

## Survey Results for students who took the USMLE Step 1 for the first time in June 2007.

### 134 Total Responses

Ratings listed in conjunction with the materials/courses used are based on a scale of: 1 = Poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good and 4 = Excellent. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were not included in the calculation of the average score for any item.

#### Which USMLE Step One materials/courses did you use?

98.5%	Online Qbank	3.52
81.3%	What You Need To Know	3.40
55.2%	Goljan	3.43
.75%	Kaplan Live	1.00
93.3%	First Aid	3.67
65.7%	BRS	3.15
5.2%	USMLE World	4.00
3.0%	PASS Program	3.00
11.2%	Other	3.53

#### How much Qbank did you do?

.75%	None
3.7%	0-25%
16.4%	25-50%
30.6%	50-75%
48.5%	75-100%

#### Did you use Qbank for your MS 2 courses?

56.7%	Yes
43.3%	No

#### Did you use Qbank mainly after finals?

63.4%	Yes
36.6%	No

#### When did you start serious review/study for Step One?

0.0%	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester
29.1%	January
52.2%	Spring Break
18.7%	After finals

## Testing Center Information

**Austin** No comments recorded.

**Beaumont** No comments recorded.

**Clear Lake** Others may be taking other exams around you that require typing - keyboards are not silent. So beware.

**Greenspoint** No comments recorded.

**Harwin** Apparently the Harwin center is located next to a speaker store - either way; there were several loud "booms" during my exam. Also, many people were talking during the exam (non-med students) and fiddling with their chair levels. I arrived at 7:00 am but was not admitted to my exam until 8:30 am because the staff was so slow checking me in.

Bass at Harwin is distracting.

There are two rooms at Harwin, one is next to a speaker store and one is not. Before you sign up find out which is next to speaker store and do not sign up for that one.

Monitor had a freak out during my first block. Had to stop test and wait while they found new monitor.

The employees were great but the bass from the stereo shop next door was very distracting.

The computer screens at Harwin flicker and the glare is horrible, but I talked to an employee and he said all the screens are being replaced within the next year. You are no longer allowed to bring your own earplugs. They have noise-blocking headphones. I didn't try them, but they look heavy.

King Kong Electronics across the street. Bass was distracting.

**Kingwood** No comments recorded.

**Webster** No comments recorded.

## Comments on Qbank

- A little too detailed sometimes. Take with a grain of salt, but do take!
- explanations are over kill
- Gives you a good feel for the test but the questions are harder than the real thing

### Comments on Qbank (continued)

- Good for practice but questions on the real thing were a little different
- Good for studying but not like the real test. NBME online tests were more like the real thing
- Good for timing and statistics of changed answers only
- Good indicator of actual test questions.
- Good material to learn from but questions not like the real test
- Good resource for questions.
- Good source
- Good to get used to time crunch.
- Great for working on time.
- Great source although sometimes not representative of the questions asked
- Harder than the actual exam, but you should definitely try to finish all questions.
- I felt it was a poor reference to the real test
- I thought the practice full length exam was good.
- It was a godsend that the medical school paid for this - a great investment!
- It was good to practice testing under pressure and time constraints.
- More anatomy on Qbank than actual exam
- Not even close to the real thing
- Ok example of difficulty of questions
- Pretty good, but I wish the school would give us the option to use USMLE World instead.
- Program interface was similar to actual test. Questions themselves not very similar - actual questions were either much harder or much easier
- Questions may be too detailed vs. the actual test
- Questions were a bit tougher than the real thing
- Questions were more difficult than the real thing but they prepared me well
- Start early
- Start early because reading all the explanations is very high-yield. Great for studying for MS 2 classes!
- This is an excellent resource. It was more difficult than the actual step but I felt it really prepared me especially to take a computer based test.
- Too detailed and doesn't emulate the exam
- Too detailed, but still very helpful. Do it all.
- Very specific and detailed- won't need this much info for step 1 but great to use for classes
- Vital to study for finals. Used less and less as step approached.

