

MCAT[®] Essentials

Required Reading

- Registration instructions
- Test-day policies
- Scoring details

...and suggestions to help you prepare for the MCAT exam, a list of contacts and online services, and other helpful information

Welcome to 2009 MCAT® Essentials!

Welcome to the 2009 MCAT® Essentials, and to this exciting and challenging stage of your professional journey.

We here at the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) and the MCAT exam staff in particular, wish you the best of success as you prepare to sit for the test. With that in mind, we ask that you please be aware of the following as you read this guide:

- ***This document is the official MCAT exam policy guide*** and provides fundamental information about registration, test-day policies, and post-test procedures. In addition, we have included a brief overview of exam content and scoring, some basic suggestions to help you prepare for the exam, a list of contacts and online services, and other helpful information.
- ***The MCAT exam staff will be happy to clarify any rules or procedures that require further explanation.*** While we cannot assist you if you fail to follow policy, we can certainly help you understand any requirements that are unclear to you. You will find contact listings for staff and related resources in Appendix A, and we encourage you to get in touch with us prior to registering for the exam if you need our assistance.

Once again, best wishes from the AAMC as you take this critical step toward a successful and rewarding medical career.

Required Reading

Please note that you are required to read the 2009 MCAT Essentials before you register for the exam.

At the time of registration, you will be required to certify that you read this material and understand the policies and procedures contained in it. In addition, please be aware that if you are a returning examinee, you must read the Essentials guide associated with your new registration. The *Essentials* are subject to change. The version of the *Essentials* that is applicable to you is that which was in effect at the time of your registration. Please print this document for your records.

Table of Contents

About the MCAT Exam -----	3
Exam Content -----	3
Registering for the Exam -----	5
Eligibility -----	5
Exam Dates and Registration Deadlines -----	5
Registration Fees -----	6
Exam Locations -----	7
Changes and Cancellations -----	7
Special Accommodations -----	8
Special Permissions -----	8
Score Release Options -----	9
Test Day Procedures and Regulations -----	11
Admission and Identification -----	11
Test Center Regulations and Procedures -----	12
Violations of Procedures -----	13
Voiding Your Exam -----	14
Test Questions Challenges -----	14
Receiving and Sending MCAT Exam Scores -----	15
Exam Scoring -----	15
MCAT Exam Testing History (THx) System -----	16
Score Reporting through AMCAS -----	16
Score Reporting to Non-AMCAS Institutions -----	17
Requests for Rescoring Tests -----	17
Remedies for Errors -----	18
Appendix A: Contacts and Online Services -----	20
Appendix B: Preparing for the MCAT Exam -----	21
Retaking the Exam -----	22
Appendix C: How Medical Schools Use Scores -----	23

About the MCAT® Exam

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is a standardized examination that consists of three multiple-choice sections and a writing assessment. Its purpose is to test the skills and knowledge that medical educators and physicians have identified as key prerequisites for success in medical school and the practice of medicine.

The exam has been part of the medical school admissions process for more than 60 years, and today all medical schools in the United States and most in Canada require applicants to submit recent MCAT exam scores. In addition, many other health professions and graduate programs accept MCAT exam scores in lieu of other standardized tests. Considering its widespread acceptance, it is no surprise that more than 70,000 students sit for the exam each year.

The AAMC, in conjunction with its member U.S. medical schools, develops and administers the MCAT exam and owns all aspects of it. Consequently, the AAMC may use scores for research and reporting, but only you, as the examinee, may receive your individual test scores and authorize their release to others.

Please research the specific application and admissions policies for the institution(s) in which you are interested for their current requirements. Unfortunately, the AAMC cannot grant refunds of MCAT exam fees for failure to comply with school policy.

Exam Content

Beyond testing for the mastery of basic concepts in biology, general and organic chemistry, and physics, the exam also assesses capacity for problem solving and critical thinking as well as general writing skills. By testing for these varied skills, medical school faculty hopes to encourage undergraduates with broad educational backgrounds to consider careers in the health professions and to persuade premedical students to explore a wide variety of course offerings outside of the natural sciences—as well as to identify those candidates most likely to be successful in the study of medicine. That is why the exam consists of the following diverse sections:

- Physical Sciences,
- Verbal Reasoning,
- Writing Sample, and
- Biological Sciences

Test Section	Questions	Time
Tutorial (optional)		10 minutes
Non-Disclosure Agreement		5 minutes
Physical Sciences	52	70 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Verbal Reasoning	40	60 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Writing Sample	2	60 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Biological Sciences	52	70 minutes
Void Question		5 minutes
Survey		10 minutes
Total Content Time		4 hours, 20 minutes
Total "Seat" Time		5 hours, 20 minutes

Total time does not include check-in time on arrival at the test center

The chart to the left provides an overview of each of these four sections, including the number of questions and the time allotted to that segment. More detailed information on each section follows below.

Section Analysis

• Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences

The Physical Sciences section assesses problem-solving ability in general chemistry and physics, and the Biological Sciences section evaluates these abilities in the areas of biology and organic chemistry. Each section contains 7 passage-based sets of questions and 13 independent questions. Each passage-based set consists of four to seven questions.

