

News Release



Contact: Brooke Bergen
202-828-0419
bbergen@aamc.org

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
2450 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1127
T 202 828 0400 **F** 202 828 1125
www.aamc.org

For Immediate Release

Countdown to MCAT2015: AAMC Announces New Resources and Score Scale *New Medical College Admission Test Designed to Support Holistic Review of Applicants*

Washington, D.C., April 30, 2014—With a year to go before the launch of the new Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT®), the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) today released new resources to help students and the medical school admissions community prepare for the exam. The association also announced the new [score scale](#).

Beginning April 2015, students will take a new MCAT exam that targets concepts recently rated by medical school faculty as important to the success of entering students. The new exam is part of a broader effort by the AAMC and the nation's medical schools to improve the medical school admissions process and support the holistic review of applicants, which balances experiences, attributes, and academic metrics when considering individuals as medical students and future physicians.

“For more than 80 years, the MCAT exam has been a valuable predictor of students’ academic success in medical school,” said AAMC President and CEO Darrell G. Kirch, M.D. “The new test will allow medical school admissions officers to more effectively select the students who will help meet their institution’s goals. This is a better test for tomorrow’s doctors.”

In the [revised exam](#), the focus will shift from testing what aspiring medical students know to testing how well they use what they know. Test takers will need to use their knowledge in the natural, behavioral, and social sciences to solve problems that call for scientific reasoning. The 2015 exam also will feature a new section that recognizes the critical roles that behavioral and sociocultural factors play in health and illness.

Because the 2015 exam will test new academic competencies, scores will be reported on a different scale than the current exam. Test takers will receive a score for each section, as well as a total score, along with improved score reports that provide more information to help examinees understand these scores and aid admissions officers when using them. Total scores will be centered at 500, with scores ranging from 472 to 528. Each section will be scored on a range of 118 to 132, with a midpoint of 125.

The new score scale emphasizes the center of the score range—rather than the top third—because students with scores at the center of the scale have historically performed well in medical school, typically graduating from medical school in four or five years and passing their licensing exams on the first try. The new scale is designed to draw attention to applicants who might otherwise be overlooked, and supports the holistic review of medical school applicants.

In addition, the new score reports will include percentiles so test takers and admissions committees can compare examinees to others who took the new exam. They also will include confidence intervals to serve as a reminder to score users not to over-interpret small differences between applicants' MCAT scores.

To develop the new score scale, the AAMC gathered data from multiple sources, including industry standards for score scale construction and reporting, as well as input from the association's MCAT review committee (MR5), Council of Deans, admissions and diversity affairs officers, pre-health advisors, and other key stakeholders. Principles to guide the scoring and reporting solutions—industry standards, fairness, and flexibility—also were established. The score scales were selected to draw attention to the center of the scale and avoid overlap with the current scales, percentages, and other commonly used scoring systems.

The final content outline for the new test is evidence-based and reflects input from more than 2,700 survey respondents and input from 90 outreach meetings and events, as well as expert panels in medical education convened to identify the most important elements to test. Seventeen medical schools will collect validity data on the new exam when they begin admitting applicants with 2015 scores in order to study the relationships between MCAT scores and students' performance in medical school and on licensing exams.

To help students and the [medical school admissions community](#) understand the new score scale and prepare for the 2015 exam, the AAMC is creating tools for and reaching out to admissions officers at meetings, webinars, and workshops over the next year to help them learn about the new score scale and decide how they will use it in their admissions processes. The AAMC also will work with pre-health advisors.

New resources also are now available on the AAMC's website to help students prepare for the 2015 exam:

- [What's on the MCAT2015 Exam?](#) is a free, interactive tool prepared by the test's developers to help students learn about the revised exam. Presented in both video and text format, it provides more detail about specific topics on which students will be tested, including the new section on psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior, and walks students through sample test questions with detailed answers and explanations.
- [The Official Guide to the MCAT® Exam \(MCAT2015\), Fourth Edition](#) is the first and only official comprehensive overview of the new exam. Published by the AAMC, it includes 120 practice questions, along with details of what students can expect on test day and information about the new score scale.

In addition, students may access the [Khan Academy MCAT Collection](#), a library of free tutorials that teach the academic competencies tested by the new exam. The collection was created by medical students and residents as part of a [collaboration](#) among the AAMC, Khan Academy, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and features hundreds of video tutorials and practice questions, receiving more than 30,000 views per day. Additional tutorials will be released this fall at the completion of a [competition](#) now underway with medical students, residents, and faculty.

“The 2015 exam focuses on the outcomes of learning by asking test takers to apply what they’ve learned,” said Kirch. “The new exam asks aspiring physicians to show that they can think and learn like scientists, and are prepared to learn about the human and social issues that play critical roles in health and illness. We are proud of the coming changes to the test that will make it an even better exam for tomorrow’s doctors.”

For more information, visit <http://www.aamc.org/mcat2015>.

#

The Association of American Medical Colleges is a not-for-profit association representing all 141 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and nearly 90 academic and scientific societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC represents 128,000 faculty members, 83,000 medical students, and 110,000 resident physicians. Additional information about the AAMC and U.S. medical schools and teaching hospitals is available at www.aamc.org/newsroom.