## Comments on What You Need To Know

- Without this, I would have been in big trouble. Brian Jenkins, MD deserves a faculty position here - he is an excellent teacher.
- Signed up, but stopped going. Thought time was better spent solo studying. Expensive
- Really helped organize me and focus on what you need to know
- Not worth the money if you can read on your own
- Not necessary to score well!
- Learned a lot, still have to study on own, take test within a few weeks to be effective
- It is just a guy talking but he mentioned several points that got me questions I would not have known. His emailed questions and quizzes during the session were helpful. His advice on how to schedule your studying was helpful.
- If you need structure and discipline, either use this or study with someone who is.
- I was really surprised how well this prepared me for the real exam
- I was a skeptic, but is a necessary evil
- He is very good at making sure you cover everything.
- Great way to get through the First Aid quickly
- Great review course with good additional info
- Great for setting a study pace.
- Good for memorizing information and keeping the days not so lonely.
- Good to cram everything in one month and force you to study during your free month.
- Good structure and way to memorize but much of the material covered was not on the test
- Good pace to go through First Aid the month before. Good for those that need a little motivation.
- Good for motivation for 3 weeks but bad because he basically read First Aid out loud
- Gave me a schedule and structure for studying. Dr. Jenkins was not a great teacher but he helps organize you and get a plan of action--very important
- Excellent-the only way to speed through the First Aid
- Excellent course! It really helped to intergrades all of the subject and build a framework of study with.
- Definitely need to have read FA at least one before the course to make the most of it.
- Boring as hell but good for micro/biochem cramming

### **Comments on Goljan**

- Would highly recommend using this audio and path textbook throughout the second year course in correlation with your path lectures
- Ties everything together! The only thing that did this for us all year.
- Rapid review pathology a must!
- Outstanding
- Nothing better. At least 15 questions on my exam
- Must use - he covers random things classes don't
- He is the best! Listen during the year!
- Great to listen to, but few people had time to use all of his lectures, given the availability of other resources.
- Great for following his book.
- Good for learning mechanics and pathology.
- Good for learning broad concepts
- Good but speaks too slowly
- Goljan ties in subjects extremely well
- Fun to listen to
- Fun and interesting. A good break from book studying if you feel burned out.
- excellent, best started early and in tandem with second year
- Best summary of Path around
- Audio is good. Rapid review book is great if and only if you get started early

### **Comments on USMLE World**

- The school should consider buying this!
- The best question bank! Question format and computer format is similar to the Step 1.
- Questions had a very similar format to USMLE questions
- Far superior to Kaplan's Qbank - closer to real thing
- Emulates the actual exam very well

### **Comments on Kaplan Live Lecture**

- No comments recorded.

### **Comments on First Aid**

- You have to fill in a lot of detail.
- Try to read rather thorough before school ends
- too rote, best reviewed early and often
- This and Qbank should be your top resources. Read 3 times!
- The resource
- The Bible of Step 1
- The Bible of Step 1

### **Comments on First Aid (continued)**

- The best resource
- Succinct but not comprehensive. A must. Use the book recommendations in the back.
- No mechanisms, very basic. Needed as a foundation.
- Must read!!
- Memorize it and all small details
- Know it well
- Has much of what we need to know in it
- Great review although poor resource
- Good summary
- Fantastic but incomplete!
- Essential
- Don't use as your only study material. Just don't. Having the latest edition is not necessary.
- Better than advertised
- Awesome
- Better than advertised

### **Comments on BRS**

- Used for reference
- Use Biochem, Phys and Path
- Too detailed, but good as a reference
- Physiology
- Phys only
- Pathology and Physiology are excellent.
- Pathology and Physiology
- Only good for the specific subjects you need. The clinical correlations are the most important part
- Okay for reference.
- No time to read these! I'm glad I only bought two and not all of them like some of my classmates.
- More than First Aid, not in depth enough
- Great for detailed reviews
- Good for in depth review
- especially Pathology, Physiology and Biochemistry
- Depends on book (Path & Phys are good)
- BRS Physiology is great
- BRS Physiology is good.
- Best for finals. Too much for Step 1
- Behavioral was closest to actual exam; Pathology was least relevant
- A lot of info - review early and make a few notes on important subjects

## **Other Materials**

### **Clinical Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple**

- If you don't remember (or never really knew) any micro, take the time to get through this book. If I had only bought this book last year, I could have honored micro with so little effort.

