Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Introduce new members
3. Recap the 2020 testing year
4. Preview 2021 testing year
5. Preview meeting agenda for the week
Welcome to new MVC members
Kadian McIntosh, PhD  
Director of Research and Analytics  
University of Arizona College of Medicine

Michelle Albert, MD, MPH  
Associate Dean for Admissions  
University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine

Rhona Beaton, MAT  
President-Elect, NAAHP

Barton Thiessen, MD, UBC, FRCPC  
Assistant Dean for Admissions  
Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Medicine

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What is the best thing that has come out of the disruption of this year’s COVID-19 pandemic for you?
What is the best thing that has come out of the disruption of this year’s COVID-19 pandemic for you?
Hopes for the future

• “I hope that we internalize that we are better when we are together--in purpose and action.”

• “My hope is that the willingness to creatively collaborate as team across previously perceived barriers will persist.”

• “The realization that resources are truly finite and that the choices of what to support - education, public health, etc. matter.”

• “I hope that we can sustain the creativity we have demonstrated to make positive change in all the ways in which we work-- to achieve equity, inclusion and opportunity for all.”
Surprise!
Work with the MR5 Committee on revising the MCAT exam
Work with the PSBB Committee to evaluate the validity of PSBB section scores
Work with the MCAT Validity Committee
AAMC Holiday Parties
Recap of the 2020 MCAT testing plan
Mass cancellations due to COVID-19 in March through May

Full-length exam, 4 test dates

8 test dates canceled

Shortened exam, 21 test dates

Expedited score reporting 6/19-9/28

~13k exams administered, 4 test dates 1/17-3/14

~86k exams administered, 21 test dates 5/29-9/28

Jan 17  
Start of 2020 test year

Mar 27  
Testing suspended due to COVID-19

May 29, June 19  
Testing resumed in some, then all states

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## Overview of 2020 testing plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Revised Testing Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shortened exam</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7 hours and 30 minutes to 5 hours and 45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Removed administrative and unscored elements to shorten seat time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• # scored questions remains the same</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Same knowledge and skills at the same levels of difficulty</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reporting the same scores with the same precision</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3 testing sessions per day</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Standard start times at 6:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3 additional test dates</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• June 28, September 27, and September 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expedited scoring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All exams administered from June 19 to September 28 will receive scores in about 2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Waived fees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• No rescheduling or cancellation fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expanded income eligibility guidelines to help more students with financial need qualify for Fee Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prep product extensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extended subscriptions to AAMC prep products until the end of testing year 2020 so that students with adjusted test dates can continue preparing for the exam</td>
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</table>

14,583 received FAP in 2020—a 63% increase from 2019
How schools have adapted during this admissions cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCAT Requirements</th>
<th>Decided to Accept a Broader Range of MCAT Exam Dates for FY 2021 Applications:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 36 (30%)</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes 69 (58%)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided 14 (12%)</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Decided to Screen Otherwise Qualified Candidates without MCAT score:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 44 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes 50 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided 25 (21%)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Decided to Interview Otherwise Qualified Candidates without MCAT score:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes 19 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided 31 (26%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 69 (58%) Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decided to Accept Otherwise Qualified Candidates without MCAT score:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes* 15 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided 19 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 84 (71%)</td>
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</table>

*Contingent on score before cycle close
Major findings

• Exams administered from 1/17-3/14, and from 5/29-9/28
  • 50% more capacity than a typical year
  • Health & safety protocols in place from May 29 through September
• More than 88,000 examinees took nearly 100,000 exams in 2020 (~2% increase)
  • >13,000 exams in Jan. - March 14; ~86,000 exams May 29 – Sept. 28
  • About 1.5% tested with accommodations
• 92% of surveyed examinees were satisfied or very satisfied with the implementation of health and safety protocols; 5% responded neutrally
• Demographic makeup of 2020 examinees mirror that of 2019 examinees
• Same % of first-time and repeat examinees
• 2020 MCAT scores are comparable to 2019 scores
• Early analysis on test preparation data show an increase across the board
Discussion

