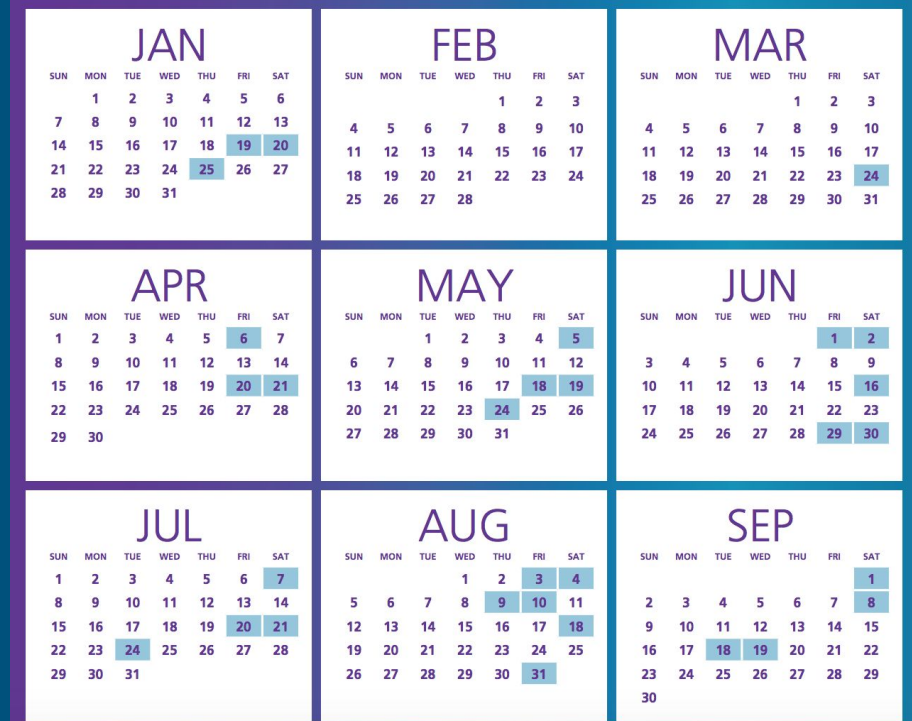
Variable: Physics, Calculus, Psychology, Sociology, Anatomy, Physiology

# MCAT specifics

- Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
  - General Chemistry
  - Organic Chemistry 1 + 2
  - Biochemistry
  - Physics 1 + 2
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS)
- Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
  - Biology
  - Physiology
  - Biochemistry
- Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
  - Psychology
  - Sociology

# When to take your test

- After you have taken the required classes
- Usually take it the same year you apply
- Want to send out applications in June/July, so have it done before then
- No gap year: By June of Junior year
- Gap year: Usually summer between Junior/Senior year



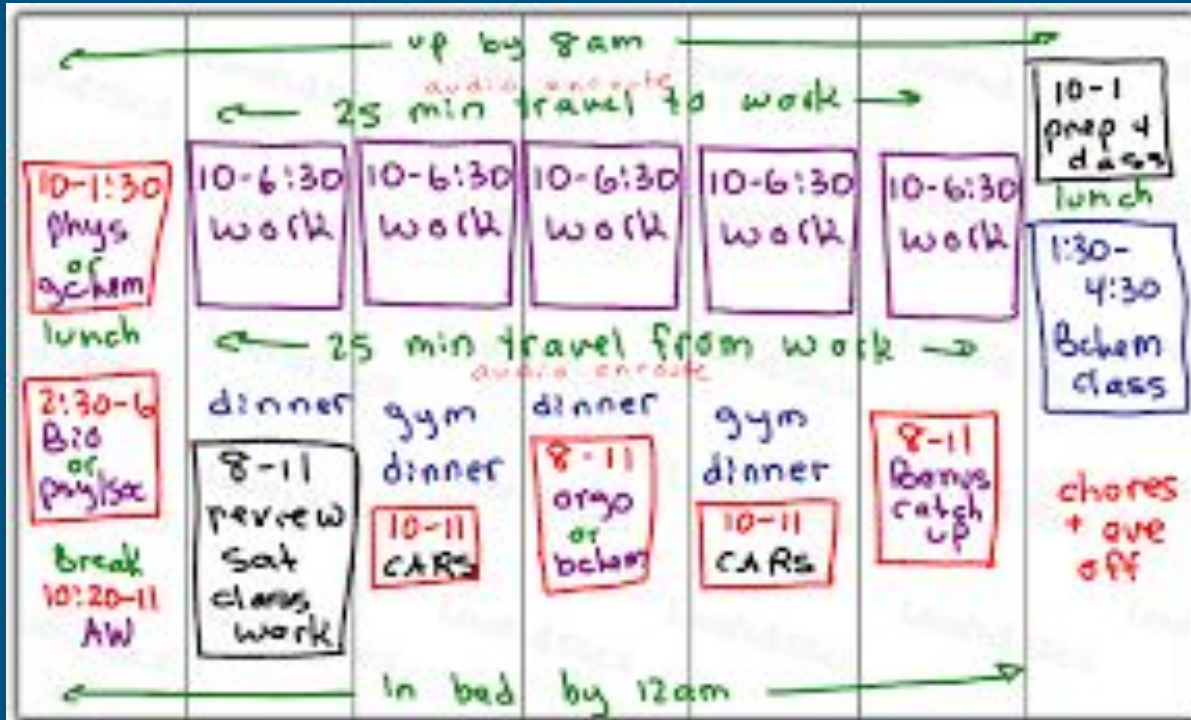


# Study Schedule

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- No Gap Year: By June of Junior year
- Gap Year: Usually summer between Junior/Senior year, or during Senior year
  