The questions, both passage-based and independent, evaluate your knowledge of basic physical and biological science concepts and your facility at problem solving using these concepts. They do not test your ability to memorize scientific facts.

• Verbal Reasoning

The Verbal Reasoning section evaluates your ability to understand, evaluate, and apply information and arguments presented in prose style. The test consists of seven passages, each of which is about 600 words long, taken from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Each passage-based set consists of five to seven questions, assessing your ability to extrapolate information from the accompanying passage.

Please note that each multiple-choice section will include some experimental items that do not count toward your score.

Preparing for the MCAT Exam

For suggestions on how to prepare for the exam, including information about and directions to a free online practice test offered by the AAMC, please see Appendix B.

• Writing Sample

The Writing Sample consists of two 30-minute essays, each of which addresses specific topics that require an expository response and assesses skill in the following areas:

- Developing a central idea,
- Synthesizing concepts and ideas,
- Presenting ideas cohesively and logically, and
- Writing clearly, with the ability to follow accepted rules of grammar, syntax, and punctuation consistent with the level of a timed, first-draft composition.

Topics do not assess subject-matter knowledge in or pertain to the content of biology, chemistry, or physics; the medical school application process or reasons for the choice of medicine as a career; or social and cultural issues not in the general experience of college students.

Registering for the Exam

The MCAT exam is administered multiple times from late January through early September, and offered at hundreds of test sites in the United States, Canada, and throughout the world. After you have read the material in MCAT Essentials, you will be able to register online for the exam at the AAMC Web site.

Please note that online preregistration is required and that walk-in registration is not available.

When Should You Take the Exam?

You will want to take the exam the year in which you will apply for medical school, so that, for example, if you are applying in 2009 for entrance to medical school in 2010, you should take the exam in 2009. (Medical schools will, however, accept scores dating back two or three years. In the event you have taken the exam previously, we recommend that you **check the application policies of each school in which you are interested.**)

Eligibility

You may sit for the exam if you are preparing to apply to a health professions school. These include schools of:

- Allopathic,
- Osteopathic,
- Podiatric, and
- Veterinary Medicine.

You may take the exam up to three times in one calendar year, although you may register for only one test date at a time.

*At the time of registration you will be required to accept a statement verifying that you are taking the exam **solely** for the purpose of applying to a health professions school. If, however, you are not applying to a health professions school, or if you are a currently enrolled medical student, you may obtain “special permission” to register for the exam. (See section on Special Permissions for more information.)*

International Students

If you are an international student, you are welcome to register for the exam provided that you meet the eligibility requirements described above.

Early Registration Encouraged

Please register early for the test date that you prefer, as test centers have limited capacity and registrations are processed in the order in which they are received.

**For the 2009 exam and registration schedule, please visit us at:
www.aamc.org/students/mcat/datesdeadlines.pdf**

Exam Dates and Registration Deadlines

- Exam Dates

The AAMC selected exam dates to ensure that scores are available to meet most medical school application deadlines. Please choose the test date that fulfills the requirements of the school(s) of your choice. (The Medical School Admissions Requirements handbook published by the AAMC outlines school requirements. If you prefer, you may contact the school directly.)

- Registration Deadlines

You must register through the online program hosted by the AAMC.

- The regular registration deadline is 14 calendar days prior to the test date.
- If you miss the regular deadline, you may be able to register during the late time period. A late fee will apply. (The AAMC will be unable to grant fee assistance, ADA accommodations, or special permission during late registration.)

Registration Fees

The following chart lists fees associated with MCAT exam registration. Please note that payment must be in the form of a credit card (MasterCard or VISA), payable in U.S. funds. We will process your registration immediately upon submission.

International sites include all countries, provinces, or territories except Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Regular Registration	\$225
International Test Site*	\$65
Late Registration*	\$55
Date Reschedule*	\$55
Change of Test Center*	\$55

*These fees are added to the regular registration fee.

The registration process cannot be reversed once it has begun, and thus you will be responsible for all fees. If you reverse the credit card charge, or if payment is declined for any reason, you must provide an alternative form of payment on request. Otherwise, the AAMC must cancel your registration, withhold all scores, and disallow future registration and other services until arrears are made current.

AAMC Offers Fee Assistance Program

The AAMC Fee Assistance Program (FAP) aids individuals with extreme financial limitations who otherwise could not take the exam. The program reduces the regular testing fee for eligible individuals from \$225 to \$85.

Please be aware that you must receive a final FAP approval before you register. Visit www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap for complete information on the FAP, including eligibility, the application process, and associated deadlines.

NOTE: FAP eligibility decisions are tied directly to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' poverty-level guidelines. For the 2009 calendar year, applicants whose total family income is 300 percent or less of the poverty level for their family size are eligible for fee assistance.

Exam Locations

The MCAT exam is offered at hundreds of locations throughout the world. Although you can review a listing of test sites at www.aamc.org/students/mcat/sitelisting.htm, we suggest you rely on the most up-to-date list found on the MCAT Scheduling and Registration System.

Changes and Cancellations

• Test Center or Date Changes

You may change your test date and/or test center at any time, provided that space is available, you make the change prior to the **regular registration deadline** associated with your initial test date, and you are rescheduling into the current calendar year. Additional fees will apply (see chart on page 6). If you make a change in both test date and center simultaneously, a single charge of just \$55 will be levied; however, if you make separate changes, you will be charged individually for each, resulting in a total charge of \$110.

