



Northeastern University

**PreMed and PreHealth
Advising Program**

Entrance Exam Workshop

Agenda



REVIEW OF
EXAMS



CREATE A
STUDY PLAN



RESOURCES



Q&A

THE EXAMS

MCAT, DAT, GRE, OAT, PA-CAT &
Situational Judgement Tests

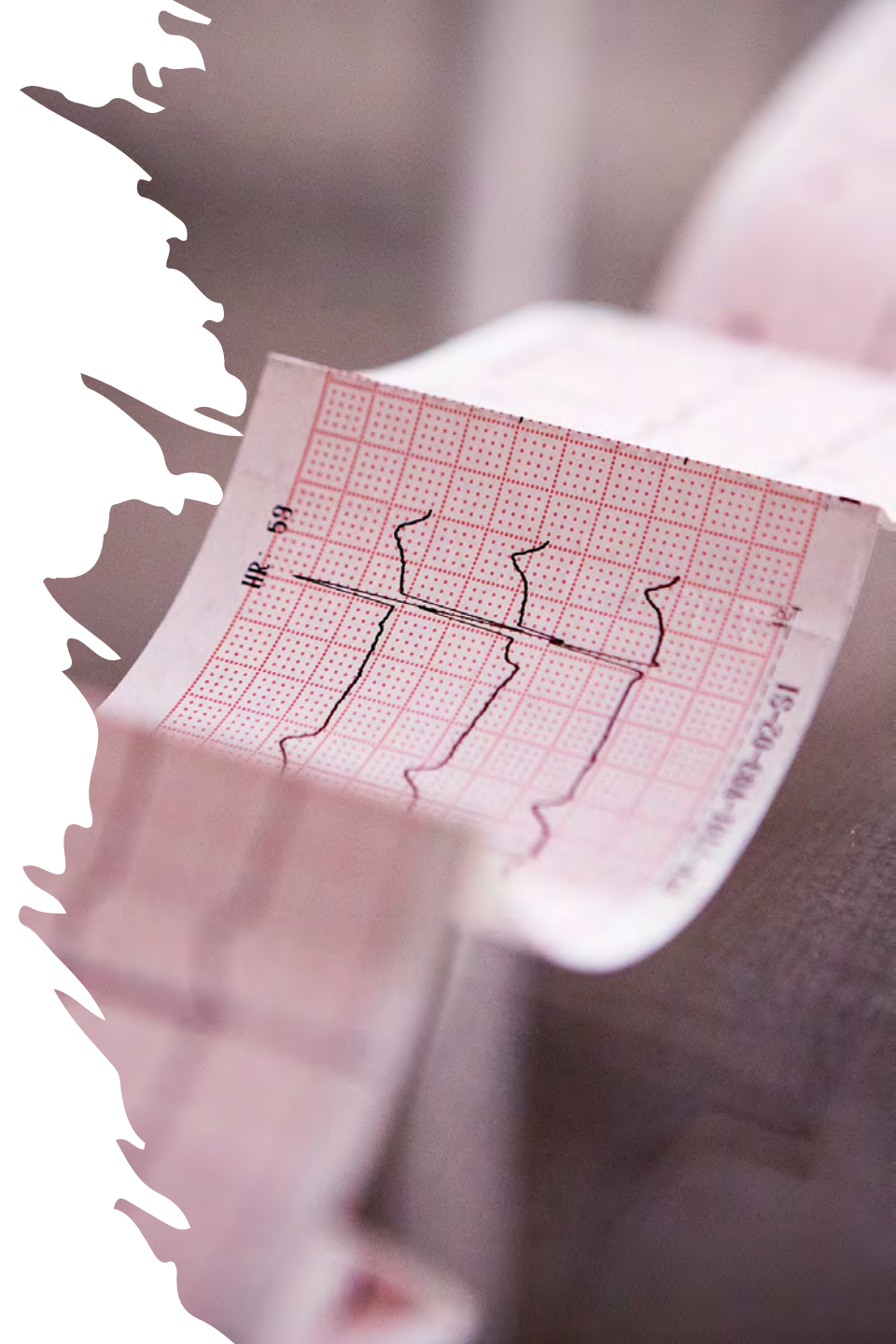
The MCAT

EXAM OVERVIEW:

