

Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior Section

What This Section Tests

Applicants must be prepared to learn in medical school about the impact of behavioral and sociocultural factors on illness and health outcomes. This section tests applicants' academic preparation in introductory psychology, sociology, and biology that provide the building blocks for learning in medical school about the ways in which:

- cognitive and perceptual processes influence students' understanding of health and illness;
- behavior can either support health or increase risk for disease;
- perception, attitudes, and beliefs influence interactions with patients and other members of the healthcare team;
- patients' social and demographic backgrounds influence their perceptions of health and disease, the health care team, and therapeutic interventions; and
- social and economic factors can affect access to care and the probability of maintaining health and recovering from disease.

This section does not measure applicants' attitudes or beliefs about social issues, their interpersonal skills, or the way they will behave. The content has not been tested on prior versions of the MCAT exam.

<p>Foundational Concept 6 Psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors influence the ways that individuals perceive, think about, and react to the world.</p>	<p>Foundational Concept 7 Psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors influence behavior and behavior change.</p>	<p>Foundational Concept 8 Psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors influence the way we think about ourselves and others.</p>	<p>Foundational Concept 9 Cultural and social differences influence well-being.</p>	<p>Foundational Concept 10 Social stratification and access to resources influence well-being.</p>
<p>Content Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensing the environment • Making sense of the environment • Responding to the world 	<p>Content Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual influences on behavior • Social processes that influence human behavior • Attitude and behavior change 	<p>Content Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-identity • Social thinking • Social interactions 	<p>Content Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding social structure • Demographic characteristics and processes 	<p>Content Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inequity

Examples of ways examinees are asked to combine their knowledge of the foundational concepts listed above and their scientific reasoning skills to answer test questions:

- Draw conclusions about the type of memory affected by an experimental manipulation when you are shown a graph of findings from a memory experiment
- Reason about whether a causal explanation is possible when given an example of how personality predicts individual behavior
- Distinguish the kinds of claims that can be made when using longitudinal data, cross-sectional data, or experimental data in studies of social interaction
- Identify the relationship between demographic variables and health variables reported in a table or figure
- Identify the relationship between social institutions that is suggested by an illustration used in a public health campaign

Foundational Concepts, or big ideas in sciences, lay the foundation for learning in medical school. This section of the exam is organized around 5 foundational concepts.

Content Categories are the topics and subtopics students need to know in order to demonstrate their understanding of the foundational concepts

Examinees are asked to combine their knowledge of the foundational concepts with four scientific inquiry and reasoning skills to solve problems.

- Reasoning with scientific principles, theories, and models
- Evaluating scientific explanations and principles
- Demonstrating understanding of important concepts in scientific research
- Interpreting patterns in data presented in tables, figures, and graphs