Q&A Transcript for MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} Q-UPP Webinar

Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2013

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Q: Will every applicant for admission in 2016 have to take the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam or will the older version be accepted for some transitional period?

A: We will continue to report current exam scores through the 2018 application cycle. We suggest you consult the Medical School Admissions Requirements, which some of you may know as MSAR. They will continue to publish the latest and oldest accepted scores by school and will collate them into a report on the MSAR Advisor’s web site.

However, any MCAT scores for tests taken from 1991 to the present can be accessed through the THx system. If a score prior to 1991 is needed, you can submit a Paper Score Report Request to the MCAT office.

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Q: Where did the input come from to include behavioral sciences on MCAT\textsuperscript{2015}?

A: In standardized testing, periodic reviews are considered a best practice, especially in fields with a rapidly-changing knowledge base like medicine. As the standardized test required by the majority of medical schools in the United States and Canada, the MCAT exam provides admissions committees with important information about their applicants’ readiness for success. Therefore, periodic updates help ensure that the exam is keeping pace with changes in the study and practice of medicine, such as new and innovative treatments, health care system reforms, and the challenges that come with serving an increasingly diverse population.

The MR5 advisory committee was appointed by the AAMC in fall 2008 and tasked with reviewing the MCAT exam and recommending changes likely to increase the exam’s value to medical school admissions committees and examinees. The 21 committee members include: medical school deans; admissions, educational affairs, student affairs, and diversity officers; basic and clinical sciences faculty; pre-health advisors and other baccalaureate faculty; a medical student; and a resident.

The MR5 committee solicited input from several blue-ribbon and advisory committees and groups including the AAMC-HHMI Scientific Foundations for Future Physicians (SFFP) Committee, the AAMC Behavioral and Social Sciences Foundations for Future Physicians (BSSFFP) Committee, the Holistic Review Project Advisory Committee, the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, the Canadian Council on Medical Education, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, and other groups.

The MR5 committee received over 2,700 completed surveys from baccalaureate and medical school faculty, administrators, residents, and medical students about curricula, medical school admissions, and the current and future tests.
The MR5 committee held more than 90 outreach events to solicit input. It published brochures, project newsletters, and survey reports, and posted videos on the MR5 website. More than 4,000 stakeholders received a regular e-newsletter.

After a rigorous review process, and based on the recommendations the committee put forth in 2011, the AAMC Board of Directors approved substantial changes to the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT®). These changes will be effective for the Spring 2015 exam administration. The new exam is designed to focus on the concepts and skills that future physicians will need in a rapidly changing health care system where medical knowledge continues to evolve at an increasingly rapid pace.

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**Q: What practice tests & questions will be available to students and when?**

**A:** We are currently developing the practice and preparation materials. The projected availability dates can be found in each issue of Q-UPP, in the right column. As of now, we plan to publish *The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam, Fourth Edition (2015 Exam)* in January of 2014. A sample test is scheduled for Fall 2014. We are also working on other practice items.

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**Q: Will current versions of PS and BS practice tests be suitable practice for corresponding sections of MCAT<sup>2015</sup> exam?**

**A:** While there is overlap in content, these tests don’t represent the new exam. However, we are looking at the possibility of repurposing portions of the existing practice tests. The development work continues, and we plan to publish practice materials to make sure these areas are adequately addressed.

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**Q: Would it be possible for audience to receive the slide after the session?**

**A:** The recording and slides will be available on the web.

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**Q: When can we get a sample of the full Psych/Soc test. Do you think it will be available by November 2013?**

**A:** The full sample test that will be available in the Fall of 2014 will be the first time we release full content from the entire exam. It will include a full sample section of the Psychology and Sociology content. There are currently items available from this section of the exam in *The Preview Guide for the MCAT2015 Exam (Second Edition)*. There will also be sample items in *The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam, Fourth Edition (2015 exam)* that will publish in January 2014.

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**Q: Are there any classes besides Psyc 101 and Soc 101 that would be beneficial for the new section?**

**A:** One of the challenges we have is that we are not familiar with the curriculum on the various campuses and they really are different. We are not able to say across the board what courses at the different campuses would be appropriate preparation for the MCAT exam. We created the *Course-Mapping Tool*, a downloadable excel spreadsheet
that outlines all the content in that section of the exam and allows you to work with your faculty to identify which
content from the courses on your campus map back best to the content on the MCAT exam. In the development of the
exam, consideration was given to what is typically taught in these courses and that was used as our guide, but we can’t
generalize across all campuses how that works.

Q: Is it correct that the Writing sample is currently eliminated to make room for trial questions and that it will be
eliminated from the 2015 MCAT and future MCAT’s?

A: Yes, the Writing Sample has been eliminated to make room for the Trial Section questions. Yes, the Writing Sample
will be eliminated from future MCAT exams.

