



Tulane
University

Dedicated Study Plan – Step 1

Class of 2026

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General Guideline vs Individual approach

- Everyone is different and at different stage of preparedness
- Feel free to individualize this approach that suits your need
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you need help in customizing this approach
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you run into some challenge during prep time
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Overview

1. Step 1 – Outline, System & Subject distribution
2. CBSSA – Overview
3. CBSSA – Report Analysis/Interpretation
4. “Dedicated Time” Planning based on CBSSA report
5. Simulated Step 1: Practice test (@280 Q)
6. Question and Answers

Step 1

- <https://www.usmle.org/step-exams/step-1>
- 280 MCQ – 8 hours
- 7 blocks of 60 min + Total 45-60 min break time
- 40 or less Q per block – about 90 sec per question
- Once exit a block – Can't review or edit answers
- MCQ – One best choice, No negative point for wrong answer – so don't leave any blank!

Table 1: Step 1 Test Content Specifications*

System**	Range, %
Human Development***	1-3
Blood & Lymphoreticular/Immune Systems	8-13
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	10-14
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	7-12
Cardiovascular System	6-11
Respiratory & Renal/Urinary Systems	10-15
Gastrointestinal System	5-10
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	9-13
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	11-16
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	4-6
Social Sciences: Communication and Interpersonal Skills	6-9

https://www.usmle.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/USMLE_Content_Outline_0.pdf

* Percentages are subject to change at any time.

**Foundational Science content is distributed throughout the organ systems based on disease process/diagnosis.

*** The Human Development topic includes Normal Age-Related Findings and Care of the Well Patient. The remaining content that had been included in the General Principles category has been distributed to other organ system categories based on disease process/diagnosis. For more information, see our [infographic](#)

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.

How do I know if I am ready for Step 1

CBSSA for **Readiness** = Gold standard

How do I best prepare for Step 1

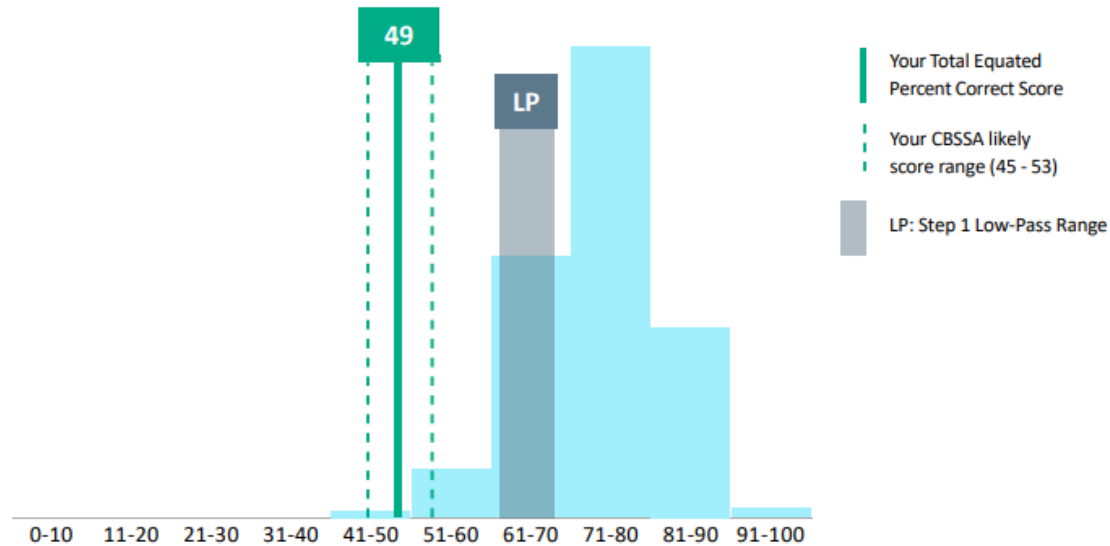
CBSSA as **Diagnostic tool** = to identify strong and weak areas

To strategize the prep time

Total Equated Percent Correct Score: 49%

The chart below represents the performance of a 2022 national cohort of students from LCME-accredited medical schools. Your total equated percent correct (EPC) score on this CBSSA exam is shown along with a range that corresponds to low passing performance (above but near the minimum passing standard) on the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) Step 1.