You will be charged for a change regardless of how quickly it is requested after your initial registration. We regret we cannot make exceptions to this rule.

• Cancellations

If you decide not to sit for the exam after you have registered for it, you will be eligible for a refund of \$115 if you cancel your registration by the regular registration deadline. If you received fee assistance from the AAMC, the refund will be \$85.

Please cancel your registration online at <https://services.aamc.org/20/mcat>.

Requests for cancellations after the deadline may be considered for special, personal circumstances, however, refunds cannot be provided. Examinees who wish to cancel after a deadline should submit a written request to the MCAT Resource Center no later than 48 hours before the exam date. The request must indicate that the examinee understands no refund will be issued. Emails are acceptable. Documentation may be required to support the request.

Cancellation Refund

Make your refund request by canceling your exam online at least 14 days before your test date. In most cases, the refund will be automatic and applied to your original form of payment; however, the funds may not appear on your account for a few days. Please note that the AAMC does not grant deadline extensions or have an appeal process.

AAMC and its test site vendor, make every attempt to ensure facilities and equipment are available on test day. We may need to reschedule a small percentage of examinees, however, to new locations and/or dates when an event occurs necessitating such action. Very infrequently, rescheduling is not possible and the only option is a refund. Therefore, appointments are subject to change or cancellation. Please keep your contact information current so that we can contact you in the unlikely event that we need to notify you of a change.

Absences

If you do not attend an exam for which you are registered, neither your registration nor your absence will be reported to schools. Additionally, the registration will not count toward the maximum three attempts you are allowed within the testing year.

If you wish to schedule a new test date, registration will be available two days after the date you missed. All fees for the new registration will apply- unfortunately, we cannot transfer the fees from the date you were absent to a new appointment.

Early Application

The MCAT Office of Accommodated Testing may require up to 60 days to process your request for accommodations. You should therefore submit your request and related documentation as far in advance of your desired test date as possible. For additional information, please review our "Examinees with Disabilities" section at www.aamc.org/students/mcat/accommodations/start.htm.

Special Accommodations

Accommodations will be made for examinees with disabilities or other health conditions, pending review and approval from the MCAT Office of Accommodated Testing. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, you will be required to submit documentation of your disability or condition at the time of registration. We will notify you in writing if your request has been approved, providing you with additional steps to confirm your registration. *(Please make certain that you follow the instructions provided with your approval letter to guarantee your accommodations.)*

If your request for accommodations is not granted, your initial registration for the exam remains valid. In this instance, you must decide whether to keep your registration (in which case no further action is necessary), or to cancel your registration. If you cancel in accordance with the cancellation and refund policies described above, you will receive a 50 percent refund.

Special Permissions

There are two circumstances in which you must apply for special permission to take the MCAT exam: (1) you wish to take the test for any reason other than applying to a health professions school, or (2) you are a currently enrolled medical student.

To apply for special permission, please send an e-mail request to mcats@aamc.org, stating the reason(s) you wish to take the exam. The MCAT exam office will attempt to review and respond to your request within five business days, although heavy volume may delay our ability to reply within this time frame. We therefore ask that you be mindful of registration deadlines, as staff cannot extend closing dates for any reason.

Score Release Options

- **Primary Release**

When you register for the MCAT exam, you authorize release of your scores to the AAMC and its affiliated institutions for research purposes. (As part of the registration process, you will be required to check “YES” when asked about release of information.) Please be assured that these institutions will maintain the confidentiality of your scores at all times and will not report them in any personally identifiable way, except with your permission.

- **Secondary Release**

If you are applying for medical school, you and the American Medical College Application Service* (AMCAS) will receive your scores automatically. Beyond that, though, there are three different score release options, described below, which you will be asked to consider and decide on at the time of registration. These options relate to services that may benefit you as you pursue admission to medical school and provide the opportunity to have your MCAT exam scores and contact information sent to the institution or agency described. The costs of these services, which are detailed below, are included in the basic registration fee.

**For a description of the American Medical College Application Service, please see page 16.*

Health Professions Advisor

This release gives the AAMC permission to include your scores and demographic information in a Web-based report to undergraduate health professions advisors, who find such data useful when counseling students. In addition, advisors may share your scores with members of their premedical committees or others involved in preparing letters of recommendation.

Health Professions Advisor

If you check the advisor release in the “Schools Attended” section on your AMCAS application, your MCAT exam scores will also be sent to an undergraduate school’s designated advisor.

In some instances, undergraduate institutions have not designated an official health professions advisor (or have not identified the advisor to the AAMC), and in these cases, we cannot release your scores to these institutions.

Med-MAR

Med-MAR

You are eligible for Med-MAR if you are a (1) U.S. citizen or permanent resident visa holder, and (2) member of a racial or ethnic group currently under-represented in medicine and/or economically disadvantaged.

This release is for use by disadvantaged students and under-represented minorities who plan to apply to medical school. It gives the AAMC permission to include your scores and biographical information in the Medical Minority Applicant Registry (Med-MAR), a service created to enhance admission opportunities for individuals from groups currently under-represented in medicine.