### **NBME Practice Tests**

- Must take online tests

### **Kaplan Books**

- Too long but worth the time.

### **Goljan Notes**

- Great with his lectures
- Pathology review – great

### **Physiology by Linda Costanzo**

- GREAT Physiology book. Very easy to read

### **High Yield Series**

- For Neurology, Embryology and Gross Anatomy
- Anatomy, Biochemistry, Embryology are okay (not necessary)
- High Yield Histology is very helpful in integrating – don't be fooled by the name.
- Neurology and Cell Biology are great

### **My one best piece of advice for Step 1 preparation is:**

- You can't know everything.
- WYNTK, start early
- WYNTK was very helpful
- Use Qbank for MS2 exam prep
- Use Goljan (Rapid review pathology) for pathology! Goljan & First Aid + Pharm cards = 240 ++ Also do well in second year courses. Some things will stick with you.
- Understand basic science experiments. Know all of First Aid, that alone doesn't help but you need to know much more.
- Talk to a couple of 3rd years you trust to get their detailed plans of step prep to compare and contrast
- The test is only 8 hours - that's including break time! Take short breaks and DO NOT take lunch. From the time you log in the test will automatically log you out exactly 8 hours from that time. Keep track of your time.
- Take your exam early as possible so you have time for vacation.

### **My one best piece of advice for Step 1 preparation is: (continued)**

- Take WYNTK
- Take what you need to know. Start Goljan Path early
- Take the WYNTK class!!! And find a good library where you can park close by (U of Houston, not Jesse Jones!)
- Take the \$45 test from the web the week before your test!
- Take exam very soon after the WYNTK course. The more time that passes, the more you begin to forget the high-yield facts.
- Take a practice test
- Study.
- Study.
- Study, hard core for classes. There is too much to learn just studying for Step 1. Review well for finals. The questions are fairly representative. Absolutely study with at least one other person at least once a week. You don't know everything so two heads are better than one. Work on Qbank daily (~40 questions a day max) and finish it. Read First Aid at least two times. Review MS1 subjects in the spring because you won't have time after finals. Your objective should not be to memorize every fact but rather to understand things-then memorize the facts.
- Study!
- Study hard and use Qbank and First Aid
- Study hard and don't let the stress monster eat you alive. It will be fine.
- Study for your classes! Your classes are preparing you for the step.
- Study for exams and step 1 simultaneously. Begin using Step 1 books & First Aid as a MS 1.
- Study early
- Stay positive. Do Qbank.
- Start reviewing first year material in January. Do as many practice questions as possible. Dedicate a weekend per subject during second semester.
- Start reviewing earlier than spring break.
- Start Qbank early and don't worry about getting them wrong in the beginning
- Start Qbank early (February) and go at a decent pace, i.e. not too much cramming at the end.
- Start Qbank early
- Start lightly in January/February and then hit hard during/after spring break.
- Start Goljan at the beginning of second year. Memorize First Aid
- Start early; use Qbank for your actual classes; take WYNTK
- Start early: Go through First Aid once before spring break (or at least one before WYNTK class) start Qbank after spring break (right after) and use Qbank for Finals