Q: Do you have any information yet on the scoring scale for the new MCAT and/or how new scores will compare to
the old ones?

A: The new score scales will be available in Fall 2014. The concordance tables for new exam scores compared to old
exam scores will be available in Summer 2015.

Q: Where can we find all the weblinks in the powerpoints? Like the mededportal and aacu ones? I

A: MCAT Resources (including previous webinars): www.aamc.org/mcat2015/admins
About the Trial Section: www.aamc.org/mcat/volunteer
Fall 2012 Issue of Peer Review: www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-fa12/index.cfm
Khan Academy Competition: www.khanacademy.org/about/med-competition
Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative: www.mededportal.org/icollaborative/pre-health
May issue of Academic Medicine: journals.lww.com/academicmedicine

Q&A Transcript for MCAT2015 Q-UPP Webinar
Date: Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Q: Is there a general sense of how long the current MCAT exam scores "count" or "last"?

A: Each medical school has its own policy about the oldest MCAT scores it will accept. About 40% of medical schools
accept scores that are two or fewer years old; another 40% accept scores that are up to three years old. A smaller
percentage of medical schools accept scores that are four or more years old. To find out the requirements for individual
medical schools, consult the Medical School Admissions Requirements® (MSAR®) guide.
We will continue to report current exam scores through the 2018 application cycle. However, any MCAT scores for tests taken from 1991 to the present can be accessed through the THx system. If a score prior to 1991 is needed, you can submit a Paper Score Report Request to the MCAT office.

Q: What concerns are most common among medical school admissions officers about the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam?

A: Medical school admissions officers indicate that the new score scales and the concordance tables for current exam vs. the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam are the two issues they are most interested in receiving updates about. We plan to announce the new score scales in Fall 2014 and plan to have concordance tables for current and new MCAT exam scores in late Summer 2015.

They have also asked about access to MCAT scores, as we discussed in the previous question.

Q: Should students take Physiology in their junior year, before taking the MCAT exam in the spring?

A: The content tested on the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam does not assume knowledge at the level taught in college Physiology courses.

Q: Will students need two full semesters of organic chemistry?

A: Organic Chemistry topics that are on the exam may be taught in either first or second semester Organic Chemistry, depending on the school. Curricula at all schools vary. We encourage students to consult the content lists in the Preview Guide, the course-mapping tool, and with their advisor to determine the best program of study at their school to prepare for the exam.

All organic chemistry topics that are tested are relevant to biological systems.

Q: How can students prepare for the social and behavioral sciences section of the new exam?

A: The content on this section covers what is typically taught in introductory sociology, introductory psychology, and introductory biology courses. We are working on the new project – the textbook resource and we also suggest that you look at the content lists in the Preview Guide.
Q: Will there be FAQs posted – I see questions on the screen, but the answers are spoken. Will there be a transcript of questions and answers.

A: Yes, in addition to the recording where you can hear the question and the answer, a transcript will be available.

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Q: video or just audio?

A: Both the video and audio will be available in the recording.

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Q: Who can we contact with regard to specific content questions, like organic chemistry?

A: At this point we don’t have more specific detail on the content, other than the content lists in the Preview Guide and the Course-Mapping Tool, but you can contact Becky Rice via mcat2015@aamc.org with a specific content question.

We also have webinars online that go over each section of the new exam:
MCAT2015: The Basics
MCAT2015: Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
MCAT2015: Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
MCAT2015: Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems

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Q: Will the cost of the exam change?

A: The cost of the new exam has not yet been determined. There may be small changes to the cost of the exam, but we haven’t determined what that will be at this time.

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Q: What can you tell us about the Khan Academy resources?

A: You can get familiar with the Khan Academy site to see the kind of resources they have available at www.khanacademy.org. They do have some content on their site now that relates to the current MCAT exam. Their presentation style, involves talking through content via short videos, writing examples on what looks like a chalkboard. The videos range from 5 to 12 minutes. They tend to include straight, didactic questions. The content for the new MCAT exam will be developed through the Khan Academy competition. Submissions are due June 14, 2013. At that point, students who win the contest will go to the Khan Academy for training on how to develop video presentations in the Khan Academy style. We anticipate that the content for the new MCAT exam will be a lot like the current Khan Academy style.
Q: Can you please repeat the response to the Physiology question - the sound was garbled and I didn't hear that response.

A: The question was should students take Physiology in their junior year before taking the MCAT exam in the Spring? The answer to that is that the content tested on the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam does not assume knowledge at the level taught in college Physiology course.

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Q: So we have to wait until fall 2014 to find out the total points available on the new exam?

A: Yes, the new score scales will be made available in the Fall of 2014.

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Q: Since the test is getting longer, I understand you are no longer offering double test days. Any plans to offer more testing dates? Will the test be offered later in the day to accommodate travelers?