- Administered from January and March through September
- Comprised of multiple-choice, best-choice test items
- Consists of a battery of four interdisciplinary tests:
 1. Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
 2. Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
 3. Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
 4. Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills
- Test scores are released approx. 30 days after test day
- Learn More: [AAMC Taking the MCAT Exam](#)
- [Register for the MCAT HERE](#) (2025 testing registration opens on **OCTOBER 2!**)

AVERAGE EXAM SCORES BY HEALTH FIELD:

- [MD Matriculants](#): 511.7
- [DO Matriculants](#): 503.9
- [Podiatry Matriculants](#): 493.9



The DAT

EXAM OVERVIEW

- Administered year-round
- Comprised of multiple-choice test items
- Consists of a battery of four tests:
 1. Survey of the Natural Sciences
 2. Perceptual Ability
 3. Reading Comprehension
 4. Quantitative Reasoning
- Beginning March 1, 2025, the DAT will transition to a 3-digit scoring format. The ADA will still provide historical 2-digit scores for exams taken before this date. You can review this sample Concordance Table to compare 2-digit and 3-digit scores and set your target for the exam. Please note that the exam content will remain unchanged.
- For tests taken through February 2025, scores will be available on the same day. Starting in March 2025, scores will be released approximately 30 days after the exam.
- Learn More: [ADA 2023 DAT Candidate Guide](#)
- [Apply to take the DAT HERE](#)

AVERAGE EXAM SCORE:

- [2-Digit Score](#): 20.9
- [3-Digit Equivalent](#): 420-430



The GRE

EXAM OVERVIEW:

- Applicable to PA & Vet Programs
- Administered year-round
- Comprised of multiple-choice test items and 2 short essays
- Consists of 3 sections:
 1. Verbal Reasoning
 2. Quantitative Reasoning
 3. Analytical Writing
- Test scores received 8-10 days after taking the exam
- Learn More on the [ETS GRE website](#)
- [Register to take the GRE HERE](#)

AVERAGE EXAM SCORES BY HEALTH FIELD:

(based on programs that require the GRE)

- [PA Matriculants](#): 300+
 - Verbal reasoning 153.4
 - Quantitative reasoning 152.8
 - Analytical writing 4.1
- [Veterinary Matriculants](#): 300+
 - Verbal reasoning 155
 - Quantitative reasoning 151
 - Analytical writing 4



The OAT

EXAM OVERVIEW:

- Applicable to Optometry Programs
- Administered year-round
- Comprised of multiple-choice test items
- Consists of a battery of four tests:
 1. Survey of the Natural Sciences (Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry)
 2. Reading Comprehension
 3. Physics
 4. Quantitative Reasoning Tests
- Test scores received within 3-4 weeks of testing date
- Learn More: [Optometry Admission Test Applicant Guide](#)
- [Register to take the OAT HERE](#)

AVERAGE EXAM SCORE:

- [Matriculants](#): 335.24.



The PA-CAT

EXAM OVERVIEW:

- The **PA-CAT (Physician Assistant College Admission Test)** is a relatively new exam designed to assess applicants' knowledge of subjects that are core to PA Education.
- The test is administered year-round and Administered year-round and includes a 240-item assessment covering 9 science subject areas (anatomy, physiology, general biology, biochemistry, general and organic chemistry, microbiology, behavioral sciences, genetics, statistics)
- Some of the schools that require or recommend the PA-CAT include: Loma Linda University, South College (Knoxville, Tennessee), Missouri State University, Lincoln Memorial University, Hardin-Simmons University, Harding University
- [Practice resources available here!](#)
- [Register to take the PA-CAT HERE](#)

AVERAGE EXAM SCORE:

- Since the PA-CAT is relatively new, exact averages for most schools are not publicly available yet. However, the overall scoring range is between **200 to 800**, with **500** as the mean.
- A competitive score would likely be in the **550-600** range, depending on the competitiveness of the specific PA program.
- It's always good to check directly with individual schools for the most current requirements and average scores since they may vary as more schools adopt the test!



