



EMORY
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE

**STEP 1 STUDY GUIDE FOR CLASS OF 2026
2023-2024**

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INTRODUCTION

Medicine and the MD program should be seen as a sequence of marathons—not sprints. Your first marathon combines the Foundations Phase of Emory's curriculum and Step 1 of the NBME. As in all challenging pursuits, you must start with a plan that emphasizes your wellness and your success.

As you begin to study in earnest for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1, choosing the appropriate study materials and study strategy will be crucial to your success. The **NEW Emory School of Medicine Anne Elizabeth and Harper Gaston Center for Holistic Student Success** is here to support you in this journey through 1:1 Step 1 study planning, workshops, and this brief guide, meant to provide an outline of suggested strategies and answers to frequently asked questions related to studying for Step 1.

How to study

Keep in mind, there is no "wrong way" to study - **no single approach to studying is right for everyone**. Consider reviewing sample study schedules online and talking with M3 and M4 students, small group leaders, deans, and faculty. While you should seek out advice from other students and faculty, you know yourself better than anyone. **Have faith in your current and established study habits/resources/schedule**, and do not fall into the trap of comparing yourself to others—what works for you may not work for others and vice versa. Through identifying your strengths and weaknesses in your current strategies, you can customize your approach to be more effective and efficient with your time and energy.

Strengths and weaknesses can quantitatively be assessed by course performance, practice tests, and UWorld scores by system or discipline. Qualitatively assess your levels of comfort and understanding. On a sheet of paper, draw a line down the middle and list your areas of strength on one side and weakness on the other. Prioritize content review based on those areas of greatest need and ensure subjects you find easier are sprinkled throughout. **Timed, mixed-mode content is the ultimate goal, but be sure to schedule in deep content review by subject/discipline and then use questions to reinforce and recall material.** (See [Qbank](#) section for more information).

What to study

Not surprisingly, **it is easy to overwhelm yourself by using too many resources**. This guide will help you develop a plan and choose what is right for you. When considering resources, be sure to ask other students' opinions (who have used them) before purchasing for yourself; many can be quite expensive. Remember, if studying from certain resources in a certain way guaranteed a "pass," it would have been readily known long ago and multiple resources would not be available. Do not equate a high price with a high score. (See [Content Review](#) for more information).

When to study

Study materials outlined in this guide can be used both during the curriculum and during dedicated. **How, when, and to what degree you use them varies based on what you personally need as a student**. Together, with the use of this guide, support from the Center for Holistic Student Success, faculty, small group advisors, and others, you will find what

works for you and be ready for test day. Just breathe and know that we are on this journey with you. (See [Structuring Study Schedules](#) section for more information).

When to take the exam

Deadline to take Step 1 for Emory School of Medicine students is **February 1, 2024**. Many students struggle with deciding when they are truly ready to take Step 1. NBME provides students a low pass range on their NBME practice exams of 60%-70% with a recommended scoring range of 68%-70% for sense of security on test day. This will vary by student. But the rule of thumb is that if you are scoring consistently in this range, you can move forward with taking the exam. **Please collaborate with your deans to identify the best time for you depending on your own personal needs.** Triangulating data from your UWorld blocks, practice tests, and comfort level with test-taking, you can decide the ideal time for you. Guidelines will be provided by administration related to optimal deadlines to have completed Step 1 in time to begin Integrations I, Orientation, and the Applications phase. (See [Practice Tests](#) section for more information).

WHAT TO EXPECT: STEP 1 EXAM

Step 1 Scheduling Permit. When you sign up for the USMLE Step 1, you will select a three-month window within which you would like to test. There will then be a verification process that is sent to Emory University School of Medicine that confirms you as a student and finalizes your registration; ([Emily Barnes](#) will be your point of contact). Once you are registered, you will receive a scheduling permit via email from the NBME. You must bring the scheduling permit you receive in that email to the Prometric testing site on the day of the exam. (Be sure to open the link and print the actual scheduling permit). **You must present this permit along with an unexpired, government-issued photo identification with your signature** (e.g., current driver's license). Your first and last names on the photo ID must exactly match the first and last names appearing on the scheduling permit.

Exam Structure. Step 1 is a one-day examination divided into seven, 60-minute blocks and administered in one, 8-hour testing session. The number of questions per block never exceeds forty. Exam questions will not exceed 280. For every exam, an unidentified 80 questions are experimental in nature and do not count toward the overall outcome of the exam.

