



MEDSCHOOLCOACH
helping you achieve your medical school dreams



SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING

FOR THE USMLE STEP 1 AND 2 CK

OVERVIEW

As a medical student, you are constantly striving to fulfill your dream of becoming a physician. The USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK exams are the first two exams in a three-step examination that is required for medical licensure in the United States. The USMLE exams test an aspiring physician's ability to understand basic pathophysiologic concepts, and to apply this knowledge towards treating patients in a safe and effective way.

Whether you are preparing for Step 1 or Step 2 CK, you have a long road ahead. Both of these exams cover a tremendous amount of material, which may feel a bit daunting. In addition to the challenge of preparing for these exams, your results will play a very important role in residency selection and may impact your ability to enter a certain specialty or match in a desirable geographical location.

Both of these exams take an entire day to complete. Step 1 is an eight-hour test that is divided into seven blocks of 40 questions, and you have

an hour to complete each block. This exam covers a wide range of material including, but not limited to, biochemistry, immunology, infectious diseases, pathology, physiology, pharmacology, and diseases of the major organ systems.

Although Step 1 typically receives the most attention, Step 2 CK has begun to play a larger role in the selection process, as matching into residencies has become more competitive. Step 2 CK is a nine-hour test divided into eight blocks of 40 questions, and you have an hour to complete each block. This exam tests your knowledge about the clinical sciences, including surgery, internal medicine, neurology, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics.

Both of these exams require several months of dedicated preparation, a strong work ethic, and perseverance. We understand that you might feel overwhelmed or intimidated, which is why we've assembled this guide to help you create a comprehensive study plan for these exams.

THINKING AHEAD

Don't fret too much - whether you realize it or not, you have been preparing for the USMLE exams throughout medical school! Your pre-clinical years have been preparing you for Step 1, and your core clinical clerkships and shelf exams have been preparing you for Step 2 CK. Excelling and working hard during these years will position you to do well on the USMLE exams.

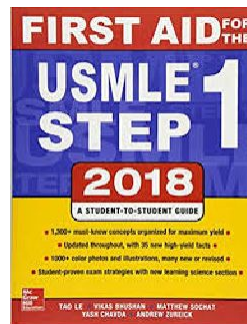
The best first step in preparing for these exams is to plan far ahead. Thinking about these exams 4 to 6 months before your scheduled exam date will ensure that you have enough time to identify appropriate resources, create a daily schedule that works for you, and cover all the material you will need to review prior to your exam.

SELECTING RESOURCES, LESS IS MORE!

A common misconception is that using more resources equates to a higher score on the exam. One pitfall of utilizing too many resources is that you tend to dabble in each resource rather than focusing on comprehensively learning all of the material in a handful of high-yield resources. It is important to select 2-3 high-quality resources

and focus all of your attention on the material within these. Your study schedule should include enough time to thoroughly and completely review all of your selected resources.

OVERVIEW BOOK



It is important to select a book to be your “overview book”. Although there are a few options for Step 1, the majority of people would agree that this book should be First Aid.