Based on your performance on this CBSSA, your estimated probability of passing Step 1 if you test within a week is 34%.



Interpreting Your Overall Results:

- **Readiness for Step 1:** Since CBSSA and Step 1 cover very similar content, CBSSA performance can be used in conjunction with other information to assess readiness for Step 1. However, if you take CBSSA under conditions that differ from the conditions under which you will be taking Step 1 (e.g., you used self-paced timing on CBSSA or consulted resources while testing), or if the CBSSA that you have taken contains the same questions that were on a CBSSA that you took previously, the information in this report will not be as reliable in helping you evaluate your readiness to take Step 1.
- **Your CBSSA equated percent correct score** represents the percentage of the content that you have mastered. It has been statistically adjusted to account for slight variations in exam form difficulty and may be slightly lower or higher than the actual percentage of questions you answered correctly on this specific form.
- **Your estimated probability of passing Step 1** can range from 1 to 99% and is calculated using a statistical model, updated annually, based on examinees who tested within one week of taking Step 1 for the first time (last updated on July 12, 2023). If you tested more than a week before you are scheduled to take it, your estimated probability may be different.
- **Your estimated probability is not a guarantee of your future Step 1 performance.** Many factors (e.g., changing levels of knowledge) may impact your performance on Step 1.
- **Your likely score range** indicates how much your score could change if you took CBSSA again without learning or forgetting any information. Under those conditions, your subsequent CBSSA score would fall within 4 points of your current score two-thirds of the time.
- **A PDF version of your report** is typically available within 4 hours. To review your score before then, log in to MyNBMESM Examinee Portal, click on the registration ID associated with this assessment, then click Review Your Results Interactively.

Your Total Equated Percent Correct Score

Your CBSSA likely score range (45 - 53)

LP: Step 1 Low-Pass Range

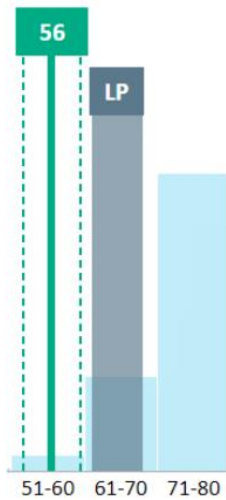
- Target score of CBSSA – > 70 (61 + 4 point variability + 5 point safety factor)
- https://www.nbme.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/CBSSA_Guidance.pdf

GUIDANCE BY SCENARIO

Your total equated percent correct score

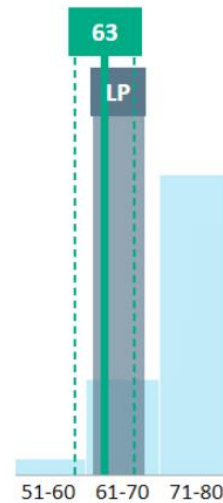
Your CBSSA likely score range

Step 1 low-pass range



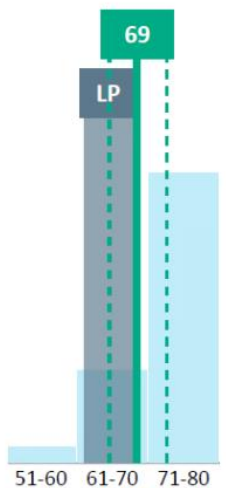
If your CBSSA likely score range is completely below the Step 1 low-pass range, you are at risk of failing Step 1.

Additional preparation is strongly recommended.



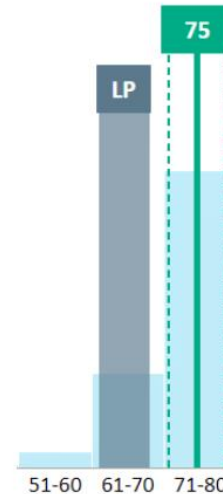
If your CBSSA likely score range is partly below the Step 1 low-pass range, your CBSSA performance is borderline. It is unclear whether your level of performance falls below or within the Step 1 low-pass range.