1. What questions do you have about the 2020 testing plans?

2. What questions do you have about the equity analyses presented in the read ahead materials?

3. What other information would help you think about equity in the 2020 testing year?
Preview of the 2021 MCAT testing plan

FLEXIBILITY IS STILL THE KEY
The 2021 testing plan balances four important priorities

• Provide timely reporting of MCAT scores for 2021 applicants finishing their applications
• Introduce new sets of scored questions as soon as possible to refresh the test forms
• Resume piloting new questions to prepare for building future forms
• Provide flexibility in exam scheduling and adapt health and safety protocols to be ready for uncertainty in the pandemic’s course
The 2021 testing year will go from January through September

2021 Testing Year

- 31 exam dates - 1 additional date (33% more capacity) in January
- Three testing periods (January-March, April-June, July-September)
- Return to the traditional length exam
- Scores reported on normal 30-35-day schedule for test dates in March and beyond

For exams administered in January and March (testing periods 2 and 3 TBD)

- Strict health and safety protocols
- Exams offered at 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to observe social distancing and limit the number of people in the test center
- Rescheduling and cancellation fees waived
- Scores reported in about 2 weeks for the 4 January test dates
Testing with Accommodations will Reflect Improvements

The AAMC is committed to providing all individuals with an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency on the MCAT exam, including ensuring access to persons with disabilities

Process improvements
  • Scheduling January and March examinees in advance of the Nov. 10 registration opening.
  • Work on other process improvements is ongoing.
Continue Health & safety protocols that were in place this year

• Requiring examinees to acknowledge that they meet the CDC recommendations for health guidelines (that they have not been diagnosed with or been in close contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 within 14 days before their exam date) and that they will follow health and safety guidelines while testing by providing their signature on the e-pad during check-in. (Anyone who does not meet this requirement is not allowed to test.)
• Requiring the use of face masks for all staff and MCAT examinees. (Anyone who does not comply with the policy will be removed from the test center.)
• Observing 6’ social distancing between individuals in the testing room.
• Limiting the number of people in each MCAT test session. Cleaning and disinfecting regimens in between all testing appointments and throughout the day.
• Utilize clear sneeze guards to create a barrier between test center staff and examinees during check in.
• Approving the use of gloves while testing (upon inspection).
• Having hand sanitizer available during testing. Examinees will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before they enter the testing room.
Health and Safety Protocols

- In 2021, will continue applying safety protocols, compliance monitoring program, and remediation steps instituted in 2020
- This includes investigating every report of COVID-19 that students report, watching videos, checking for safety lapses, using secret shops, and inviting students to report health and safety concerns through surveys and a variety of other ways

Process improvements (in progress)

- Enhanced communications, such as an email communication about health and safety protocols to examinees with upcoming test dates
- Allowing personal hand sanitizer bottles in the test room (upon inspection)
- Under investigation: additional protections, influenced by current and emerging information
We will continue to provide regular communications to the admissions community in 2020

• Regular school-specific emails

• Monthly topical emails in the limited-edition series *Medical School Admissions in the time of COVID-19*
  
  • November 13: Recap of the 2020 testing year
  
  • December 18: Updates on the 2021 testing year

• Other updates in 2021 based on feedback about the topics of interest and the frequency of communications needed
Example: Regular school-specific emails

• # of submitted applications for the 2021 admissions cycle: **7,468** (compared to **3,779** at the same time in the 2020 admissions cycle)

• # of submitted applications with MCAT scores (includes scores for recent exams that will be released within two weeks): **7,409**
  
  • # of submitted applications with MCAT scores that will be released on Oct. 13: **392**

• # of submitted applications with MCAT scores that are anticipated on Oct. 27 (including applicants who have tested on a make-up date or are still registered to test on a future make-up date): **1**

• # of submitted applications without MCAT scores - applicants are NOT registered to test on a future test date: **59**
Discussion

1. What questions do you have about the 2021 testing plans?

2. What types of information will be most impactful during the 2021 testing year?
   a) What resources did you get this year that you would like to continue to get next year?
   b) What do you wish you had that you didn’t get?
Poll Question: What resources did you get this year that you would like to continue to get next year?