Med-MAR distributes Web-based basic biographical information on prospective medical school applicants to admission offices of AAMC members (and certain

health-related agencies) who wish to increase opportunities for economically disadvantaged students and those from under-represented groups. The registry is updated after each score release, at no cost to students or to medical schools.

MCAT Recruiting Service

This release gives the AAMC permission to include your contact and MCAT exam score information in reports produced by the MCAT Recruiting Service. Accredited U.S. and Canadian schools of medicine, osteopathic medicine, podiatry, and veterinary medicine, along with scholarship programs of the U.S. government (including those of the U.S. military), may request information about examinees and use that information to send you material as part of their recruiting efforts.

Please note that you cannot change your response to the three release options described above after you have submitted your registration.

Taking the Exam: Test-day Procedures and Regulations

Admission and Identification

You must report to the test center at least 30 minutes prior to your appointment time in order to be admitted to the exam. When you arrive at the center, you will verify your identity, proceed through admission procedures, and receive your seat assignment. In the event of inclement weather, most test centers will be open and examinees are expected to report to their appointments. Registration fees will not be refunded to examinees who are delayed or unable to reach the test center.

The Test Center Administrator will admit only those examinees who can be positively identified through qualifying forms of identification. Please be prepared to provide personal identification in the form of a current, valid government-issued ID containing an expiration date, your photo, and signature (e.g., a driver's license or passport) in which the name matches that of your registration exactly. We regret we cannot accept employee ID's, library cards, school ID's, or other similar forms of identification, even if issued by a government-sponsored institution. We also cannot accept temporary ID's. If you are unsure if your ID meets our requirements, please contact us well in advance of test day. Please see our [Registration Tips](#) for more information.

In addition, you must accept the terms of a Non-Disclosure Agreement in which you agree to not disclose any content of the exam, including passages, questions, or answers. If you do not indicate that you agree with this statement, or if you do not answer this question within the five minutes provided, you will be unable to test and you will not receive a refund.

These measures help prevent fraud and protect the integrity of the exam. The Test Center Administrator will capture your identification electronically, including your fingerprints and photograph (biometrics). If you refuse to provide fingerprints or photo, the Test Center Administrator will not be able to admit you to the testing room. Electronic capture of your biometric data allows for easier and quicker return to the testing facility after breaks. The biometric and other identity data will be retained by the AAMC and made available for identity verification at future MCAT administrations, should you choose to retake the examination. Should you continue to pursue a medical career, these data may permit you to verify your identity when you arrive at a medical school, board exams or health care facility. Please see our Web site for more information on [biometrics](#).

Please take the following actions, if necessary:

1. If you cannot obtain government-issued identification, you must contact the MCAT Program Office prior to registering for the exam.
2. If your photo ID does not have your signature on it, you must bring a second form of identification that does have your signature.
3. If the name on your identification does not match your registration (you were recently married, for example), you must bring official proof of your name change. The proof must be an original document that includes both the old and new names.

Test Center Regulations and Procedures

For Assistance During the Exam

If you require assistance during the exam, raise your hand and the Test Center Administrator will come to your seat to assist you.

The AAMC is deeply committed to ensuring the authenticity and validity of test scores. In order to do so, and to provide fair, equal, and secure testing conditions for all examinees, the staff at each test center will adhere to the following common procedures:

- The Test Center Administrator will check examinees into the testing room one by one to begin the exam. The actual starting time of the exam may vary due to volume and pre-administration procedures; therefore, please be prepared to wait up to an hour, possibly a little longer.
- The center will provide scratch paper or dry erase boards, ear covers (industrial), and pencils. No other testing aids are allowed. The Test Center Administrator will collect your scratch paper before you leave.

If You Have a Concern

We strive to provide comfortable testing environments and fair, equal, and secure testing conditions. If, after taking the MCAT exam, you have a concern regarding test-day procedures or the testing room environment, you should inform the Test Center Administrator on the day of testing and submit your concern in writing within five days of the test date. See below for more information about test center complaints.

- You may bring no personal items into the testing room other than your ID. You must store personal belongings, including telephones, pagers, books, handbags, and food in the secure area that will be provided for you. You are encouraged to leave personal items at home on test day, as neither AAMC nor the testing contractor are responsible for loss or damage to personal belongings.
- You must sign in and out on the Signature Log and present identification each time you enter and leave the testing room.
- A digital image of your fingerprint will be taken, and your identification will be rescanned each time before entering the test room.

- The Test Center Administrator will assign you to a seat, which you will maintain for the duration of the exam.
- Access to the examination room will be restricted to test center personnel, examinees, and authorized observers.
- Once the examination begins, you are considered to have tested even if you void or do not complete the test. Please see below for information on voiding the exam.
- The testing clock will begin to count down as soon as the examination is started. The timer is visible on your testing monitor throughout the examination, and time is counted down by section. If you end a section early, you may continue on to the next section, but additional time will not be counted towards any subsequent sections or breaks.