Situational Judgement Tests

- Some programs may require additional assessments in their **secondary applications**.
- **Situational Judgment Tests (SJTs)** assess interpersonal skills and complement other evaluations.
- The most common SJTs are [Casper](#) (MD/DO, PA, Dental, Veterinary, Optometry) and [AAMC PREview](#) (MD).
- These are typically taken after submitting the primary application (June–August).
- You can't study for SJTs—no right or wrong answers—but it's important to understand the format.
- More info will be shared in our June **Secondary Application Workshop**

Getting Started

DEVELOPING YOUR STUDY PLAN

Getting Started



Read everything from
AAMC/ADA/AAVMC/AOA/PAEA



Get the Official Guide to the exam



Make a folder for each exam section and list
topics



Gather notes, lectures, problem sets, textbooks,
review articles, etc. to cover each topic



Read dense and complex material daily



Practice tests are key to pacing for the length of
the exam

Study Overview

Prepare

- Dental: [DAT Test Preparation](#)
- Medical: AAMC [free guide to set up a study plan](#).
- PA/VET: [GRE Preparation](#)
- [PA-CAT Resources](#)
- Optometry: [OAT Guide](#)

Assess

- Start with a diagnostic test to analyze what you need to study most

Plan

- Plan a realistic study schedule. 20 to 25 hours per week for four to six months is typical. Try to have at least one day off per week and build in a few “flex” days in case you get behind!

Content

- Focus on your weakest areas from your diagnostic. Study from all sections most days.

Practice

- Incorporate practice questions, sections, and then full-length exams into your plan to build up the stamina needed to complete the test successfully. Ensure you understand the test design and develop a strategy for success. Content alone will yield desirable results!

Review

- Review your answers! Consider what skill was being tested, what happened (why you got it **right** or **wrong**), and how you plan to replicate or change your approach next time.

Connect

- Join the PMPH Mapping Your Entrance Exam and/or Navigating Wellness and Building Community [Expedition Courses](#) to connect with other test takers, form study groups, & prioritize your well-being during exam prep!

How long should I study for?



MCAT

4-6 months



DAT

4-6 months



GRE

2-3 months



PA-CAT

4-6 months



OAT

3-4 months



Sample Study Plans

Plan 1 (MCAT/DAT)

- 3 months of content review
- 3 months of taking 6 to 10 full-length practice DAT/MCAT exams, with several days of spot review on topic areas identified as needing more study, following each exam

Plan 2 (MCAT/DAT)