A: At this time, we do not have the schedule for the new exam testing dates. Once we do have that information, we will post it on our website. The 2015 testing calendar will be made available in the Fall of 2014.

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Q: Should we recommend that our students take an intro statistics course?

A: We would suggest looking at the Preview Guide which does go over the types of concepts that are included in the exam. The Scientific Inquiry & Reasoning Skills (possibly SIRS 3, but please check with the Preview Guide) deals with quantitative reasoning and will explain in detail the types of data they will be working with and the problems they will be asked to solve. A Statistics course is not required. It is assumed that students can pick up some statistics in another course. As long as someone has a basic understanding of statistical concepts, they should be able to answer questions on the MCAT exam. We suggest comparing curriculum/course offerings on your campus with the information in the Preview Guide to make that determination.

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Q: Will test scores be available sooner without the Writing Section?

A: The current test scores are available in the same time frame: 30-35 days after the exam administration date.

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Q: Will there be more dates? Will there be dates in months when the current MCAT was not usually offered?

A: At this time, we do not have the schedule for the new exam testing dates. The schedule for the new exam testing dates will be available in the Fall of 2014, similar to prior years.
Q: So how does a student know what to focus on or prepare for if the practice exams and if the test isn't ready as of yet? Secondly, did you say college physics won’t be on the 2015 MCAT?

A: We suggest students review the Preview Guide which outlines the content and gives students an idea of what they should be looking at in preparing for the exam. The Preview Guide also includes sample items. Students can begin to get familiar with the items by using the Preview Guide. The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam, Fourth Edition (2015 exam) which comes out in January 2014 will also have sample items. We are also looking at other resources we can prepare to help students get ready for the new exam.

With regard to Physics, we were actually talking about Physiology and we just wanted to clarify that the content tested on the MCAT2015 exam does not assume knowledge at the level taught in college Physiology courses.

Q: When will be the last time the old MCAT will be administered?

A: The final administration of the current MCAT exam will be in January of 2015. The new exam will begin in the Spring of 2015, but we do not have dates as of yet.

Q: Is there a timeline for the logistics of the exam? In other words, what preparations are being made to take care of test takers for an 8 hour day (food during the lunch break, for example), or security measures for those who need extra time?

A: Our Test Administration group is working on these very issues. We hope to have information available later this year, or early next year about some of the considerations we need to address with regard to the length of the test day and the time the test starts.

Q: will the powerpoint be sent to attendees via email or only available on your web site?

A: The PowerPoints will be made available on the website.

Q: What is the best resource for information on health care and health disparities?

A: If the question is asking specifically about the section of the exam on Psychological/Sociological/Biological foundations of behavior and those are some of the topics addressed in that section of the exam, that is why we are taking on the textbook project so that we can provide to you some resources and textbooks that teach this material. The Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative is another place where we are hoping to provide guidance to undergraduate schools about including new content into existing courses.
Q: Is Kaplan working on test prep materials for the new exam?

A: We believe all commercial test preparation companies are working on materials, although we don’t know what those will be.

Q: How much biochemistry content will be on the new MCAT test compared to the existing test?

A: Biochemistry is a new addition to the MCAT exam. Those topics are outlined in the Preview Guide so you can see what they are. If you are familiar with the Course Mapping Tool, this tool will allow you to sort the topics and may be easier to see them this way than it would be to go through the Preview Guide page by page.

Q: Will there still be 28 offerings of the exam per application cycle available?

A: We do not have the schedule for the new exam just yet. We will know the schedule for the new exam in the Fall of 2014. Once the schedule is available, we will share it with everyone.

Q: There has been some difficulty for applicants to get their preferred date and location at testing sites in the past. Has this capacity issue been resolved, especially as more applicants take the MCAT each year.

A: Our Test Administration team is thoroughly reviewing our seat availability plans to ensure that we have seats available where and when we need them. We will continue to work with our vendor, Prometric, and provide as much information about those plans as soon as they are available.

Q: Since the exam will be longer, when will students get their scores? Do students still have the options of reporting or not reporting their scores to advisors?

A: The timeframe has not yet been determined. The current timeframe is 30-35 days from the day of the test administration. Yes, students will still have the option of reporting or not reporting their scores to advisors.

Q: Would you again give the URL’s for the sites where we can find the older webinars and the address for the iMedEd Portal, etc.

About the Trial Section: [www.aamc.org/mcat/volunteer](http://www.aamc.org/mcat/volunteer)
Fall 2012 Issue of Peer Review: [www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-fa12/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-fa12/index.cfm)
Khan Academy Competition: [www.khanacademy.org/about/med-competition](http://www.khanacademy.org/about/med-competition)
Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative: [www.medportal.org/icollaborative/pre-health](http://www.medportal.org/icollaborative/pre-health)
May issue of Academic Medicine: [journals.lww.com/academicmedicine](http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine)
Q: It's stated that first semester Biochem will be sufficient for the new MCAT, but will the topics or content areas be clearly stated at some point?