You may still be at risk of failing Step 1, and additional preparation is strongly recommended.



If your CBSSA likely score range is partly within and partly above the Step 1 low-pass range, your level of performance is still close to the minimum performance level required to pass Step 1.

Additional preparation is recommended.



If your CBSSA likely score range is completely above the Step 1 low-pass range, you are likely ready to take Step 1.

Please remember that CBSSA performance is not a guarantee of future Step 1 performance because many factors (e.g., changing levels of knowledge) may impact your performance on Step 1.

Report By System

Student 1		Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Questions
Performance by System							
General Principles	53	70				12-16%	
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	67	73				9-13%	
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	42	74				9-13%	
Respiratory and Renal/Urinary Systems	42	70				9-13%	
Blood & Lymphoreticular/Immune Systems	42	74				7-11%	
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	46	74				6-10%	
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	48	76				6-10%	
Cardiovascular System	49	71				5-9%	
Gastrointestinal System	48	73				5-9%	
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	36	77				4-6%	

Student 2		Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Items
Performance by System i							
General Principles	68	78				12-16%	
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	61	80				9-13%	
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	61	81				9-13%	
Respiratory and Renal/Urinary Systems	72	79				9-13%	
Blood & Lymphoreticular and Immune Systems	69	81				7-11%	
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	73	82				6-10%	
Musculoskeletal, Skin, & Subcutaneous Tissue	88	82				6-10%	
Cardiovascular System	59	79				5-9%	
Gastrointestinal System	77	80				5-9%	
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	56	80				4-6%	

Student 3		Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Items
Performance by System							
General Principles	50	76				12-16%	
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	57	78				9-13%	
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	41	79				9-13%	
Respiratory and Renal/Urinary Systems	50	76				9-13%	
Blood & Lymphoreticular/Immune Systems	44	79				7-11%	
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	73	80				6-10%	
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	82	80				6-10%	
Cardiovascular System	47	77				5-9%	
Gastrointestinal System	55	78				5-9%	
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	29	80				4-6%	

Report By Discipline

Student 1	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Questions
			Lower	Same	Higher	
Performance by Discipline						
Pathology	56	74				44-52%
Physiology	48	73				25-35%
Microbiology & Immunology	53	72				16-26%
Biochemistry & Nutrition	47	73				14-24%
Pharmacology	38	75				15-22%
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	39	68				11-15%
Behavioral Sciences	75	84				8-13%
Histology & Cell Biology	29	71				8-13%
Genetics	42	71				5-9%

Student 2

Student 2	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Items
			Lower	Same	Higher	
Performance by Discipline						
Pathology	72	81				44-52%
Physiology	74	80				25-35%
Microbiology & Immunology	67	81				16-26%
Biochemistry & Nutrition	75	81				14-24%
Pharmacology	87	83				15-22%
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	62	76				11-15%
Behavioral Sciences	82	87				8-13%
Histology & Cell Biology	73	78				8-13%
Genetics	69	80				5-9%

Student 3










Student 3	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Items
			Lower	Same	Higher	
Performance by Discipline						
Pathology	56	79				44-52%
Physiology	49	78				25-35%
Microbiology & Immunology	60	78				16-26%
Biochemistry & Nutrition	40	79				14-24%
Pharmacology	63	80				15-22%
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	45	74				11-15%
Behavioral Sciences	82	86				8-13%
Histology & Cell Biology	42	76				8-13%
Genetics	61	77				5-9%

Report by System

	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Questions
			Lower	Same	Higher	
Performance by System						
General Principles	53	70				12-16%
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	67	73				9-13%
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	42	74				9-13%
Respiratory and Renal/Urinary Systems	42	70				9-13%
Blood & Lymphoreticular/Immune Systems	42	74				7-11%
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	46	74				6-10%
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	48	76				6-10%
Cardiovascular System	49	71				5-9%
Gastrointestinal System	48	73				5-9%
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	36	77				4-6%