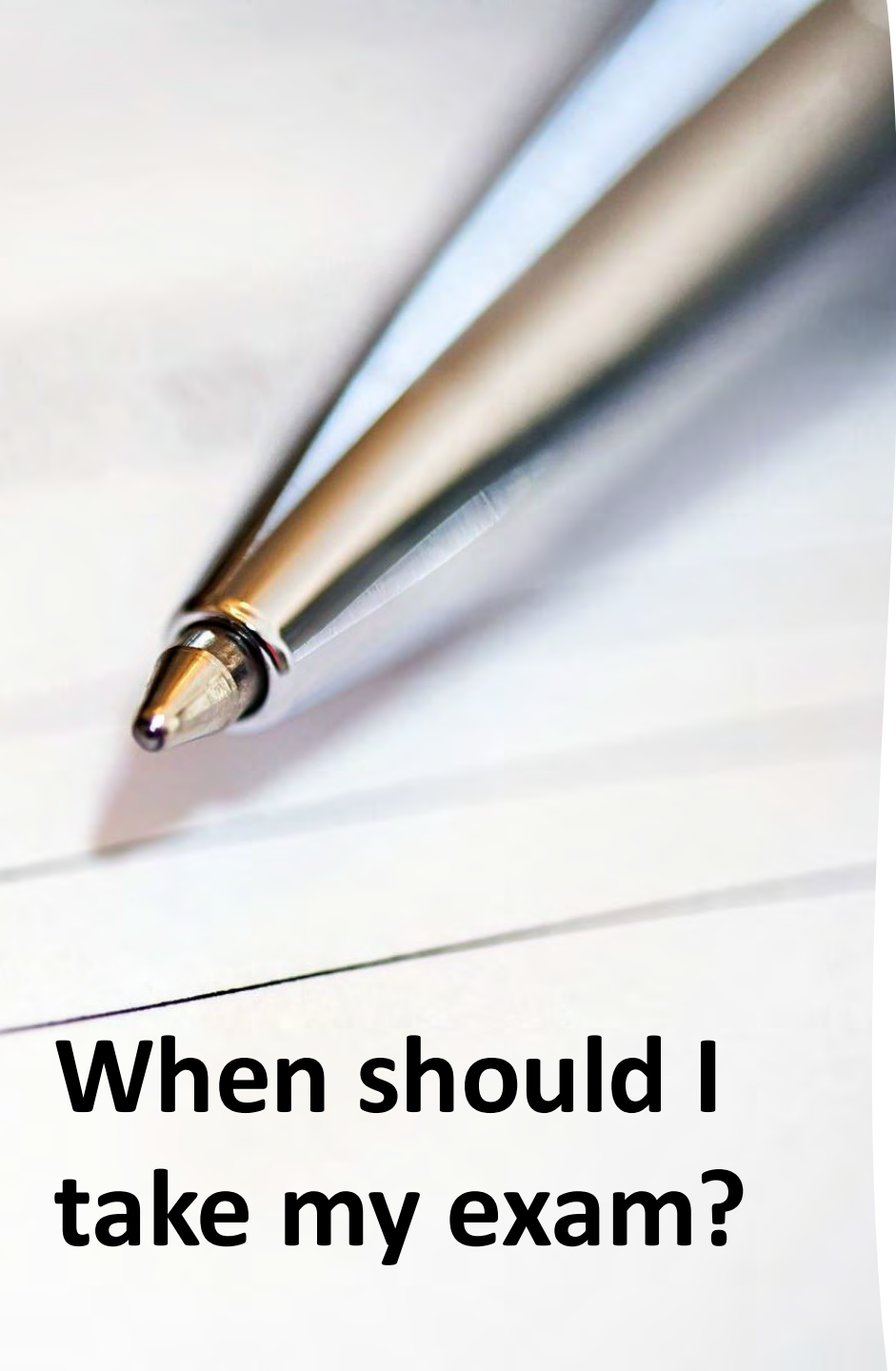
- 2-3 months of content review
- 1-2 months of combined content review with several full-length practice exams

Plan 3 (GRE)

- 1.5-2 months of content review
- 1-2 months of taking 4-6 to full-length practice GRE exams, with several days of spot review on topic areas identified as needing more study, following each exam

Plan 4 (OAT)

- 2 months of content review
- 1.5-2 months of combined content review with several full-length practice exams



When should I take my exam?

When you are ready to achieve your best score!

On a date that allows you to receive your score and apply early:

MCAT:

- June 1, 2025 (Letter Packet Deadline)

DAT:

- June 1, 2025 (Letter Packet Deadline)

OAT:

- June/July 2025

GRE:

- Vet – July/August 2025
- PA – April/May 2025

PA-CAT

- April/May 2025

Situational Judgement Tests:

- 1-2 months post application submission

EXAM GUIDANCE

What to expect from registration through test day

Prepare for Test Day

- **Register Early!** Apply for accommodations beforehand. Ensure your name matches your government issued ID!
- During study, **simulate test day conditions!** Do your practice tests under “test conditions.” Get up at the same time, have the same breakfast, pack the same snacks and lunch. Go someplace quiet, but not silent, to take your practice tests.
- **Embrace anti-perfectionism!** You are aiming for your best score, not a perfect score.
- **Adapt!** You always have the option to postpone, cancel, or void the test if you aren’t feeling confident about readiness!