As you start your study plan, the following tables show the exam structure weighting by content areas.

Tables 1 (right), 2, and 3 (below) are slicing the Step 1 exam in three different ways—percentage items by (1) system, (2) physician tasks, and (3) discipline.

Table 1: Step 1 Test Content Specifications*

System	Range, %
General Principles**	12–16
Blood & Lymphoreticular/Immune Systems	7–11
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	9–13
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	6–10
Cardiovascular System	5–9
Respiratory & Renal/Urinary Systems	9–13
Gastrointestinal System	5–9
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	9–13
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	6–10
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	4–6
Social Sciences: Communication and Interpersonal Skills	6–9

* Percentages are subject to change at any time.

** The Step 1 General Principles category includes normal and abnormal processes that are not limited to specific organ systems.

Table 2: Step 1 Physician Tasks/Competencies Specifications*

Competency	Range, %*
Medical Knowledge: Applying Foundational Science Concepts	60–70
Patient Care: Diagnosis	20–25
History/Physical Examination	
Diagnosis	
Communication and Interpersonal Skills	6–9
Practice-based Learning & Improvement	4–6

* Percentages are subject to change at any time.

Table 3: Step 1 Discipline Specifications*

Discipline	Range, %
Pathology	44–52
Physiology	25–35
Pharmacology	15–22
Biochemistry & Nutrition	14–24
Microbiology	10–15
Immunology	6–11
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	11–15
Histology & Cell Biology	8–13
Behavioral Sciences	8–13
Genetics	5–9

* Percentages are subject to change at any time.

This information can be helpful to you in mapping out how many study days you will spend by content area in relation to their weighting on Step 1. **For a very detailed USMLE Step 1 Content Guide**, visit: https://www.usmle.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/USMLE_Content_Outline_0.pdf. This guide can provide additional insight into every minute detail and subject area covered.

Accommodations for Step 1. If you are interested in applying for accommodations for USMLE Step 1, please plan to meet with [Dr. Christen Hairston](#) to discuss and plan timing for applying. Typically, Step 1 accommodations are granted to those with a long history of receiving accommodations. However, we will work with any student who is interested in applying to send in the best possible application. Sending thorough and early applications is the best approach. For more information on requirements to apply for Step 1 accommodations, please see <https://www.usmle.org/step-exams/test-accommodations>.

Break time. Step 1 is a test of endurance. There are seven, one-hour blocks of 40 (or fewer) questions; eight hours are allotted to complete the test. **Forty-five minutes of break time is automatically allocated.** In addition to the exam blocks, the test begins with a [15-minute computer tutorial](#). However, the tutorial is identical to the one online. **It is best to watch the tutorial online prior, skip it on test day, and take those 15 minutes as additional break time.** This allows you to begin with 1 hour of break time, which you may take between sections at any point during the day. Also, if you finish an exam block early, the remaining time is added to your break time.

Some complete a couple of sections at a time and then take a prolonged break, while others choose to take a five-minute break at the end of each section. Do not let the hours of testing wear you out. Do smart test-taking things like bring (and eat) snacks, use your break time, etc. Give each question consideration, but if you are unsure, pick an answer and move on or skip the question and plan to return to it. A subsequent question may help to trigger the answer to a previous question that you skipped. There may be what you find to be easier questions at the end of the block, so you do not want to run out of time.

STEP 1 STUDYING: TIMING

Step 1 studying during the curriculum

- Step 1 studying during the Emory SOM curriculum can and should reinforce what you are already studying. In other words, Qbanks or other sources can be used to reinforce curricular knowledge as you learn material during your Foundation courses.
- ***The amount of time you designate for additional Step 1 studying during the curriculum should be guided by the amount of time you have available to study after completing your course activities. Please do not allow your studying for Step 1 to hinder you from passing a course.***
- Emory School of Medicine's curriculum is preparing you for Step 1. **What you CAN do during the curriculum is constantly reinforce your content knowledge, layer, and interleave¹ concepts, and constantly assess and reassess your areas of strength and weakness.**

Step 1 studying during dedicated

- Dedicated studying is a broad sweep of content review, improving how you approach questions, and increasing your individual endurance for a long, strenuous examination.
- During dedicated, it is important you customize your study plan around these three areas:
 - **Content Review**
 - **Strategy of Question (QBank)**

¹ Interleaving is the mixing of subject content to interlace concepts and make connections. This differs from blocked studying in which you study one topic without moving on to a new topic until the review is complete on that one.