A: The Preview Guide to the MCAT2015 (Second Edition) is where we have identified all the topics that will be covered on the exam. There may be some minor updates to the sociology and psychology related content within the Foundations of Behavior Section. In the Preview Guide, not only does it list the Foundational Concepts and content categories, but it has bulleted lists of topics that are covered on the exam.

Q: Are you hearing from the prehealth advisors if their universities are ready for the increase in demand for psychology and sociology intro courses?

A: We have not heard that from the advisors. What we have been hearing the most is how can we best help students prepare. That is why we created the Course-Mapping Tool, and also why we are working on the Sociology and Psychology textbook project.

Q: will the new MCAT change the way admission officers choose students? Will it becoming more challenging for them since this is a new test?

A: Each university has their own set of admissions criteria that they evaluate and re-evaluate on a recurring basis. The MCAT exam scores are just one thing they look at. AAMC has been working with many medical schools on the holistic admissions process and looking at how the various metrics factor into selection. We will be working closely with medical schools to help them understand the new exam scores so that they can use them effectively in the admissions process.

Q: Are these resources, webinar recordings, questions and answers available to students as well as advisors?

A: Yes, the content will be available on the MCAT site.

Q: You currently offer a bulk discounts to us on practice exams, will this continue with the new 2015 practice tests?

A: Absolutely. We plan to maintain the same structure in order to make low-cost materials are available to everyone.
Q: Is the textbook mapping project being done only for the new section of the MCAT, or will all sections of the new MCAT have textbook mapping done?

A: At present we are looking at this project for the just Psychology and Sociology textbooks. Once we get through this first phase, we may take a look at other areas to see if there are additional resources we can provide.

Q: How are you preparing for the larger than normal number of test takers during the last administration of the old MCAT which will take place in January 2015?

A: Our Test Administration team is reviewing our seat availability plans to ensure that we have seats available where and when we need them leading up to the new exam. The 2014 and January 2015 testing calendar will be available in the Fall of 2013.

Q: How long will the test score for the current MCAT last?

A: We will continue to report current exam scores through the 2018 application cycle. We suggest you consult the Medical School Admissions Requirements, which some of you may know as MSAR. They will continue to publish the latest and oldest accepted scores by school and will collate them into a report on the MSAR Advisor’s web site.

We will continue to report current exam scores through the 2018 application cycle. However, any MCAT scores for tests taken from 1991 to the present can be accessed through the THx system. If a score prior to 1991 is needed, you can submit a Paper Score Report Request to the MCAT office.

Q: Are there plans to expand the opportunities to take the exam in foreign countries?

A: Our Test Administration team is reviewing our seat availability plans to ensure that we have seats available where and when we need them. We will continue to work with our vendor, Prometric, and provide as much information about those plans as soon as we are able.

We currently offer the exam in foreign countries on test day. If you have a question about a particular country, please e-mail mcat@aamc.org.

Q: Will there be other MCAT related webinars this summer?

A: Yes. We will be sending out the next edition of the Q-UPP eNewsletter in June. Once people have had some time to take a look at that, we will conduct another webinar in July. We will update the recent activities and provide a preview of what is coming up this Fall.
Q: Where do we find the Preview Guide?

A: You can find the Preview Guide online in a downloadable PDF format at www.aamc.org/mcat2015/admins

Q: When will the results of the textbook project for social and behavioral sciences be posted?

A: Our goal is to post that online in early June. Right now, we’ve had three publishers respond to our requests and we reminders out to those who have not yet responded. We will also update the document as additional publishers provide us with the information. The document will be posted on the MCAT website, as well as the Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative.

Q: What about MCAT validity for osteopathic schools? The MSAR will only provide information on how long MCAT scores are valid for allopathic medical schools.

A: The MSAR provides information appropriate to MD-granting institutions. If information about osteopathic schools is required, we suggest visiting the American Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine website page focusing on applicants and matriculants: http://www.aacom.org/data/applicantsmatriculants/Pages/default.aspx

Q: January 2015 is the last date for the current exam. If those who have taken the current exam want to retake it after January 2015, do they have to take the new MCAT or will they get another chance to take the old MCAT exam?

A: If an examinee decides to take the exam after January 2015, they will have to take the new exam.

Q: Thank you so much for all that you do but especially for these webinars!!!! Do you have an idea of what the new MCAT score will look like? Still subscores with a 15 max? Something different?

A: We do not have the score scales for the new MCAT exam yet. We expect to make the score scales available in the Fall of 2014.