- You may not eat, drink, or smoke in the testing room. The day includes three optional 10-minute breaks between each section. You may wish to bring snacks for your breaks, since eating facilities may not be located near the test site or may not be equipped to handle large crowds.
- To protect the security of the exam questions, examinees may not study or use cell phones during breaks.
- You may not bring a timer or watch into the test room. A timer is provided on-screen during the exam.
- You may not wear caps during the test. Earplugs are permitted, but upon arrival at the test center they must be presented to the Test Center Administrator for inspection in their original sealed packaging.
- Energy-saving practices vary widely, and you may find the testing room colder or warmer than you expected. You should therefore dress comfortably and be prepared for varying room temperatures. If you remove an item of clothing (for example, a sweater) during the exam, you will be instructed to place it in the secure area. The exam clock will not stop during this time.

We take care to ensure that registrations, the exam, and the answers are properly processed and scored. In the unlikely event that a mistake occurs in processing registrations, scoring, or in reporting scores, the error will be corrected, if possible. If this is not possible, the examinee will be permitted to either retake at no additional fee or to receive a refund of his or her examination fee.

Violations of Procedures

If an examinee violates procedures or engages in any irregular behavior, it will first be reported to the Test Center Administrator and then to the AAMC.

Notification Process and Appeal

If a report is to be issued, the AAMC generally notifies the examinee first, providing information about the options available, including procedures for appealing the AAMC's decision to an independent arbitrator.

The following are prohibited actions:

- giving or receiving assistance,
 - copying another examinee's work,
 - using prohibited aids (e.g., desktop timers),
 - attempting to take the test for someone else,
 - attempting to remove scratch paper from the testing room,
 - attempting by any means to duplicate, record, or memorize test content, answer documents, or any other test materials,
 - leaving the testing room without permission,
 - failing to follow the supervisor's instructions after being warned,
 - creating a disruption of any kind,
- violating test center regulations or procedures,
 - violating local laws, regulations, or policies, and
 - being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If a violation is substantiated, MCAT exam officials will notify the examinee and will send a report documenting the incident, with attachments provided by the individual, to legitimately interested parties (such as medical schools). In addition, the AAMC may also investigate the validity of the individual's test scores, cancel scores when there is reason to believe that they are invalid, and prosecute anyone whose behavior unlawfully undermines the security of the MCAT exam or the integrity of the process.

Voiding Your Exam

The AAMC offers you an option to void your MCAT exam if you are uneasy with your performance and do not wish your test to be scored. This opportunity occurs at the end of the exam, when you will be asked to select one of the following two options:

- “I wish to have my MCAT exam scored.”
- “I wish to VOID my MCAT exam.”

Please note the clarifications below:

- Voiding your scores on test day means that you will not receive scores. Scores cannot be “unvoided” at a later date.
- If you begin each section but do not complete one or more of them, your test will not be voided unless you request it. To “begin” means that you have answered at least one question in the multiple choice sections and that you have opened the Writing Sample. If you intend to void the test before completing it, and do not know how to proceed to the screen to select the void option, inform the Test Center Administrator, who will provide instructions for doing so. Notifying the Test Center Administrator of your intent to void your exam is not sufficient. You must select “I wish to void my MCAT exam” on the void screen to have your exam voided.
- If you have begun each section and skip the void screen and do not select one of the statements above, we may not void your test, and you cannot cancel your scores at a later date. If you do not begin each section and must leave due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, we may void your scores on your behalf; however, you should make every effort to follow the void instructions above to prevent confusion about your intentions.
- You will have five minutes to make a selection on the void screen. If you do not select one of the statements above during that time, your exam will be scored. You may not void scores at a later date.
- The AAMC will not approve refunds for voided tests, regardless of the reason for the void.

The AAMC will not report your participation in the test to AMCAS or to non-AMCAS schools if you void your scores. We will, however, regard you as having attended the test and will therefore count the attempt toward one of the three permitted each year.

Test Question Challenges

If you discover a question you think is flawed or ambiguous, please notify the MCAT Program Office.

For a Written Response, Please Notify Us Within Five Days!

You have the right to a written response from MCAT exam officials. To ensure this response, we must receive your communication—via fax or regular mail—no later than five days following your test date. In your correspondence, please include your name and address, your AAMC ID or Social Security Number (SSN/SIN), the location of the center where you tested, the question number, the section of the test in which the item was found, and a detailed description of the nature of the problem.

You may expect a response within four to six weeks from the date we receive your correspondence. Please note that we cannot accept challenges by email.

Please address your communication to:

Attention: Test Question Challenges
Association of American Medical Colleges
2450 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-1127
Fax: 202 828 4799

Receiving and Sending MCAT Exam Scores

Exam Scoring

The four sections of the MCAT exam each result in a separate score. The Physical Sciences, Verbal Reasoning, and Biological Sciences sections, each comprised of multiple-choice questions, are scored between a low 1 and a high of 15; the Writing Sample section, consisting of two essays. Each essay is scored twice on a scale of 1-6 (and ultimately converted to an alphabetic scale). The following explains the scoring in more detail and highlights certain aspects of the process:

- **Physical Sciences, Verbal Reasoning, and Biological Sciences**

- Although all test forms of the exam measure the same basic skills and concepts, each form contains different questions. Since one form may be slightly more difficult or slightly easier than another, we convert the raw scores to a scale that takes into consideration the difficulty of test questions. Regardless of the particular test form used, equal scaled scores will represent the same level of skill mastery.
- Your raw score on the Writing Sample is the sum of four individual scores. Two scores are assigned to your first essay, and two are assigned to your second essay.
- There is no penalty for guessing.
- Taking into consideration the relative difficulty or ease of specific questions on your form as described above, your raw scores are converted to a scaled score ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 15. This conversion minimizes variability in test scores and tends to provide a more stable and accurate assessment of your abilities, since two examinees of equal ability would be expected to get the same scaled score even though there might be a slight difference in their raw scores.