- **Endurance of the Exam**
- As you begin, ask yourself:
 - Where am I strongest in these three areas?
 - Do I feel strong in content but weaker in how I approach questions?
 - Do I get exhausted in long exams and need to improve my endurance?
 - Do I feel like I need to start from scratch and review content in absolutely everything?
- This will differ by each individual, but based on where you are at this moment, we can create a plan customized to your greatest areas of strength and weakness. Your time and energy are limited. The more strategically you plan for Step 1 the less stressful the experience can be.

FINDING BALANCE AMID THE STRESS

- **Follow your energy flow.** Schedule the most challenging part of your study day when you are most alert (i.e., are you a morning or evening person) and schedule accordingly.
- **Study environment.** Find a good place (or places) to study. What setting is least distracting and absent of anxiety-triggers? Home, library, school, coffee shop, etc.
- **Silence your notifications.** Turning off all phone and computer notifications will aid in your ability to concentrate. Plan to check your phone and email at specified times as part of your study schedule.
- **Do not be an island.** Humans need connection and dedicated study time can be very isolating. Make sure that you are engaging with others in some way throughout the entire dedicated study time.
- **Study partners.** Many students benefit from a study partner. Plan, for example, to meet with a classmate to review a topic, ask one another questions, present a topic to one-another, find a white board, and give “lectures” to one-another, etc.
- **Time off from studying.** A study schedule *must* include study breaks. Time off makes for more effective study. Take at least one full day off a week (e.g., one full day, two mornings, or two afternoons). Schedule a five-minute break at least every 45 minutes as this simulates the testing scenario. Go outside for breaks, when possible, to get fresh air and sunshine. During a break, remove yourself from any study materials and do your best to truly relax - no flash cards or podcasts on the treadmill. It is better to study 8 “good hours” than 12 “non-productive hours;” respect your limit and stop studying. Do not sacrifice your health; make time to exercise, meditate, hydrate, refuel with nourishing food, and soak up some sunshine.

- **Sleep.** Get on a sleep schedule that will model the wake time on test day. Practice like you play.
- **Comparing self to others.** There will always be someone studying more than you (and less than you). While you should listen to the advice of others, you know yourself best and the way(s) in which you are most productive studying. Do not be stressed by how other people are studying—be confident and do what works best for you.
- **Additional study time. Avoid the urge to push back the test date.** There comes a point in time where additional study is counterproductive. Although the thought of an additional week of study time may be tempting, be confident in your ability and in the effectiveness of your study schedule. Changing the test date can negatively impact your confidence and contribute to anxiety. You will never feel totally prepared; most students “peak” at 5-6 weeks of dedicated study time.
- **Reaching a passing practice test score.** Please note that if you are not yet passing your practice exams at least in the “low pass range” on NBME between 60%-70%, we will recommend you delay your exam until you reach a passing score. The Deans will work with you to think through strengths, weaknesses, strategies, and opportunities to help boost both your confidence and performance on test day.

If a student is not making adequate progress toward a successful attempt on USMLE Step 1, we may recommend a student participate in a residential preparatory course. Financial support is considered for students already receiving financial aid and is only for participation in WolfPacc or PASS programs. The decision to award financial support and the amount of support will be at the discretion of the Executive Associate Dean. Students may also choose to do online versions of these programs at their own expense.

- **Reach out to your Emory School of Medicine Resources.** You are not alone in this journey—it takes a village—and we are here to support you! Please feel free to reach out to:
 - Small Group Advisors;
 - Dr. Christen Hairston, Associate Dean of Student Success at christen.hairston@emory.edu;
 - Dr. Ira Schwartz, Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs at ischwar@emory.edu;
 - Dr. Stacy Higgins, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Clinical Services at smhiggi@emory.edu;
 - Dr. Gordon Churchward, Assistant Dean of Medical Education at gordon.churchward@emory.edu;
 - Dr. Bill Eley, Executive Associate Dean of Medical Education and Student Affairs at jeley@emory.edu;
 - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) <https://counseling.emory.edu/services/get-started.html>;
 - Student Health Services <https://studenthealth.emory.edu/>.

- **Waiting for your score.** After completing Step 1, your score will be available two to four weeks after your exam date. Scores arrive on Wednesdays. Administration will have access at 8:00 a.m., and you will receive an email around 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. If you have failed the exam, someone (typically Dr. Churchward, Dr. Hairston, or Dr. Higgins) will call you that morning to inform you that you have not passed. If you have passed the exam, typically your first notification will be your email from NBME.