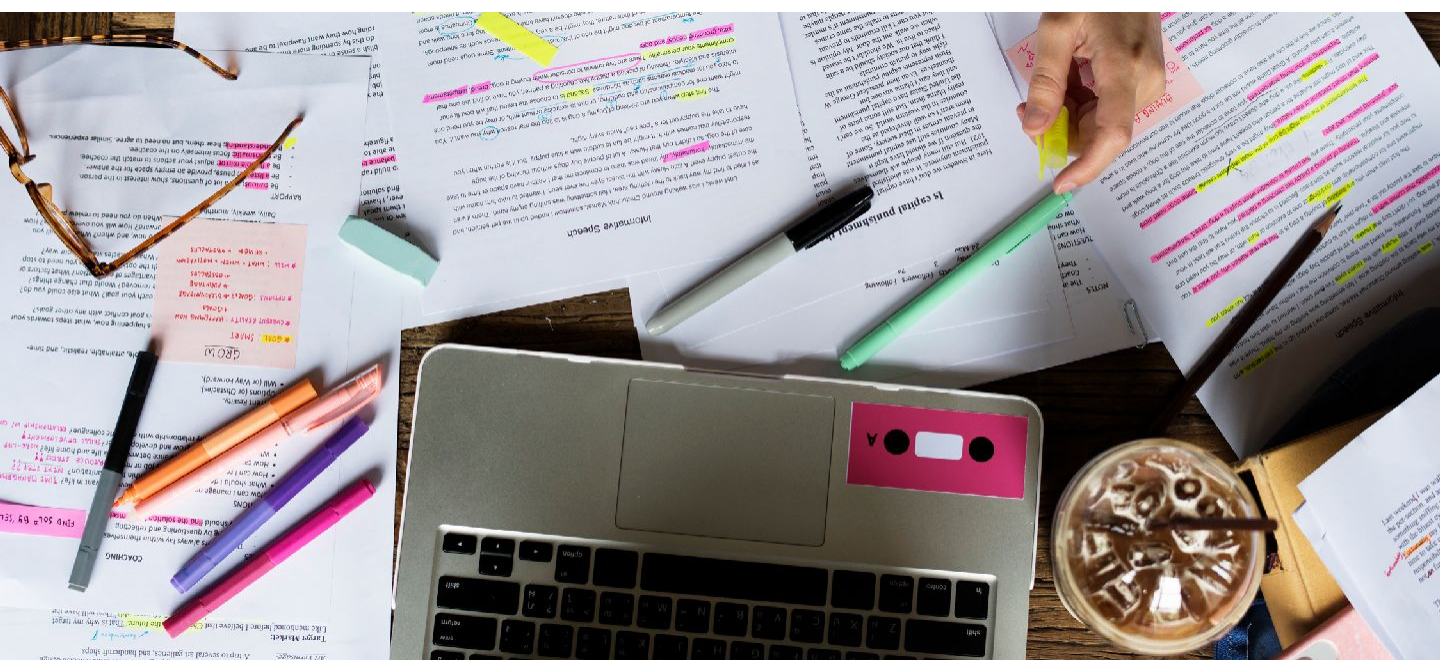
First Aid has compiled the highest yield facts believed to be tested by Step 1 and is written by students who have seen recent questions. First Aid is a huge book filled with content sprawled over 600+ pages. First Aid provides you with a long list of details and concepts that may be tested on the exam. However, the book itself is short on explanations of concepts, and requires the reader to utilize outside resources (lecture slides, a textbook, Wikipedia, etc...) for further explanation, if needed. Therefore, it should take you at least 30 minutes to learn/review a single page in First Aid! Make sure to plan accordingly and dedicate several months to thoroughly review First Aid. It is almost impossible to learn all the information in this book if you start reading it one or

two months before you take the test. When creating a study plan, remember that the content is too vast for you to be able to process it in just 4-5 weeks of free/dedicated study time. Plan to start reviewing First Aid and making flashcards/Anki decks/notes at least 2-3 months before your dedicated study time (see section below, The Small Details).

It is important not to underestimate any details presented in First Aid. Even the most minute detail can come up in the form of a question on the test. Even after reading the book multiple times, you may find details that you had missed before. It is imperative to read the

small italicized font (that you thought wasn't important), the captions on the images, and the labels of any diagrams. Although you might find some sections of First Aid less interesting or "easier", do NOT skip any of them! You should aim to have everything in First Aid memorized, to the best of your ability.

For Step 2 CK, there is less consensus regarding an overview book. However, Step Up to Medicine and Master the Boards are commonly used textbooks that provide an adequate overview of all of the material tested on the exam.