For Your Information

The AAMC is pleased to make available interpretive information—scaled score means and standard deviations for each section, percentage of examinees receiving each scaled score, and percentile rank ranges—so that you may compare your performance to that of other candidates.

- **Writing Sample**

- Each essay is scored twice and your total raw score on the Writing Sample is the sum of the four individual scores.
- Each individual score ranges from 1 to 6.
- Your total raw score is converted to an alphabetic scale ranging from J (the lowest) to T (the highest).
- The same alphabetic score can result from different combinations of individual scores. For example, a candidate whose individual scores are 4 and 5 on the first topic and 4 and 4 on the second—for a raw score of 17—would receive the same alphabetic score as a candidate who scored 3 and 3 on the first topic and 5 and 6 on the second.

MCAT Testing History (THx) System

The AAMC offers an online score-reporting capability via the MCAT Testing History (THx) System by which you may view your most recent MCAT exam scores as soon as the AAMC releases them—at no charge.

In addition to that, and also at no charge, you may send THx score reports online to application services (besides AMCAS), as well as podiatry, veterinary, and public health programs. You may also print an Official Score Report to send to whomever you wish to receive your scores. (Recipients can verify examinee-printed official score reports online, allowing examinees to send an official score report anywhere they wish.)

Score Release Dates

The AAMC and the MCAT Program Office will use all available and reasonable means to release scores approximately 30 days after each test date. You will find approximate score release dates associated with each test date online at www.aamc.org/students/mcat/datesdeadlines.pdf.

MCAT exam scores from 1991 to the present may be accessed through the THx system at <https://services.aamc.org/mcatthx>.

Please be aware that AAMC staff will not provide scores to examinees over the phone, nor will the AAMC or the MCAT Program Office be responsible for any claims or damages resulting to any person from delayed transmission of test scores for any reason whatsoever.

Score Reporting through AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service)

The AMCAS, a centralized application processing service of the AAMC, was developed to make the process of applying to participating medical schools easier and more uniform. The AMCAS applies only to first-year entering-class applicants to allopathic medical schools.

AMCAS Release of Scores

AMCAS automatically includes MCAT exam scores for examinees who sat for the exam in 2003 onward. (You do not have the option to withhold scores for exams taken in 2003 or later.) Scores from 1991 to 2002 will be included only if you have released them to AMCAS.

If you wish to apply to a medical school that participates in the AMCAS—and almost all medical schools currently do—you must complete an AMCAS application and submit it to the AAMC. Advanced standing and transfer applicants should contact medical schools directly for application information.

If you take the MCAT exam after you have submitted your AMCAS application (for example, you submit your application in June and take the exam in September), AMCAS will send updated application information to the schools to which you applied, specifying your new test date and scores.

You may obtain AMCAS information either from your advisor or directly from the AAMC Web site at www.aamc.org/amcas. If you have particular questions, either concerning MCAT exam scores within an AMCAS application or about AMCAS procedures in general, please direct your question(s) to amcas@aamc.org.

Please see Appendix C for information on how medical schools use MCAT exam scores in their admissions process.

Score Reporting to Non-AMCAS Institutions

If you want your scores sent to a non-AMCAS school or application service, please use the online MCAT THx system (<https://services.aamc.org/mcatthx>) when your scores are released. If the school to which you want your scores sent is not listed, you may print a copy of your scores from the THx system and mail them directly.

To obtain MCAT exam scores prior to 1991, please use the form available at www.aamc.org/mcat. It can be either faxed or mailed; a small payment will be required.

Requests for Rescoring Tests

Rescoring Fees

Multiple-Choice sections (one fee for PS, VR, and BS combined)	\$55
Writing Sample	\$55
Entire exam	\$110

The AAMC and the MCAT Program Office maintain a variety of quality-control procedures to ensure the accuracy of scores and score reporting. If, however, you think that a scoring error has occurred, you may request that your multiple-choice answers be rescored by hand. You will receive the results of this rescoring in writing, and the response letter will either confirm that your original scores were correct as reported or inform you of the corrected scaled scores for each test section. Raw scores will not be disclosed.

If you wish to use this service, please write to: Attention: MCAT Rescoring Service
 Association of American Medical Colleges
 2450 N Street, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20037-1127

In order for AAMC staff to process or respond to requests for rescoring, your letter must include:

- Your full name,
- AAMC ID number
- Mailing address,
- Telephone number,
- E-mail address,
- Date of test,
- Sections of the test you wish rescored—either the three multiple-choice sections and/or the Writing Sample.
- Explanation for why you feel rescoring is necessary, and
- Check, money order, or credit card information (MasterCard or VISA 16-digit card number, expiration date, and amount) for the full fee. If you are paying by credit card, you must also provide your signature. Checks and money orders should be made payable to the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Note: Your letter must be postmarked no later than 30 days following the score release date.

