

MCAT PREPARATION: SOME TIPS

Dartmouth courses have prepared you well, but you will still need to do a thorough review.

- Dartmouth students surveyed average 10-12 weeks of concentrated, dedicated, daily study including time allotted for full-length practice exams
 - Choose time frame when you can follow a dedicated study plan and fully prepare.
 - You will combine your plan, enough time, and discipline to treating your daily preparation like you would commit time to a job.
 - Adjust other commitments accordingly.
- Peers who've already taken it are a great source of ideas for developing your preparation.
 - They will often freely share the structured plan that helped them succeed.
 - Ensure your own plan suits your style and needs.
 - Do you need a longer study plan? Are there certain areas that require extra review?
 - You can also check out [this document](#) to read advice and tips from alumni.
- Some study during an off-term, some also include a part-time internship or job during that time.
- Some study on an on-term, often with a 2 course, or lighter load.
- Adjust your timeline if, upon approaching your test day, you recognize you need further preparation. There is a cost to changing the test dates, so the sooner you recognize this the better.
- This is an exam to prepare to take once. While there are times when someone needs to retake the exam, it is different than the SAT exams.
 - All scores show, and it's a big investment of time and money.
 - Strong preparation on the front end allows most people to have a single MCAT.
- Use the AAMC/MCAT practice tests even if you use other resources as well.
- Use question banks and practice questions. The AAMC provides some as do many of the testing companies and you can often purchase just those—and sometimes on sale. Take full-length practice exams and at least several in real time so you are training in similar conditions as test day and building your stamina. Practice questions and exams are the best gauges for how you are doing.
- For CARS practice read articles from places like the Sunday NY Times, The Guardian, The Atlantic Monthly or other publications that have longer articles/essays. If reading+time is a factor, start timing yourself to get more accustomed. Ask what you perceive as key points.
- Check in with the pre-health advisors to gauge your goal score and where your practice scores are if you are unsure-- before taking the real exam-or to debrief after you receive a score.
- Only about 50% of test-takers surveyed took an exam prep course, about 50% did not.
 - If you are someone who needs structure and accountability, investing in a course can be useful.
 - Given the cost, keep in mind that with excellent preparation test-takers who don't take a course also do well on the MCAT when they develop and commit to a plan.
 - Courses sometimes have financial-aid services, but are still quite costly. If you anticipate a need for one, plan to save money.
- HPP website has an MCAT resource page [HERE](#).
 - For those not using a course, there are many companies to choose from.
 - We don't promote any particular resources but are glad to share what we hear from advisors around the country and your peers. There is more than what we list.
 - You can purchase practice question banks and practice tests from a variety of companies (see our website for some).
- You may even be able to borrow or buy at lower cost from someone who has already taken it.
- [AMCAS/MCAT Fee Assistant Program \(FAP\)](#) If you qualify, the AAMC MCAT prep materials are free, the cost of the test is reduced, and test date change fees are also waived.
 - To qualify, apply well in advance of signing up as once you have paid for an exam it is not retroactive.
 - If you qualify for the reduced MCAT fees you will automatically have also qualified for reduced AMCAS application fees and secondary application fees.