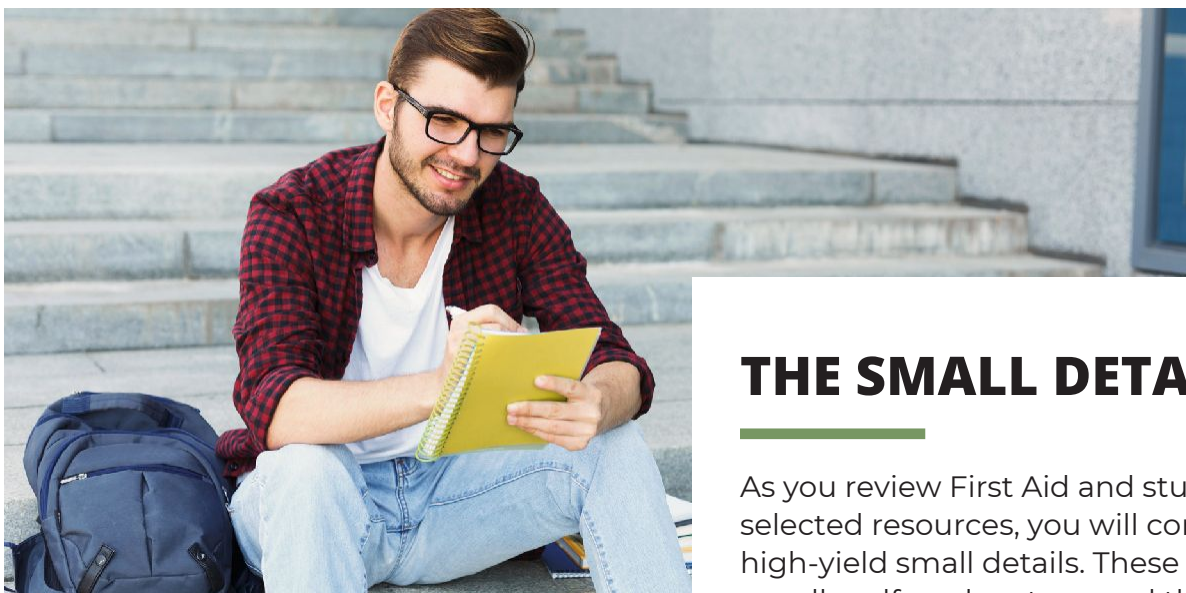


QUESTION BANKS

Since the USMLE exams are multiple choice exams, it is very important to practice applying your knowledge by utilizing question banks, or QBanks. Commonly used QBanks include USMLE Rx, UWorld, and Kaplan. Make sure that you choose a question bank that gives detailed explanations about why an answer is correct and the others incorrect.

Practice tests (UWorld, Kaplan, NBME) are another key strategy to assess your progress, identify weak subjects, provide additional

questions for learning, and simulate the test day. However, try not to stress about a low score on a practice test, especially if you are taking it early on. Similarly, do not let a good score prevent you from studying hard. Although these scores can help give you an idea of where you are currently performing, these scores may not always represent your true performance on exam day. A research study demonstrated that the number of questions finished directly correlated with students' Step performance, so make sure not to neglect any questions!



MICROBIOLOGY

Since microbiology is largely memorization, it is important to create a strategy to regularly revisit this material throughout your study period, in order to make sure that this knowledge stays fresh in your mind. Although this applies more to Step 1 than to Step 2 CK, there are still a handful of high-yield facts to know about microbiology for Step 2 CK (and learning it well for Step 1 will help you for Step 2 CK!)

An easy way to ensure regular review of this material is to utilize flow sheets, flash cards, or sketchy microbiology. It will be important to schedule ~1 hour of microbiology review daily.

PHARMACOLOGY

Similar to microbiology, pharmacology is largely memorization and will require daily review using flow sheets, flash cards, or sketchy pharmacology. It will be important to schedule ~1 hour of pharmacology review daily.

THE SMALL DETAILS

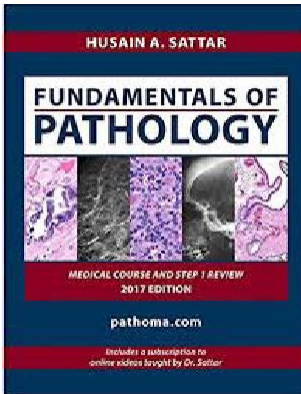
As you review First Aid and study all of your selected resources, you will come across many high-yield small details. These details are not usually self-explanatory, and they are often very challenging to memorize. However, you will see many of these details on your actual exam and learning them will be necessary in order to score high.