CONTENT REVIEW

When approaching Step 1 studying, it is helpful to first identify your **content areas of greatest strength and weakness**.

Content review needs to be **engaged and active**; not passive. The more passive, the less likely you will retain the information. You can engage in videos by taking notes, working with anatomical models, or printing off/drawing sketched images. Another engaged approach is to learn and then teach topics to your fellow classmates. Engaging with the material towards knowledge retention means that you not only read/review material, but you also find ways to conceptualize, interleave, and reinforce using question banks and flashcards. **Together, we can map a plan for how and to what degree you review content, but content review will be an essential part of your Step 1 dedicated review process.**

CONTENT REVIEW: ONLINE RESOURCES

2023 pricing is provided in green. This guide is not an endorsement of one product over another, nor should one believe that the higher the price, the higher the quality. These are popular resources that have helped students see success, and we are listing them to guide you in your choices.

First Aid for the USMLE Step 1

- **Approximately \$25 to rent; \$50 to buy.**
- **First Aid is available for FREE when a student becomes a member of American Medical Association (AMA) which costs \$20 a year or \$68 for 4 years. You will also get the FREIDA residency database and other wellness tools.**
- The book is separated into the following sections:
 - Section 1: Guide to Efficient Exam Preparation
 - Section 2: High Yield General Principles
 - Section 3: High-Yield Organ Systems
 - Section 4: Top-Rated Review Resources
- Students often read relevant sections of *First Aid* throughout the first three years (especially second year).
- Many students make notes directly into *First Aid*; while others choose to hole-punch the pages and put them in a binder, combining class notes and high yield information gleaned from *UWorld* questions into one source.
- As valuable as it is, *First Aid* is not recommended as a stand-alone resource. It is great for a high-level, high-yield overview of target areas for review.

Pathoma - <http://www.pathoma.com/>

- **PathomaFree version is FREE and does not include the textbook or all videos. PathomaPro starts at \$84.95 and offers the textbook, and 3-, 12-, or 21-month subscriptions to videos for every chapter of the book.**
- Pathoma offers a Step 1 review, and this resource covers high-yield pathology information for all organ systems in shorter videos. For those who prefer reading, the *Pathoma* textbook may be faster than reviewing the videos. The textbook has many color images like those on Step 1 and 2.

Sketchymedical - <https://sketchymedical.com/>

- **\$299.99 for 6 months; \$399.99 for 12 months; \$599.99 for 24 months**
- A visual mnemonic series for microbiology, pathology, and pharmacology.
- Sketches "help you create a memory palace by associating medical topics with memorable visual elements."

Boards and Beyond - <https://www.boardsbeyond.com/>

- **Subscriptions range from \$24 for one week to \$399 for 2 years.**
- Step 1 resource includes 447 videos, PDF copies of the slides, and Qbank of 2,300 questions. Covers content review and Qbank with one subscription.

Anki Flashcards - <https://apps.ankiweb.net/>

- **Android and Mac version: free; iPhone app version: \$25**
- Some students use flashcards extensively, and others never use them.
- For those who benefit from flashcards (e.g., a quick review of material prior to bedtime or first thing in the morning) this is a popular option.
- Zanki offers a Step 1 specific deck using First Aid prompts.
-  [100 most important concepts of Developmental and Gross Anatomy.pdf](#)
-  [100 most important Concepts Anki Deck.apkg](#)

Goljan Pathology Lectures

- **Offered as FREE Audio lectures on the web or Spotify Podcast as "Daddy Goljan Lectures"**
- This resource provides a comprehensive pathology review in a way that integrates multiple disciplines. It has become one of the most popular resources for concept connection and crucial for review throughout the year. Because it is an audio podcast, it can be listened to during commutes, while running errands, or even during exercise.

AMBOSS - <https://www.amboss.com/us>

- **Full Qbank access is in addition to the monthly membership; \$149 for 1 month; \$189 for 3 months; \$229 for 6 months; \$299 for 12 months.**
- Includes content review using unlimited library access, Anki add-on and smart study tools, as well as interactive medical imaging with overlays. Includes "phrasionary, table quizzes, charts, radiological images with overlays, videos, SmartZoom samples and other images that illustrate key points on different topics" all on a digital platform.
- Includes 2,700+ Step 1 questions, and with your subscription you also have access to 3,200+ Step 2 questions, 3,700 Shelf questions, and 2,000+ Step 3 questions.

