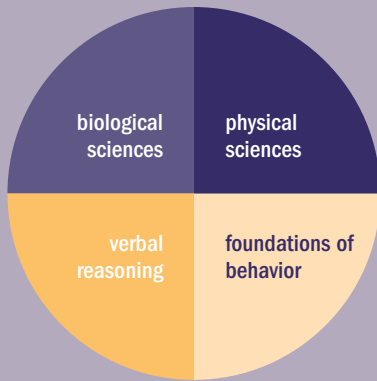


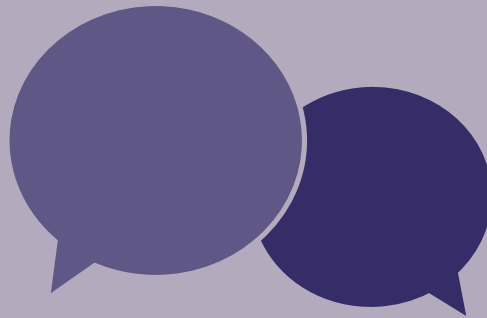
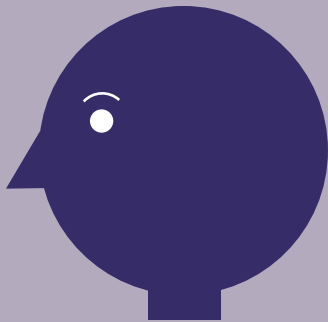
The MCAT 2015

A Briefing of Changes, the New Section, and Psychology's Response



A NEW VERSION OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST (MCAT) will be administered in 2015, and, *for the first time*, it will test students' knowledge and use of concepts from the behavioral sciences. MCAT 2015 will also test students' critical analysis and reasoning skills, replacing the writing sample that was required in the previous version of the examination. The new MCAT will consist of four sections, including the new section on psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior.

Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior

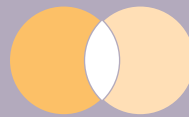


The new section will not only test students' knowledge and use of concepts in these disciplines but will also target concepts taught in introductory psychology and sociology courses.

It will require students to demonstrate these skills in the social and behavioral sciences:



scientific inquiry



reasoning



research methods



statistics

*This new section will measure the following specific five foundational concepts.**

6. Biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors influence the ways that individuals perceive, think about, and react to the world.

7. Biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors influence behavior and behavior change.

8. Psychological, sociocultural, and biological factors influence the way we think about ourselves and others, as well as how we interact with others.

9. Cultural and social differences influence well-being.

10. Social stratification and access to resources influence well-being.

*www.aamc.org/mcat2015exam

Why Is the MCAT Changing?

The revisions to the MCAT reflect the growing body of evidence that *behavioral and social factors* interact with *biologic factors* to *influence health*. These changes also reflect the knowledge and skills that today's physicians will need to understand and address the health needs of an increasingly diverse population of patients.

Barry Hong, PhD, and **Richard Lewis, PhD**, two psychologists, served on the 21-member advisory committee that recommended these new changes to MCAT. To learn more about the changes for MCAT 2015, read Dr. Hong's article at www.apa.org/ed/precollege/ptn/2012/08/mcat.aspx and visit www.aamc.org/mcat2015exam to peruse *What's on the MCAT 2015 Exam?*

How Psychology Educators Can Respond to MCAT 2015

The American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs encourages psychology educators to begin planning for the new MCAT 2015 by reviewing the MCAT's potential impact and engaging in self-study of their programs as suggested:

PREPARE

for an influx of pre-health (pre-medical) students in introductory psychology courses.

Reliable national figures on the percentage of pre-health students who now take the introductory course are not known, but estimated across universities as between 50 and 80%. Practically all pre-health students will be taking Introductory Psychology in the next few years.

Self-study questions:

Will our department need to add more sections of introductory psychology?

Should we offer sections of introductory psychology for pre-health majors only?

Should sections be taught by psychology faculty only or also in health sciences by non-psychology trained persons?

Will the content and learning outcomes of the introductory course match those needed for the behavioral science section of the new MCAT?

PLAN

for a smaller influx of those same pre-health students in the statistics and research methods courses.

Estimates put the percentage of pre-health students now completing psychological statistics at 20% and lower than that for research methods in psychology.

Self-study questions:

Will pre-health students take the statistics courses in psychology or in biology or another department?

Will our department need to add more sections of statistics to accommodate these students?

Will most pre-health students take only statistics or also a research methods course?

Should psychology professors create a one-semester combined statistics and research methods primer specifically for pre-health students?

EXAMINE

existing policies that impact preparation for the MCAT.

Some psychology departments restrict registration in their statistics courses to psychology majors; other departments strongly recommend taking Introduction to Psychology during the freshman year, which will typically be at least 3 years away from students taking the MCAT for the first time.

Self-study questions:

What is the optimal timing for the Introduction to Psychology course among pre-health students?

Can nonmajors take the Psychological Statistics course?

WORK

collaboratively with/on pre-health advisory committees.

This may mean more committee work, advising, and requests for letters of recommendation from pre-health students for admission to medical school.

Self-study questions:

Will our department need to provide more resources for faculty who take on added responsibilities related to work on this committee or advising additional students?

FOCUS

on core competencies and learning outcomes required by the new MCAT in behavioral sciences as well as critical analysis and reasoning skills.

Simply completing a course or two in psychology will not suffice; the MCAT 2015 will assess specific knowledge of:

- Psychology, sociology, and biology concepts
- One-semester introductory psychology and sociology course concepts
- Biology concepts that relate to mental processes and behavior
- Research methods and statistics concepts
- Scientific inquiry and reasoning, research methods, and statistics skills

Self-study questions: Who will provide training for teaching the introductory psychology course to pre-health students?

Are there training modules readily available?

COLLECT

data and garner resources.

Psychology educators can collect numbers on pre-health students at their respective institutions (e.g., number of pre-health students, number of medical school applicants, number of those who already took the introductory psychology course and the statistics course). Educators can also meet with the campus pre-med advisors and academic administrators to acquire and coordinate the resources to meet these coming challenges.

POPULATE

the psychological science collection within the AAMC's MedEdPortal.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and APA have formed a partnership that will provide medical students, faculty, and other health professionals with access to free online psychological science resources. As part of the collaboration, the APA members will be invited to submit content to create the first-ever psychological science collection within the AAMC's MedEdPortal, an expansive online repository of peer-reviewed instructional materials.

Contact Information

Questions and suggestions about APA's response to MCAT 2015 can be sent to Robin Hailstorks, PhD, at rhailstorks@apa.org.

For an Overview of this Section of the Exam

www.aamc.org/mcat2015psbfb