In order to ensure that you are able to memorize these details, it will be important to utilize a study strategy similar to your approach to microbiology and pharmacology. Creating a notebook, flowsheets, or flash cards (handwritten or Anki) containing all of these details is essential. It is also very important that YOU create these resources, whether they are organized in a notebook, flowsheets, or flash cards. The process of identifying important but challenging small details is itself a very valuable learning experience. Purchasing giant Anki decks full of details that someone else has identified is not ideal. The shortcut of purchasing pre-made decks shortchanges the value of creating your own resource of high-yield details. It is recommended that you create this resource during your first pass through First Aid 2-3 months prior to your dedicated study time, and spend at least 2-3 months reviewing and memorizing the material in this resource. This will typically take 2-3 hours of review daily and will be essential to ensure memorization and long-term retention.

INTERESTED IN RAISING YOUR USMLE SCORE BY 30 POINTS OR MORE?
FIND OUT HOW WITH MEDSCHOOLCOACH'S ONE-ON-ONE TUTORING

OTHER GREAT RESOURCES

For Step 1, Pathoma is a fantastic resource for learning pathology and histology. Pathoma is full of high-yield facts and concepts and it is important to approach memorizing Pathoma



the same way you would approach First Aid. It is a much shorter textbook and has corresponding videos. Students often find the videos to be more engaging than the book and offer a nice break from reading. Incorporate these details into your personalized resource, as described above.

There are many other resources for Step 1 including Doctors in Training and Boards and

Beyond. Although most of these resources typically rehash the same material as First Aid, students often find these two resources useful in providing additional videos to help understand challenging concepts.

For Step 2 CK, OnlineMedEd is a priceless resource. OnlineMedEd provides lessons on clinical sciences by offering notes, engaging videos, and question banks for all high-yield clinical subjects. This resource is largely recognized by students as being indispensable for Step 2 CK preparation. Plan to watch and take notes on all videos during your corresponding third year clerkship. You will use these notes to study for Step 2 CK during your dedicated study period.

CREATE A DAILY SCHEDULE



Creating a realistic and feasible daily schedule will be core to your success.

A daily schedule will help keep you on track and make sure that you are efficiently using your time throughout your study period. Students often find that having a daily schedule is a great way to relieve anxiety and frustration with time management. This daily schedule should be personalized to fit your needs.

Although everyone's schedule will look different, below is an example of what a schedule might look like:

6-7 AM: Wake up and have breakfast

7-10 AM: Review new material
10 AM-12 PM: Two blocks of Qbank

12-1 PM: Lunch and personal time

1-6 PM: Review blocks of Qbank and review material from Qbank questions

6-7 PM: Dinner

7-10 PM: Review small details, microbiology, and pharmacology

TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

It is important to schedule “personal time”. This personal time will be time spent doing things that you enjoy.

Although this would likely be different for each person, some common activities include: physical fitness, watching television and movies, cooking, hiking, playing video games, spending with friends or family, etc. It is also reasonable to take an entire day, or at least a half a

day, completely off every week.

Be sure to incorporate this time into your daily schedule! Investing time in your physical, mental, and emotional health will pay off in the long run. Studying for 12-16 hours every day for several months is incredibly challenging and you want to ensure that you are taking care of yourself and avoiding burnout!

USMLE Step 1

Date

Examinees from US/ Canadian Schools	2016		2017	
	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Number Tested	Percent Passing
MD Degree	21,122	94%	21,382	94%
1st Takers	20,122	96%	20,353	96%
Repeaters	1000	64%	1,029	67%
DO Degree	3,454	93%	3,835	95%
1st Takers	3,398	94%	3,786	95%
Repeaters	56	75%	49	76%
Total	24,576	94%	25,217	94%

Examinees from Non-US/ Canadian Schools	2016		2017	
	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Number Tested	Percent Passing
1st Takers	15,031	78%	14,9	78%
Repeaters	2,575	39%	2,303	41%
Total	17,606	72%	17,203	73%