Pixorize - <https://pixorize.com/>

- **\$185.00 for 6 months; \$249.00 for 1 year (Biochemistry \$150 for 1 year)**
- A visual mnemonic series for biochemistry, microbiology, immunology, and pharmacology.
- Recommended primarily for useful mnemonics on biochemistry as a long-term memory tool.

Access Medicine - <http://pid.emory.edu/chkns>

- **Free subscription through Emory Health Science Library**
- Access Medicine is a resource to over fifty medical texts, and it contains study tools with review questions, flashcards, and play Showdown!
- Create an account to access the study tools which are located under *the Study Tools* tab.
- Emory University has subscriptions for [AccessSurgery](#), [AccessEmergencyMedicine](#), and [AccessPhysiotherapy](#).

Kaplan - <https://www.kaptest.com/usmle>

- **On Demand (\$1,999); Live Online (\$4,399); New York In-Center (\$9,999)**
- *On Demand*: Over 1,700+ videos with over 330 hours of lecture, 3,100 quiz questions, 7 volumes of lecture notes in print and eBook, and 2 full length practice tests.
- *Live Online*: Adds 270+ hours of interactive live online lectures by physicians + membership to private Facebook group.
- *New York*: Access to facility and staff at New York Kaplan Medical Center. 1:1 medical advising and weekly workshops.
- See *Qbanks* below for additional Kaplan Step 1 offerings.

Dirty Medicine - <https://www.youtube.com/c/DirtyMedicine?app=desktop>

- **Offered as FREE YouTube videos**
- Conceptual review of two concepts that are similar and helps you discern the ways in which they are different with mnemonics. Known for excellent biochemistry videos.

Divine Intervention Podcast - <https://divineinterventionpodcasts.com/category/usmle-step-1/>

- **Offered as a FREE Podcast**
- Focuses on high yield concepts. This podcast allows you to choose specific topics to supplement learning deficits. Because it is a podcast, it can be listened to during commutes, while running errands, or even during exercise.

HyGuru - <https://hyguru.teachable.com/p/usmle-step-1-pass-fail-course>

- **USMLE Step 1 Course: \$196**
- Focuses on integrated organ systems. "HyGuru's comprehensive USMLE Step 1 course augments the pathophysiology in the free NBME Top Concepts with the relevant physiology and pharmacology. Integrated with immunology and biochemistry, this course provides a high-yield, integrative overview of each organ system."

Clinical Key - <https://proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=https://www.clinicalkey.com/>

- Offered **FREE** through Emory Health Science Library
- Clinical Key is an online database to search conditions, treatments, drugs, books, journals and more related to clinical practice. A great content review resource for clinical overviews, drug monographs, calculators, drug class overviews, and guidelines.

Brosencephalon - <https://www.brosencephalon.com/>

- Offered as a **FREE** resource
- Another flashcard collection used by some students. It is a very long deck, and many find it most helpful during the year rather than during dedicated study time.

Firecracker by Lippincott - <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/lippincott-medicine/medical-education/firecracker>

- For the full MD Firecracker deck: **2 months for \$99; 6 months for \$149; 12 months for \$199**
- Offers several “bundles” for Step 1 review which include various additional (and more expensive) options; the most popular of which includes First Aid citations and a collection of topics, flashcards, and test questions which reference material from *Pathoma* and *SketchyMedical*

USMLE-Scholar-Rx - <https://www.usmle-rx.com/>

- **QMax (2,300 questions) - 1 month (\$59); 3 months (\$99); 6 months (\$169); 12 months (\$199); 24 months (\$229)**
- Question bank for Step 1 by the authors of *First Aid*. **Emory School of Medicine offers USMLE Scholar Rx Step 1 subscription for the Foundations phase as part of the curriculum.** USMLE Scholar Rx has five different resources in one—Rx bricks, Step 1 Qmax, Flash Facts, Express Videos, and Digital First Aid.

PHYSE Biochemistry Map

- Offered as a **FREE** resource
-  [Biochemistry Map.jpg](#)
- Analyze biochemistry questions using the visual to conceptualize the biochemistry map.

