Q&A Transcript for MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} Q-UPP Webinar  
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Q: Will the Fee Assistance Program be available for the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam?

A: Yes, we will continue to offer the Fee Assistance Program with benefits for the MCAT exam. These benefits will include reduced registration fees for the exam and free test prep materials.

Q: When will you publish the new grading/score scale for the new exam?

A: We plan to announce the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} score scale at the AAMC Group on Diversity and Inclusion (GDI)/Group on Student Affairs (GSA), and Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) National Meeting in late-April in San Diego. We will also make the information along with users guides and videos mentioned earlier available on our website at that time.

This information will also be presented at the NAAHP Meeting in San Francisco this June.

Q: When will the Official Guide for the new exam be available?

A: The Official Guide to the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} exam is in progress and planned for release this Spring in late-April or May. It will be a detailed guidebook just like the current one. It will include sample questions, a description of the test content and guidance on the logistics such as registration and test day procedures. We are developing an online component so students have the option to answer the same practice questions that appear in the book in an online format. We are looking forward to making this available a year before the new exam.

Q: When will the schedule for the MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} testing dates be available?

A: We plan to announce the schedule for MCAT\textsuperscript{2015} testing dates this fall.

Q: When will practice tests be available for the new exam?

A: The first full length practice test will be available in the Fall of 2014. We will have a second one available in the fall of 2015.

Q: Will the scores from the current version of the MCAT exam be accepted for some transitional period?

A: We will continue to report current exam scores through the 2019 AMCAS application cycle. We suggest you consult the Medical School Admissions Requirements, also known as MSAR, as each medical school determines how long they will accept scores. The MSAR will continue to publish the latest and oldest accepted scores by school.
Q: How do medical schools exactly “participate” in validity studies? Do medical students volunteer to take the test?

A: The participation with medical schools in the validity studies is really a partnership with the medical schools and AAMC. There are 11 schools in the Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundation of Behavior section study, including one Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and a number of schools with a diverse student population. A medical school that has committed to this partnership is responsible for recruiting students who will be a part of this study. For the study about the Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior section, students who volunteer to participate, agree to take this new section of the MCAT exam (prototype version) and they also agree to allow the medical school to study their grades as they go through the first, second, third and so on, years of medical school. They agreed to be followed through all four years of medical school. And response so far has been great. We have almost 2,000 medical students who have taken this prototype exam and volunteered to participate.

The second study is a little simpler in that we will be relying on MCAT scores from medical students who volunteer to participate. This study includes 17 schools, two of which are HBCUs, as well as a number of schools with diverse student populations. The participants in this study won’t have to take a special prototype test. For the 2015 entering class, it will be students who have taken the current exam, and then starting with the 2016 entering class, a combination of them will have taken the current exam or the new exam.

Q: I have seen on the listservs, complaints about accuracy of information in Khan Academy resources. Have the tutorials been reviewed by experts in the relevant fields?

A: The Khan Academy’s MCAT2015 collection has been posted in the Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative. Just like all of the videos in the Pre-health Collection, these Khan Academy videos have been reviewed by undergraduate faculty reviewers. It’s not a journal-style peer review process, such as is done for a research article, but they all are reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness for teaching pre-health competencies. That feedback is shared with the Khan Academy and none of the videos are posted until the reviewers are comfortable with that material.

In addition, the Khan Academy has a way for people to comment on the videos. If you are on the Khan Academy website, with every video there is a comment button. Anyone who has a challenge or question about any of the videos can comment directly to the Khan Academy. They do respond to those comments. One of the things to keep in mind is that this is a quick production process. The Khan Academy gets things up and if anything is questioned they quickly respond to that as well. Overall, you’re going to see great quality in those videos.

Q: The trial section will not be included on the new dates offered in October and November?

A: That’s correct; the last time the Trial Section is going to be part of the current exam will be with the September 2014 administration dates.

Q: In addition to the recently added dates, is there discussion about adding even more additional dates in January 2015 for the current exam before we go live in spring for MCAT2015?