Want to Guarantee a Higher Score, Learn from the USMLE Experts @ **MedSchoolCoach**

USMLE Step 2 CK Data

Examinees from US/ Canadian Schools	2015 - 2016		2016 - 2017	
	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Number Tested	Percent Passing
MD Degree	21,515	96%	21,071	95%
1st Takers	20,535	97%	20,14	96%
Repeaters	980	71%	931	66%
DO Degree	2,272	94%	2,581	94%
1st Takers	2,228	94%	2,547	95%
Repeaters	44	84%	34	68%
Total	23,787	95%	23,652	95%

Examinees from Non-US/ Canadian Schools	2015 - 2016		2016 - 2017	
	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Number Tested	Percent Passing
1st Takers	12,72	80%	11,949	81%
Repeaters	2,738	53%	2,342	50%
Total	15,44	75%	14,291	76%



Average USMLE Score for First Time Test Takers

Why **MedSchoolCoach** Tutoring?

+55 - Highest Score Increase
with MedSchoolCoach

+25-35 Average Score Increase
with MedSchoolCoach

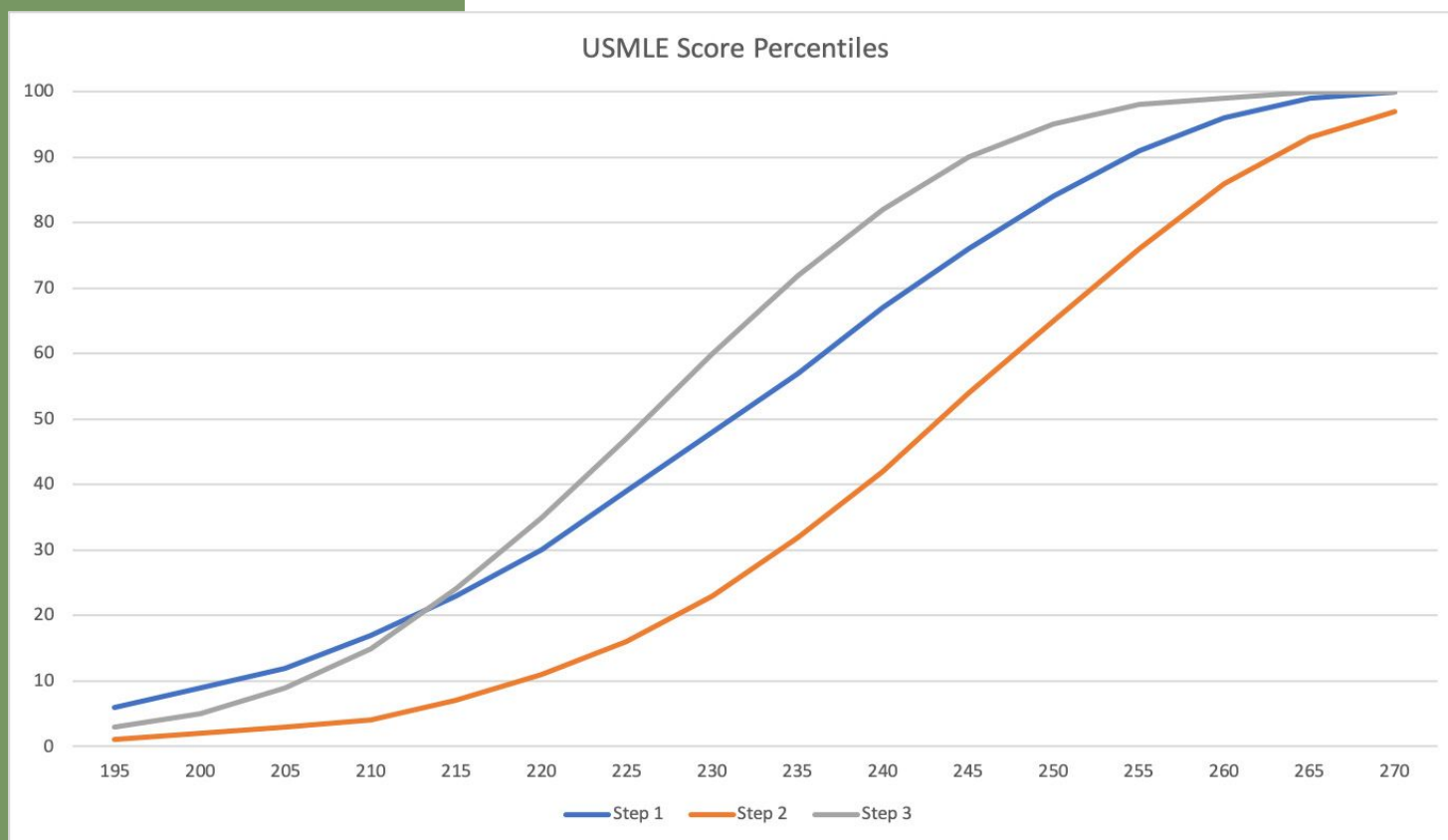
The Best Tutors: 260+ Scorers

LEARN MORE

Table 1. Means (SDs) First Takers from the US/Canadian medical schools

Step 1	
<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
2015	229 (20)
2016	228 (21)
2017	229 (20)
Step 2 Clinical Knowledge	
<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
2014-2015	240 (18)
2015-2016	242 (17)
2016-2017	242 (17)
Step 3	
<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
2015	225 (16)
2016	225 (15)
2017	226 (15)