High priority systems

Report by Discipline

	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison:			% of Items
			Lower	Same	Higher	
Performance by Discipline i						
Pathology	72	81				44-52%
Physiology	74	80				25-35%
Microbiology & Immunology	67	81				16-26%
Biochemistry & Nutrition	75	81				14-24%
Pharmacology	87	83				15-22%
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	62	76				11-15%
Behavioral Sciences	82	87				8-13%
Histology & Cell Biology	73	78				8-13%
Genetics	69	80				5-9%

High
Priority
Disciplines

Study Plan – 2 elements

1. Scheduling

2. Resource

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	19	20	21 Today	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	1 March	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1 Apr	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Step 1	12	13

Scheduling

- Date for step 1
- Blocking day/time slots for life events
- Blocking 2 half days or 1 full day every week for rest
- Blocking buffer days.
- Blocking days for practice test – CBSSA or other (shelf assessments) & blocking time for review of incorrect questions on test
- Blocking day for simulation test a week before Step 1 date (optional)
- Count available days/hours
 - Questions/blocks distribution/review incorrect answers/review high yield material

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	19 CBSSA Diagnostic test	20 CBSSA Diagnostic test	21 Today	22	23	24
2 Rest ½ D	26	27	28 Rest ½ D	29	1 March	2
3 Rest ½ D	4	5 CBSSA Test review	6	7	8	9 Rest Day
10	11	12	13 Rest ½ D	14	15	16
17 Rest ½ D	18	19 CBSSA Test review	20	21	22 Family event	23
24	25	26	27 Rest ½ D	28	29	30
31	1 Apr Rest ½ D	2 SIM test	3 Test review	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Rest Day	11 Step 1	12	13

Creating sample weekly schedule

- Block times for basic important activities
 - Sleep, personal hygiene, food etc.
 - Exercise (yoga, gym, running, walking etc. at least 20 mins 3-4 times a week)
 - Block 10-15 mins daily for some kind of relaxation / meditation practice
 - Anything else that you may need to relax and unwind daily (social, entertainment etc.)
- Keep a buffer time (few hours to half day) every 3-4 days at least to begin with that can help you catch up with your schedule if you fall behind for whatever reason. Also block rest day.
- Now finally plan your study time which includes 1) practice questions, 2) learning from incorrect answers, and 3) rapid review of high yield information on a daily basis 4) content review for select topics
- Make sure to have multiple small breaks between study sessions.

Resources for Step 1



Primary

- U-World Learning Tool
- First Aid Learning Resource
- Flash Cards: Make your own, U World, Anki, ETC
- U-World Assessment Evaluation
- NBME Practice tests: Assessment

Secondary

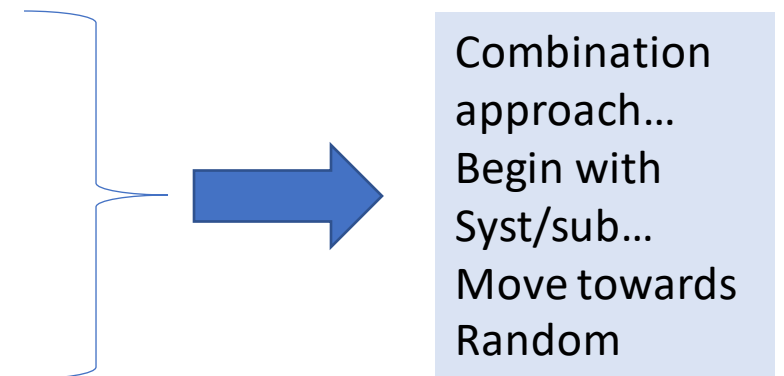
- Pathology : Rapid Review or Pathoma
- Physiology: BRS
- Microbiology Sketchy Micro
- Pharmacology Anki, Osmosis

Core elements of a Step 1 dedicated plan

- “non-Q based” topic review (from secondary resources)
- Questions (block) in tutor mode initially followed by timed mode
- Processing of wrong questions to extract high yield material
- Rapid, high repetition, high yield reviews of previous wrong questions