We will begin processing rescoring requests once all scoring and data analyses following the test date have been completed and your scores have been reported to you. You will receive the results of rescoring the multiple-choice answers about four weeks after we receive your request. Due to the time involved in imaging the essays (and the nature of the essay scoring process), essay rescoring may require up to four months. We will, however, notify you of the outcome as soon as possible.

Remedies for Errors

The AAMC and the MCAT Program Office take great care to ensure that exam registrations are properly processed, and that exams are properly prepared, handled, and scored. In the unlikely event that a mistake occurs during the registration process; in preparing, handling, processing or scoring an exam; or in reporting scores, AAMC will correct the error, if possible, or may permit the affected examinee(s) to either retest at no additional fee or to receive a refund of his or her examination fee. Please note, the remedies described below are the exclusive remedies available for errors in registrations, exam information, scoring (including score reporting), testing disruptions or potential compromises through prior access to exam content by one or more examinees.

• Disruptions in Testing and Potential Compromises

The AAMC and the MCAT Program Office take steps to ensure standardized administration on test day. If events occur that result in the cancellation or interruption of testing or a deviation from required testing procedures, raise concerns about possible advance access to an exam's content by one or more examinees, or otherwise disrupt or compromise the normal testing process, the AAMC will examine the situation and determine if corrective action is necessary, including score cancellation(s) or non-scoring of answers. If the AAMC concludes that action is warranted, each affected examinee will be offered the option to either retest at no additional fee (normally on a future test date) or to receive a refund of his or her examination fee.* If the AAMC offers a retest, examinees who select that option must retake the entire exam in order to produce a valid score.

****If affected examinees are found to have caused or been involved in the conduct that resulted in corrective action, the AAMC may withhold either or both of these options.***

• Test Center Closures

If a test center is closed, an effort will be made to reschedule all affected examinees. If this is not possible (especially late in the year when fewer testing opportunities remain), registration fees will be refunded.

• Test Center Concerns Reported by Examinees

If you believe test center conditions interfered with your performance on the exam, you should report your concerns to the Test Center Administrator, who will file a Center Problem Report. The MCAT Program uses these reports in its investigations. If you would like a written response about a concern, you may request an investigation by the MCAT Program Office by writing to us at the address below. Please be aware that you must send your correspondence—either by fax or regular mail—no later than five days following your exam, If you would like a response by the time scores are released. We will investigate any concern received within 10 days following an exam, however the processing time may be longer. Complaints received after 10 days will not be investigated. We cannot accept test center complaints by email.

Contact us within five days!

Attention: Test Center Complaints
Association of American Medical Colleges
2450 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-1127
Fax: 202 828 4799

When writing to us, please include the following information:

- Your full name,
- AAMC ID number or Social Security number (SSN/SIN),
- Mailing address,
- Telephone number,
- E-mail address,
- Date of test,
- Location of Test Center.
- Detailed description of problem.

*Investigations may take up to six weeks. We will notify you by regular mail of the result. Regardless of the result of an investigation, scores will not be changed or voided.

- **Cancellation of Scores or Registrations by the MCAT Office**

The MCAT Office may cancel test scores in cases of testing irregularities—such as falsification of one’s identity, impersonation of another examinee (surrogate testing), unusual similarities in the

The MCAT office also reserves the right to cancel registration or prevent future registration if a registration or test day irregularity is confirmed through our investigation processes.

answers of examinees at the same test center, violations of the non-disclosure agreement, or other indicators that scores may not be valid. When the AAMC decides to cancel test scores, it notifies examinees before taking that

action (except in cases of testing disruptions or compromises described above). The notice includes information about the options available regarding the planned score cancellation, including procedures for appealing the decision. In any such appeal, the issue to be decided is whether the AAMC acted reasonably and in good faith in deciding to cancel the scores.

©2009, Association of American Medical Colleges. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Appendix A: Contacts and Online Services

ADA Accommodations

accommodations@aamc.org
www.aamc.org/students/mcat/accommodations/

General Questions

Item Challenges

Rescore Requests

Test Center Complaints

www.aamc.org/mcat
MCAT Program Office
Association of American Medical Colleges
2450 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
Phone: 202 828 0690
Fax: 202 828 4799
E-mail: mcat@aamc.org

Please include a subject or attention line stating the reason you are writing to us.

Exam Scores

<https://services.aamc.org/mcatthx>

Practice Tests

www.e-mcat.com

Publications

www.aamc.org/publications

Fee Assistance Program

www.aamc.org/fap

AAMC Fee Assistance Program

Association of American Medical Colleges
2450 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-1127
Phone: 202 828 0600
E-mail: fap@aamc.org

**Information is Official Only
When it Comes Directly from the
MCAT Office.**

Unless you have been otherwise instructed by the MCAT Program Office, please be aware that you should rely only on the MCAT Office for information related to your exam.