USMLE Percentiles

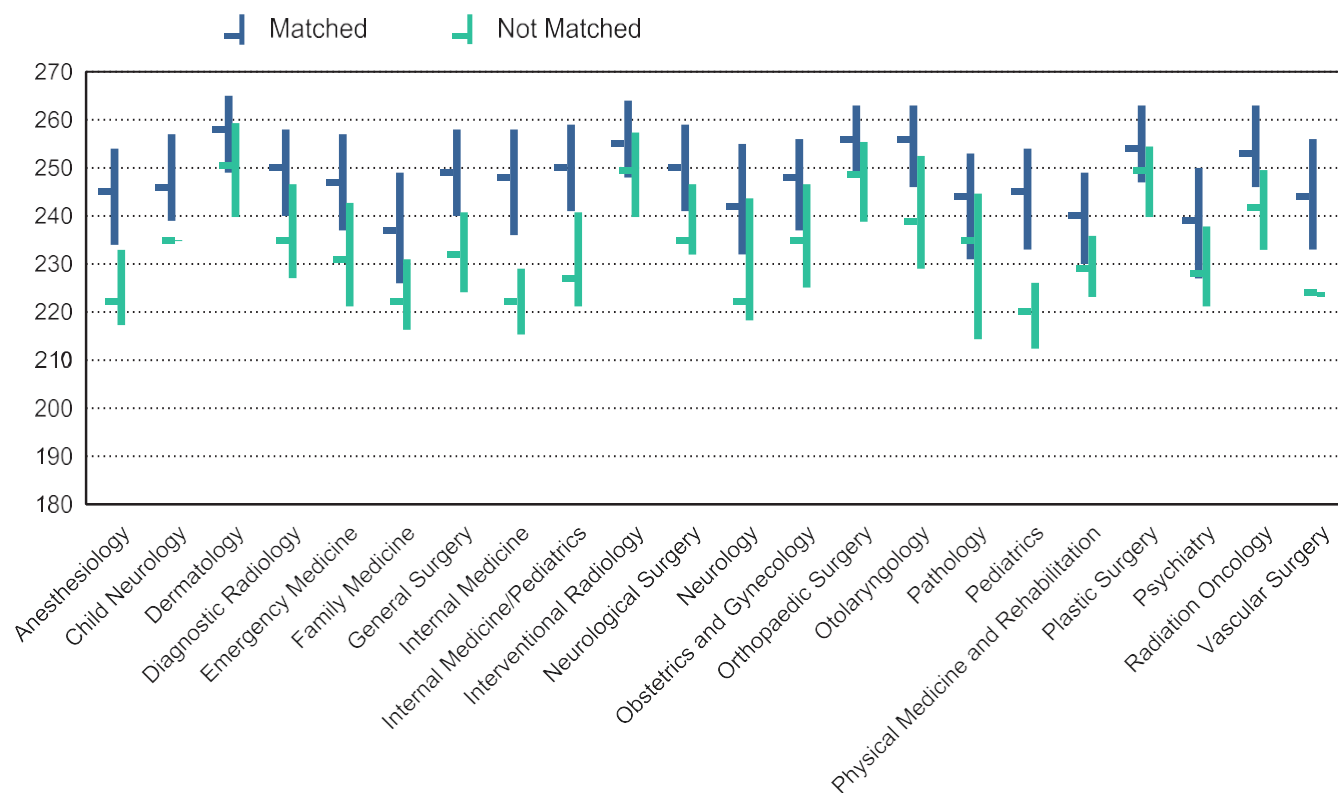




Discuss how to
achieve your
target score with
us

[LEARN MORE](#)

USMLE Step 1 Score by Specialty



THE MEDSCHOOLCOACH USMLE ADVANTAGE

The Best Tutors

Our tutors have been in your shoes before and they recognize the enormous challenge of preparing to take the most important set of exams of your life! In addition to having taken these exams very recently, all of our tutors have excelled on the exams and scored in the top percentiles. Not only do they know the material very well, but they are also intimately familiar with resources, study strategies, and how to best prepare for these exams. However, having high scores on these exams is not our only selection criteria for becoming a MedSchoolCoach tutor. All of our tutors are excellent communicators and are driven and passionate educators with years of teaching experience.

Discuss how to
achieve your
target score
with us

LEARN MORE

A Personalized Experience

We recognize that every student is unique, and our tutors focus specifically on your needs. Our tutors do not use a generic rubric, they tailor their tutoring and exam planning specifically to you, so that you get the best and most individualized help possible. Our tutors' number one goal is your success!

Comprehensive Support

All of our tutors are experienced in selecting resources, creating study plans, content review, test-taking approaches, and much more! They are able to provide comprehensive support and can guide you from the beginning of your study period all the way up to the day of your exam, and beyond. Students who have received tutoring for Step 1 with MedSchoolCoach often return for help with shelf exams and Step 2 CK preparation.

MEET SOME OF OUR TUTORS



Ashley Paquin
Master Tutor



Jeanie Gribben
Tutor