CONTENT REVIEW: BOOK SERIES

Included in case anyone prefers print rather than digital/online resource. **Pricing varies by book seller.**

Lippincott Medical Series: <https://shop.lww.com/lippincott-illustrated-review-series/c/458?sortBy=createDate+desc>

Board Review Series (BRS)

Multiple subjects are available. *BRS Physiology* and *BRS Biochemistry* are the most popular.

Appleton-Lange Series

Multiple subjects are available. Microbiology/immunology and pharmacology are the most popular.

Ridiculously Simple Series

Multiple subjects are available - silly, but helpful, mnemonics. *Clinical Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple* is the most popular.

High Yield Series

Multiple subjects are available. *High Yield Neuroanatomy*, *High Yield Embryology*, *High Yield Gross Anatomy*, and *High Yield Behavioral Science* are the most popular. These books distill the content to an irreducible minimum.

Rapid Review Series

Multiple subjects are available. *Pathology RRS* (Goljan) and *Biochemistry RRS* are the most popular for their images (Pathology) and diagrams (Biochemistry).

STRATEGY OF QUESTION: QUESTION BANKS (Qbanks)

Question Banks are a valuable resource to improve the speed and effectiveness by which you reinforce content and improve your test taking ability. By practicing question types, you can also improve the ways in which you can (1) identify distracters, (2) see what the question is truly asking, (3) work through the best possible answer, (4) choose it and (5) move on. It is both an art and a science.

Qbanks can play various roles in your studying:

- During courses, Qbanks can reinforce newly acquired knowledge through questions.
- During dedicated, Qbanks can be used to:
 - Reinforce content review through spaced recall and learning from missed questions.
 - Give you a 360° view of how questions are asked around certain concepts.
 - Improve timing per question.
 - Give you a pattern of question types you are missing to see if you are able to improve blind spots.
 - Simulate testing environment.
 - Improve endurance of exam through the gradual addition of question blocks over time.
- For content review purposes, you may consider single-subject or single-system blocks on tutor mode to review. To improve your strategy of question, endurance of the exam, and synthesized knowledge across systems and subjects use mixed, timed blocks.

The QBanks listed below are popularly used for Step 1 review. To optimize Qbank use:

- **Identify** ways to gain optimal benefit from this essential resource for your own personal learning style.
- **Integrate** high yield topics gleaned from questions and reading answer explanations into your own list of high-yield topics for additional review (i.e., Anki cards, *First Aid* annotation, excel documents or other creative way you have identified).
- **Review** incorrect questions. Should you read the explanation for each answer option for every question? For the sake of efficiency, probably not. Rather, read the explanation for any answer option you get wrong, "guessed right" or considered as possibly correct.
- **Plan** to do a set amount of questions/day during dedicated study time. While it is true that there is an advantage to completing as many questions as possible, be sure you do not rush through questions at the expense of learning from the questions.
- **Reflect** on your strengths and weaknesses.

UWorld - www.uworld.com

- **30-day (\$319), 90-day (\$439), 180-day (\$479) or 360-day (\$559) subscriptions; Emory School of Medicine provides a subscription during dedicated to the UWorld 3700 + question bank. (If necessary, any renewal costs are the responsibility of the student). For the class of 2026, the subscription length and timing is still under review and students will be updated once the plan is finalized.**

AMBOSS - <https://www.amboss.com/us>

- **Full Qbank access is in addition to the monthly membership; \$149 for 1 month; \$189 for 3 months; \$229 for 6 months, \$299 for 12 months.**

Kaplan - <https://www.kaptest.com/usmle>

- **QBank Step 1: 1 month (\$128); 3 months (\$160); 6 months (\$240); 12 months (\$320); 18 months (\$360); 24 months (\$499)**
- **QBank Step 1 integrated plan (QBank PLUS videos and other additional features): 1 month (\$144); 3 months (\$240), 6 months (\$360); 12 months (\$549); 18 months (\$568); 24 months (\$799)**

Board Vitals - <https://www.boardvitals.com/>

- **Subscriptions include \$209 for 1 month; \$279 for 3 months; \$459 for 6 months. You can also add a full-length practice for \$15-\$20 depending on your subscription.**
- Access to question banks and practice tests. 3,250+ Step 1 questions available.