***Please do not include
attachments when
sending to our email
addresses.***

American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS®)

www.aamc.org/amcas

AMCAS

Association of American Medical Colleges

2450 N Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20037-1127

Phone: 202 828 0600

E-mail: amcas@aamc.org

Appendix B: Preparing for the MCAT Exam

- Begin with a careful review of the information available on the MCAT Web site. In particular, take note of the ***Preparing for the MCAT FAQ*** (accessible from the Web site), which includes sample topics, a description of skills assessed, test items, and answer keys for the Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences sections of the exam. The Writing Sample section includes sample essays and score explanation, and describes how to organize and compose responses.
- In addition, you will also need to review relevant course outlines, notes, and textbooks, particularly in the sciences.
- After you have studied the material online and reviewed course material, you should take one or more of the official ***MCAT Practice Tests*** in order to help determine the areas in which you may need further study. When you take a practice test, try to replicate an actual testing environment as closely as possible. Minimize distractions, time yourself, and take the sections in their standard order (Physical Sciences, Verbal Reasoning, Writing Sample, and Biological Sciences).
- ***In addition, a free practice test is available online at www.e-mcat.com.*** This practice test provides optional interactive feedback that candidates can turn on or off, automated scoring, and a sophisticated diagnostic summary report across content areas. It also permits candidates to select an entire examination or a section only, and to customize items selected by content area, type of skill, type of reading passage, or item difficulty.
- Although little computer skill is required to complete the computerized MCAT exam, you can acquaint yourself with the format and functionality through the tutorial at the beginning of the practice tests.

More About Official MCAT Practice Tests

Official MCAT Practice Tests consist of items that were developed exclusively for the MCAT exam and are currently available for purchase from the AAMC (Practice Test 3 is free of charge). Using the raw-to-scaled conversion tables, you can estimate your likely MCAT exam score.

And More About the Exam Sections

Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences

The scientific competency that you will be expected to demonstrate involves fundamental principles and concepts in biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics that are presented in basic science courses offered at most undergraduate institutions. Consequently, because the depth of knowledge you will be expected to exhibit is limited, it is unlikely that you will improve your performance by enrolling in advanced science courses in preparation for the MCAT exam.

Verbal Reasoning

In this section, you will read a series of passages that will contain all the information you need to answer the accompanying question. Participation in a variety of courses in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences during your undergraduate studies will enhance your performance. Please be aware that you need not specialize in any of these areas, but you should become familiar with the types of critical thinking and reasoning skills used in these disciplines.

Writing Sample

The best preparation for the Writing Sample is coursework in expository writing or composition, which enables you to become acquainted with the components of a well-written, well-organized essay. You may also benefit from taking courses in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences that have strong writing requirements. In responding to the Writing Sample, you should be certain you address the given topic, respond to the specific writing tasks, and fully develop your ideas into a complete, unified essay.

Retaking the Exam

If you feel that your scores are low or do not accurately reflect your abilities, you may wish to take the MCAT exam again. (It may be beneficial to discuss your decision with your premedical advisor.)

The AAMC recommends retaking the MCAT exam only if:

- There exists an unusual discrepancy between your college grades and MCAT exam scores,
- Your coursework in areas covered on the test was inadequate,
- You misunderstood the directions or incorrectly recorded your answers,
- You had a serious illness at the time of the test, or
- A member of a medical school admission committee recommended that you retake.

How Can You Use the Scores If You Are Not Admitted to Medical School?

If you are not accepted to medical school, you may use the exam to help identify the academic areas in which you may need further study. You should remember, however, that the MCAT exam is only one of the criteria medical schools consider, so you should identify all areas in which you may need to improve if you intend to reapply to a medical school.

How are Multiple Scores Used?

According to a survey of medical school admission officers, schools use multiple sets of scores in several ways:

- Some schools weigh all sets of scores equally and note improvements,
- Others consider only the most recent set of scores,
- Still others take an average of all sets of scores, or
- Finally, some schools use only the highest set of scores or the highest individual section scores.

Of the four methods used by medical schools, the first (using all sets of scores equally and noting improvements) is the most common. You may wish to contact an institution's admission office directly for information about its procedures.

Appendix C: How Medical Schools Use MCAT Scores

A survey of medical school admission officers showed that the MCAT exam serves three main functions:

1. Identification of applicants who are likely to succeed in medical school and those likely to experience academic difficulty,
2. Assessment of applicants' specific strengths and weaknesses, and
3. Supplementation to applicants' transcripts and letters of evaluation.

Still, the MCAT exam is just one of a set of criteria that schools use to compare qualifications of applicants, and the emphasis that committees place on MCAT scores (as well as the range of acceptable scores) varies from school to school. In general, MCAT scores are considered in combination with a number of other factors, including:

- undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate grade-point averages,
- breadth and difficulty of undergraduate coursework,
- letters of evaluation from undergraduate advisors or others,
- personal comments on application forms,
- involvement in extracurricular activities such as student governance and community service,
- involvement in and quality of health-related work and research,
- participation in other activities demonstrating motivation, responsibility, maturity, integrity, resourcefulness, tolerance, perseverance, dedication to service, citizenship, or other relevant noncognitive characteristics,
- compatibility between the candidate's characteristics and professional goals and the institutional mission,
- knowledge of health care issues and commitment to health care,
- medical school interview results, and
- state or county of legal residence.