Faustine Ramirez
Master Tutor



Peter White
Master Tutor



Mackenzie Naet
Tutor



Sam Taylor
Tutor



James Farah
Tutor



Dan Pahl
Tutor

99th Percentile Scorers
Exceptional Teachers
USMLE Experts
Dedicated to Helping You
Achieve Your Goals

LEARN ABOUT OUR USMLE EXAM TUTORING

Incredible tutors with extensive experience

Your USMLE score is too important to trust to just anyone. MedSchoolCoach tutors have all scored exceptionally well on the USMLE (>250) but more importantly, are amazing teachers. We recruit only those who have proven a track record of teaching success.



Flexibility to learn anywhere, anytime

We utilize a platform that allows virtual tutoring anywhere, at anytime. Our platform allows whiteboard, screen share, video chat and automatic recording so that your experience will actually be even more productive than meeting a tutor in person.

Individualized services to maximize results

Your tutoring sessions are completely customizable to your individual needs. No more wasting time going over concepts you already know. Instead, focus on your weaknesses to maximize your score!



A relentless focus on all things medicine related

8,000 students can't be wrong! That's how many students have come to MedSchoolCoach for help in becoming a physician; we pride ourselves on being the absolute leader in medical education and focus on nothing else.

Money back guarantee & a higher score guarantee!

We have had such great success with our students that we know you'll love working with us. If not, just let us know after your first session and you are entitled to a full refund. If you work with us through Silver or Gold plans and your score does not increase, we will work with you again at no cost.



MEDSCHOOLCOACH
helping you achieve your medical school dreams

GUARANTEED
SCORE INCREASE
ON YOUR USMLE