A: We have added two additional dates in January 2015 already, in addition to the two that were on the schedule previously. In fact, there will be five opportunities for examinees to take the current version of the MCAT in January of 2015. There have also been three dates added to the 2014 schedule, two in October and one in November. The complete schedule for 2014 and January 2015 dates is online.
Q: Have you received any input from medical schools about how flexible they will be in interpreting and weighing the MCAT<sup>2015</sup> scores?

A: One of the things we are doing is reaching out to the medical schools now with our research studies. We are also going to be talking a lot with them at the AAMC Group on Diversity and Inclusion (GDI)/Group on Student Affairs (GSA), and Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) National Meeting in April. We actually have a couple of sessions on the calendar to present and talk about the new exam and the score scales. We are still doing a lot of gathering feedback right now, and then we plan to share that with the constituents who have an interest in how the schools are going to be looking at these scores in the future. We'll share that information via the Q-UPP eNewsletter, and if necessary in a special webinar.

The decision to report out scores from the current exam through the 2019 AMCAS application cycle was made in conjunction with the medical schools. Medical schools told us how long they would like to receive current exam scores, which is not to say that every medical school will accept current exam scores through their 2019 entering class, but that decision was made with the medical schools.

Another thing that might be helpful to know is that after we meet with the medical schools in April, we’ll be working to get information into the MSAR about the window within which they will continue to accept current MCAT scores and anything else they would like to say about the way they plan to use the current and new exam scores.

Q: Question on the composition of the test takers -- were they primarily "majority" students? Has the exam been reviewed for potential bias?

A: There are a couple of pieces of information we’d like to share with regard to this. First, schools participating in our studies include Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) and a number of schools with a diverse student population. The participants -- medical students who volunteered for the Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior validity study were representative of both participating schools and also the medical school classes nationwide. So they really represented examinees in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and other demographics and background characteristics.

As far as the exam being reviewed for potential bias, we have looked at this from a number of potential fronts. We have efforts that we follow in terms of exam development, but we’ve also done special studies to really look at it from both a quantitative perspective, looking at how different examinees perform on the new content. We’re also looking at qualitative research, in which we conduct focus groups and gather other information to really understand how medical students and undergraduate students are reacting to the new content.

Q: Why is it necessary to change the score scale?

A: The reason that we are changing the score scale is because the test on the new exam will be measuring different knowledge and skill areas than what the current exam does. We want to make sure that those who are involved in admissions decisions are not making comparisons that are not really supported by a lack of similarity between those two different sets of scores.
Q: Can you comment on the Kaplan MCAT 2015 Practice Test and how helpful it will be to students, given that it was released far in advance of the MCAT 2015?

A: As the test developers, we have a long-standing practice of not commenting on outside resources created by others, and will continue that practice. As far as reviews go, the AAMC does support The Pre-health Collection within MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative. It offers a community of undergraduate faculty, students, tutors and others the opportunity to share comments about free, open-access resources to any who wish to share resources in that way.

Q: To be clear: does this mean that the new exam sections will not be scored on a scale of 15?

A: We will have the details of the scale report that we are still working on at the AAMC Group on Diversity and Inclusion (GDI)/Group on Student Affairs (GSA), and Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) National Meeting in April. However, it is safe to say that the new scale will not be reported on a scale of 1-15 per section because we do want to have a distinct and separate from what the current scales are, which is 1-15 per section.

We will be sharing the information at the AAMC Group on Diversity and Inclusion (GDI)/Group on Student Affairs (GSA), and Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) National Meeting in April, but we will also be posting that information to our website at the same time.

Q: Might we assume that medical schools will be viewing the 2014 and 2015 scores by percentile rather than total score?

A: Until the medical schools have a chance to look at the new score scales and the information that will come with the new scales – information that will include examples of test questions that examinees at different points of the score scale will get correct and incorrect – we don’t know how medical schools will compare applicants who submit 2014 scores to applicants with scores from the new exam.