USMLE-Scholar Rx - <https://www.usmle-rx.com/>

- **QMax (2300 questions) - 1 month (\$129); 3 months (\$159); 6 months (\$249); 12 months (\$299); 24 months (\$349)**
- **Emory School of Medicine offers USMLE Rx Step 1 subscription for first- and second-year medical students as part of the curriculum. Students who choose to use it further may purchase on their own.**

- USMLE Rx has five different resources in one—Rx bricks, Step 1 Qmax, Flash Facts, Express Videos, and Digital First Aid. Questions, videos, and flashcards with First Aid integration produced by the authors of *First Aid*.

ENDURANCE OF EXAM: PRACTICE TESTS

Taking practice tests is the best way to improve your endurance for an 8-hour exam. It is recommended to plan practice tests when it can be optimal for your own personal learning. Speak with your Associate Deans or small group advisors to decide how many and when practice tests make the most sense for you.

Practice test quantity and timing. Plan to take a couple of practice tests—some students take more. Completing the test at the standard pace allows you to practice getting through the exam in the allotted time. Use your practice exam as a diagnostic tool to identify areas of strength and weakness and as a guide on how to direct your studying and schedule during the remainder of your study period. Reviewing material repeatedly through questions also helps to consolidate information and helps with retention. A low score may lead to undue anxiety while a high score may contribute to a false sense of security. Do not get fixated on your score! Practice exams help with endurance and time management skills.

Practice environment. When taking a practice test, ensure your testing environment simulates the test site as closely as possible. You may want to consider taking a practice test at the Prometric test site. Details are at <https://proscheduler.prometric.com/scheduling/testInformation>. Within your 90-day eligibility period, Prometric offers a practice session with a brief tutorial section and three, one-hour blocks of approximately 40 multiple-choice test items each. Upon completion, a printed percent correct score is provided. The opportunity to become familiar with the testing site may help decrease anxiety on the test day. Contact your local Prometric Testing Center for costs.

For those who do not choose to use a Prometric practice space, it is important you still simulate your testing environment when taking practice tests. An optimized test site will need to be a quiet place with no interruptions or excess noise, likely outside of your home. This might be the library, a reserved classroom, or other reserved, quiet space with “testing in progress” posted to the door.

Practice test resources:

1. **Multiple Question Blocks.** Using QBank blocks one after the other with breaks simulating the testing environment (**included in whatever QBank you choose**).
2. **UWorld.** Four blocks of 40 questions practice exam. (**Get 1 test with 90-day access; 2 tests with 180-day and 360-day options**).
3. **Kaplan.** Kaplan offers a three-hour free diagnostic exam (**Free**).
4. **Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment Exam (CBSSA) (\$60)**

5. **USMLE Practice Examination (\$75)**
(https://apps.nbme.org/CBTPSRegistrationWeb/jsp/usmle_CBTPS_registration.jsp)
6. **NBME Free 120 (Free)**

STRUCTURING STUDY SCHEDULES

Following a study schedule will help you to stay on track. That being said, you may not reach all the goals you set out to meet in the beginning. Be flexible, adapt throughout, do not beat yourself up, and move on. Include several flex-days for “catch-up” or more time on a particular topic. Allow more time for review toward the end of dedicated study time—reviewing material helps with retention and more rapid recall during the exam itself. It is easy to get stressed and to ignore the importance of food, sleep, exercise, family, and friends if you get behind schedule. A daily routine helps to maintain mental health and decrease burnout.

Sample study schedules.

- Additional tips and sample schedules are **FREE** at <https://firstaidteam.com/schedules/>
- Many students also like **Cram Fighter** for a daily Step 1 study schedule.
 - 1 month (**\$29/month**); 3 months (**\$60**); 6 months (**\$95**); 12 months (**\$119**). (<https://blueprintprep.com/medical/med-school/study-schedule>).
 - You enter all the resources you will use, the time you have before the test, and it gives you a daily schedule. If you do not finish something in one day, it rolls over and updates daily.
- Your mentors and student success resources can support you in outlining your Step 1 schedule for dedicated as well as throughout the curriculum.

Ordering and balancing time on topics. Begin with your weaker topics and/or those more heavily emphasized on the exam so that you can schedule accordingly to allow more time for these topics. To guide the stratification of your topic areas, please see [Tables 1, 2, and 3](#) on pages 5 and 6 in this guide for the percentages of items by systems, physician tasks, and disciplines. Also see [“How to Study”](#) on page 4 to further identify how you balance your strengths and weaknesses in your topics. Please know this is not necessarily an easy process, so please reach out to Dr. Hairston to help identify those strengths, weaknesses, and the best approach for you to balance your study plan.

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