- Health and safety updates for testing
- Regular updates on testing progress (# of people registered vs. tested)
- Projected score availability for applicants (national)
- Project score availability for applicants at your school (tailored school data emails)
- Equity analysis
- Using MCAT scores in admissions guide
- Template slide deck for the MCAT data guide
- Research summary on MCAT predicting more than Step 1
- Fall validity report
- Other (Type your answer into chat in WebEx)
What do you wish you had that you didn’t get?

Type your answers into the chat in WebEx
Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, 12/16, 2 – 4 pm
Topic: Present and future MCAT research agenda

• Review AAMC’s strategic action plan for diversifying tomorrow’s doctors
• Discuss how the current context could affect the MVC research agenda
• Discuss future research topics and how to prioritize them

Prework
• AAMC strategic plan (optional)
• Fall 2020 Validity Report
• MCAT Validity Research Agenda: Overview of Findings (from the March 2020 MVC meeting)
• Think about insights that might reduce opportunity gaps, equity in admissions decisions, and equity in medical student performance outcomes given opportunity gaps
• Review the map of research topics proposed at the March 2020 MVC meeting
Activity: Identify any new research topics not reflected in the results of the March 2020 brainstorming exercise

Research topics map: [https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/19Tdqj-cOTxB4CJPbqvF3bhcYwNPDR403-xz0rOncl0/edit](https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/19Tdqj-cOTxB4CJPbqvF3bhcYwNPDR403-xz0rOncl0/edit)

**Analyses of existing data**
- Relative contributions of educational disadvantages vs. test prep. Does test prep help disadvantaged students more?
- Positive (or negative) discord analysis: students that perform better (or worse) than their MCAT scores predict.

**New data collections (e.g., admissions, PMQ surveys)**
- High vs. low-impact test prep strategies
- Types of support available for students with MCAT scores in the middle third
- Attitudes of admissions committees regarding acceptability of “1” strategy.
- Drivers of high MCAT average/minimum of accepting students with lower MCAT scores
- Measure of fixed vs. growth mindset in test prep (PMQ)
- Challenges faced by disadvantaged students in test prep: anxiety, defensiveness, feeling slapped back, etc. (PMQ)
- Measurement of motivation of exterminers (PMQ)

**Future research ideas beyond MVC**
- Impacts of Step 1 P/F change on validity
- Change in curriculum
- Change in preparation
- Change in test-taking approach/motivation
- Predictive validity of MCAT among essay-weak students
- Role of clinical science short exams in preparing for Step 2 CS given Step 1 passing P/F
- Longitudinal study of MVC validity
  - Specialty choice/specialization
  - Knowledge base

**Needs for resources**
- Guidance (one-page outline) on how to use section scores
- Training on holistic review/decision-making case scenarios/best practices from similar schools that have successful outcomes
- Information on students who do not succeed to set realistic expectations about how hard medical school is

**Research topics map:**
- Admitted with modest scores
- Admitted with different section scores
- Admitted with different section scores

**Others**
- Characteristic of high MCAT performing URMs/low SES students, particularly those from low-resource schools (anti-deficit model)
- Predictive validity of academic metrics:
  - Separating BCPM, AO, post-bacc/graduate QMPs
  - Research hours
  - Hours of science coursework

Type your ideas in the “sticky notes” and drag and drop them into one of the four columns.

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Friday, 12/18, 1 – 2:30 pm  
Topic: Next Steps in the Evaluation of the MCAT Exam

- Working groups provide updates about their discussions and decisions
- Discuss priorities during the committee’s remaining tenure
- Gather feedback about the virtual committee meeting experience

Prework

- Working groups convene on 12/17 as needed to refine action plans and pose feedback questions for the MVC
Questions