Test Day Tips

- **Relax:** The Day Before: Relax, don't study! Unwind and relax. Exercise or meditate.
- **Go:** The Night Before: Go to bed early and get a good night's rest!
- **Wake up:** The Morning of: Wake up early and eat breakfast. Don't forget 2 forms of government issued ID!
- **Plan:** Plan to arrive to the test center early! Do a test run, in the morning traffic if possible. Check transportation schedules for public transit and parking directions if you are driving. Allow extra time!



What Happens if I don't Achieve a Competitive Score?

- One poor score will not keep you out of your chosen health profession school. **BUT** two+ poor scores are a bigger concern. Make sure you are prepared for next time!
 - Can I retake the exam in a few months? Yes, but this is **NOT** recommended for most applicants.
 - Defer your application until the next cycle and retake the exam in 4-6 months (after you've given yourself time to re-approach the material)
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Test Limits

- **MCAT:** Per AAMC Policy, you may take the MCAT up to three times in a testing year, up to four times over two testing years, and up to seven times in a lifetime.
- **DAT:** You can only take the DAT once every 90 days. You can only take the test three times, no more unless you get special permission from the ADA.
- **OAT:** A maximum of 4 administrations during a 1-year period (at least 60 days in between). Special request after 3 failed attempts.
- **GRE:** No lifetime limit, but a maximum of 5 times a year with at least 21 days in between.

The PMPH Program advises taking at least several months between exam dates to ensure a competitive retake.



RESOURCES



PMPH Resources

- [Entrance Exam Preparation Survey.xlsx](#)
- **Mapping Your Entrance Exam Seminars** offer complimentary, tuition-free MCAT and DAT prep courses exclusively for our students and alumni. These courses are thoughtfully designed and taught by Northeastern University students and alumni who have excelled in these demanding exams, providing a peer-led learning experience enriched with firsthand insights and strategies.

[Register Here!](#)



NORTHEASTERN PREMED AND PREHEALTH ADVISING PROGRAM

FALL '24 MCAT PREP COURSE

Wednesdays 7-9PM EDT
October 2nd - December 18th
Virtual Synchronous

[Register Here!](#)

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR:

Hi everyone! My name is Hope Zamora and I am so excited to be the PreHealth Department's MCAT Course Instructor this semester! For some background, I graduated from Northeastern with my BS in Behavioral Neuroscience in May 2023 and I am currently applying to medical school for matriculation in 2025. During my undergrad, I dedicated much of my time to tutoring students in General Biology with the Peer Tutoring Program, as well as serving as a Teaching Assistant for Genetics and General Chemistry. Having spent the summer after my graduation studying for the MCAT, I was ultimately able to succeed on the exam in September 2023. Much of my study plan involved test-taking strategies, practice, and self-reflection, in addition to targeted content review. With these strategies, alongside enough planning, determination, and a growth-oriented mindset, I believe any student can achieve their goal score on this exam. As such, I look forward to helping you all on your paths to success on the MCAT and your overall premed journey!

[Register Here!](#)



Northeastern PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program

FALL '24 DAT PREP COURSE

Wednesdays: 6 PM - 8 PM EDT
October 2nd - November 6th
In-Person Synchronous
Cahners 006, Boston Campus

SIGN UP HERE!

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR:

Hello everyone- My name is Vickrum. I just graduated from Northeastern this May. Since graduating I've been working as a prosthodontic assistant at Clearchoice dental implants. I also did a previous dental Co-op dental assisting at South Shore Oral Surgery. I understand how much of a struggle studying for the DAT can be, especially while on coop. My goal as an instructor is to help cut out some of the pitfalls of studying and share what strategies worked for me. I have also been applying to dental schools and am looking forward to sharing my experience and helping you all.

Q&A with MCAT & DAT Course Instructors!