- Average hours spent studying for MCAT: 200-300
- Usually over 3 months: 16-25 hours/week
- Can do while taking a light course-load (12-14 credits) or a part-time job/volunteering

# Sample Schedules: Work/Class





# Test Preparatory Classes

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- The Princeton Review- content review
- Kaplan- test-taking strategies
- Examcrackers, Next Step- practice materials
  
- Preparatory classes/materials are expensive! (\$1000-\$2500)
  - Decide how you best learn, and take advantage of all the materials you can find

# Practice Materials

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- Take as many practice tests and questions as possible
  - Practice endurance of a 7.5 hour test
  - Review your answers the next day
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- Test prep companies- study books and questions
  - AAMC: 4 Full Length Practice tests
    - Section Banks: 300 questions
    - Question Packs: From old MCAT

# Study Tips

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- Take a test at the beginning of your studying to see how you feel
- Try to take one full practice test per week, 2/week as you near your test date
- Find out which strategy for passages works for you
- Keep a notebook with every question you have ever gotten wrong, and make sure you never get it wrong again
- Make sure you do not completely cut out social/fun activities while studying

The MCAT is just  
one part of your  
medical school  
application

# Extra-curriculars

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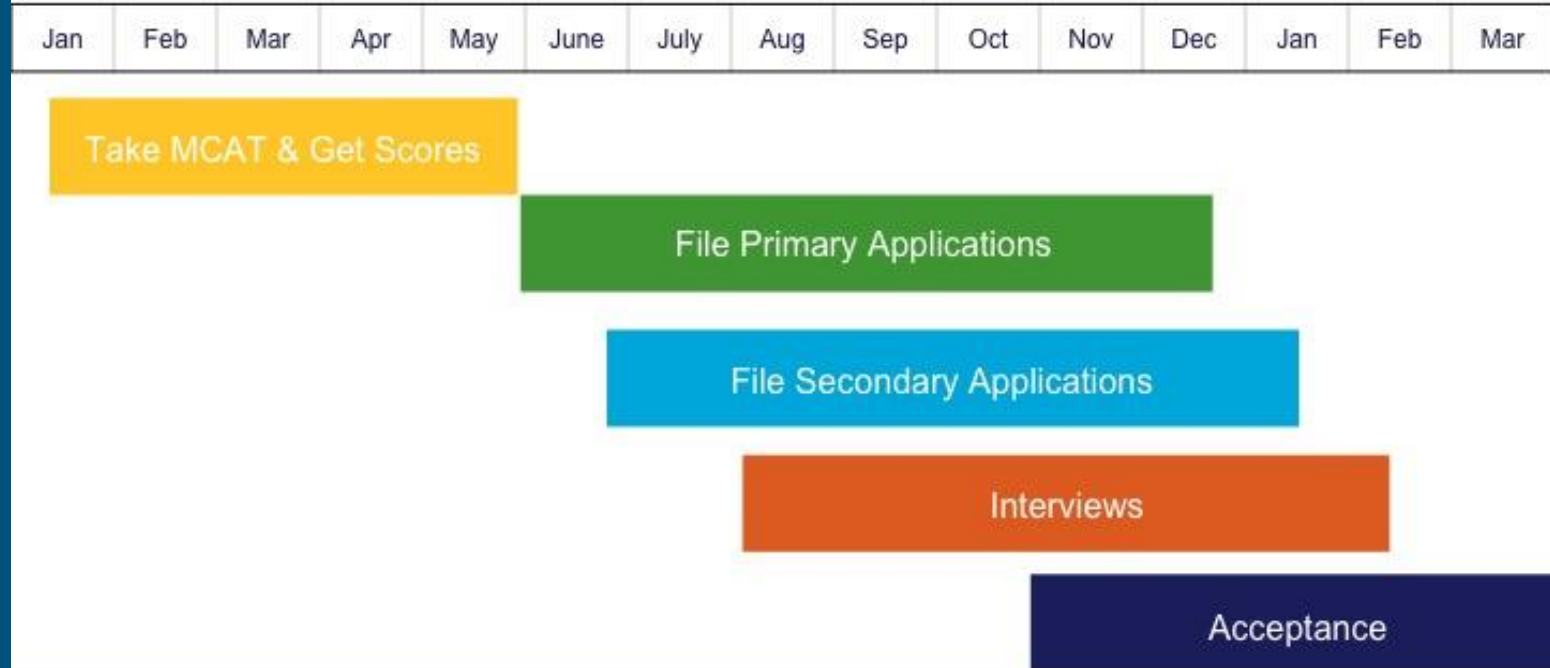
- Clinical experiences/Patient care
  - Volunteering, working (scribe, MA)
- Research
  - Science or non-science
- Leadership/Teamwork
  - Usually in student organizations
- Shadowing
  - Show you know what the everyday of the medical profession is like



# Application

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- **Primary:** AMCAS application
- List courses, grades, and GPA
- Up to 15 work and activities
  - 3 most meaningful, extra 1325 characters
  - One clinical, one research, one volunteering
- **Personal Statement: Why Medicine?**
  - Most important essay
  - Integrate your passions and activities to convince the reader of your commitment to medicine
  - Takes at least a month to polish this, have as many people read as possible
- **Secondary:** Specific essays to each medical school



Ideal time to prep    Most students will prep between October and April of their junior year.  
Ideal time to test    Most students will test between January and May of their junior year.

Questions?