U-world questions

- No of questions to be aimed at least 75% @ 2700 in UWorld
- Tutor Vs Time mode
 - Tutor mode:
 - Immediate feedback
 - Not practicing test day timing
 - Timed mode:
 - Practicing test day timing
 - Delayed review of questions
- Questions based on Sub/System Vs Random
 - Subject/System
 - See all diseases for a topic at once
 - Doesn't simulate exam day
 - Random topics
 - Mimics actual exam



How to make progress using Uworld Q-bank

- Start with 1/2 blocks (40-Q each) daily
- Start with 1 System and Path+Phys as discipline
- Once the score is > 50% correct, add another discipline. Do this until all disciplines are in the question set.
- Next add another system. Continue to add systems when the scores improve.
- Once all systems are in the question bank begin doing blocks of random Q and try to do 3 blocks (120 question) daily
- Then about 5 days later add another block if possible.

Recap

- So far we have understood
 - Blocking events on your calendar between now and step 1
 - Creating sample weekly schedule
 - Selecting high priority system and discipline to begin with
 - Incorporating all systems and disciplines

On daily basis....

- 40 question blocks -Review wrong answers with ans. choice analysis
 - U-world explanation & Extract “high yield”
- Rapid repetition of previously extracted “high yield” on daily basis
- Knowledge-gap based content review

Defining High Yield: What do multiple choice question exams measure?

- A. Your level of knowledge
- B. Your understanding of a topic
- C. Your ability to become a competent physician
- D. Your ability to choose the correct answer choice out of multiple answer choices

Defining high yield: What do multiple choice question exams measure?

- A. Your level of knowledge
- B. Your understanding of a topic
- C. Your ability to become a competent physician
- D. Your ability to choose the correct answer choice out of multiple answer choices**

Processing of wrong questions to extract high yield material

Definition of High Yield

- Anything that allows you to choose the correct answer
- Anything that allows you to not choose the incorrect answer

Tool

- [Comparative answer choice analysis](#) (CACA)¹⁻³

Rationale for focusing on wrong questions only

- Objective evidence of weakness
- Avoiding cognitive overload
- Difficult to self assess⁴⁻⁵ level of guessing/uncertainty especially with stress of Step 1 prep

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-120 min

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-120 min

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-120 min

Review previous
days' High Yield
material

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-120 min

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-120 min

Review previous days'
High Yield material

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-120 min

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-80 min

Review previous days' High
Yield material

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA (5min/Q)
40-80 min

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA
(5min/Q)
30-60 min

Review previous
days' High Yield
material

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA
(5min/Q)
30-60 min

40 Q Block
60 min

CACA
(5min/Q)
30-60 min

Simulated exam

Simulated exams to build cognitive stamina & understand process for test day

Timing, format of Step 1 exam

- 7 x 40 question blocks with 1 hour per block
- 45 minutes of break time
 - Extra break time for finishing early/skipping 15 minutes tutorial
 - Extra break time for finishing question blocks early

Purpose

- Cognitive stamina
- Practicing timing
- Practice break use, bathroom use, food/drink, etc

Can be combined with NBME or private company self assessments

- Sim exam with 200Q from NBME self assessment and 80Q from bank
- Sim exam with 160Q from private company self assessment + 120Q from bank

General Guideline vs Individual approach

- Everyone is different and at different stage of preparedness
- Feel free to individualize this approach that suits your need
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you need help in customizing this approach
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you run into some challenge during prep time
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Combat burnout to optimize Step 1 outcome

During Step 1 dedicated study time¹

- 71% of students reported feeling burned out weekly or more often
- 52% of students reported feeling depressed weekly or more often

Burnout decreases cognitive function²⁻⁴

Scheduling elements

- Is your daily schedule realistic?
 - Cutting back on sleep will affect memory⁵
 - Enough break time in daily schedule to be sustainable?
- Is your overall schedule realistic?
 - Enough days off to avoid harmful burnout?
- Accounted for known life events?
- Rest day/light studying day before taking exam to optimize cognitive function?

Any Questions?

Thank you!