**My one best piece of advice for Step 1 preparation is: (continued)**

- Start early. Work more Qbank. Not as much micro as on Qbank.
- Start early. Read First Aid five times!
- Start early. Read all of First Aid 3-4 times and do all of Qbank at least once. Study with someone who will keep you in a positive and productive frame of mind.
- Start early. Incorporate study for classes/finals with board study
- Start early, USMLE World is your best friend
- Start early, take the test early
- Start early, know First Aid cold, DO ALL Qbank questions
- Start early!
- Start early!
- Start early! Start early! NBME has 4 practice exams online that you can purchase. Definitely do those questions. Also, as you go through MS 2 courses, make some notes in your First Aid. Take WYNTK if you can afford it.
- Start early and enjoy the process
- Start early
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- Start early
- Start doing Qbank early, like during spring break, because it helps a lot for finals.
- Review cell biology!
- Repetition is key - go through everything at least a few times. Write key facts that you can't seem to remember on post its and stick them in places that you will see everyday.
- Relax. You know everything already. The purpose of the month long cram session is to refresh everything. Best way to prepare = do well in medical school for two years
- Relax if you put in the time, you should do fine. The test will be anti-climatic
- Read the First Aid, watch the PASS program videos, take practice NBME tests online and do lots of questions.
- Read Goljan or listen to the lectures online. Start studying early - use First Aid during second year classes
- Read First Aid
- Qbank, Goljan
- Prepare yourself with as many questions as possible on Qbank to get your stamina up.
- Pace yourself. Start early!

### **My one best piece of advice for Step 1 preparation is: (continued)**

- More than four weeks of studying and you will be burned out!
- Make sure to make a study schedule and stick to, but be realistic about the amount of material you think you can cover in a day.
- Make note cards and study them on hard subjects
- Make a study plan in November and make sure to give it some space for cushioning. Goljan is money. First Aid is money. Dr. Jenkins class is money.
- Make a schedule and stick to it. Go through it a little bit at a time and go over it all multiple times.
- Make a plan and stick to it. Do not get confused by everyone else's plan.
- Listen to the 37 lecture Goljan series 3-4 times. Use Goljan Pathology following 2nd year path blocks
- Listen to Goljan early.
- Learn from your missed questions. Start early. Search studentdoctor.net for advice from many people scoring 230+. Do the NBME tests in tutorial mode.
- Know the First Aid like the back of your hand!
- Know basic sciences, even stuff you learned in undergrad. Know how to interpret graphs and supplement the First Aid.
- Keep positive, it's a long test.
- If you don't have time to listen to 40 hours worth of Goljan lectures then don't try and overextend yourself. Trust that what you are doing will work for you. Don't let the Goljanites scare you into thinking that all the time they spend listening to Goljan lectures is going to get them a higher grade.
- Get through First Aid before end of school 2nd semester tests
- Focus on learning and understanding the material presented during the first 2 years. This is not really a test you can cram very well for.
- First Aid
- Finish Qbank. USMLE World is better.
- Finish Qbank, don't wait to study. Study First Aid throughout year for MS II courses.
- Figure out what works for you and do it. Other people will do different things or highlight more, but that's okay
- Eat, sleep, breath Edward Goljan. Goljan is a diety.
- Don't worry too much - finals are one of your best study tools. Use Qbank for the subjects you are taking finals in - before the final. WYNTK was the best resource around!
- Don't stress too much and do lots of Qbank.
- Don't pick and choose information from different resources. Get the BIG PICTURE and most of your information from one course (Goljan)

**My one best piece of advice for Step 1 preparation is: (continued)**

- Don't listen to anyone's advice. It's hard, even if you memorize First Aid.
- Don't just study from First Aid, use it as a review. Also do questions, questions, questions
- Don't get overwhelmed by everyone's advice.
- Don't freak out. Make sure you know where Qbank scores will place you on the test. Your scores may go up at the very end.
- Don't freak out and if you do - it's okay. Everyone does.
- Don't do a lot of specific subject tests on Qbank, it will skew your later averages.
- Don't put it off, take in early June. Don't use too many resources; pick a few and trust them. Know that you will be prepared!
- Don't be too intense in the beginning - you will burn out!
- Do what has worked for you for the past two years. Everyone will give you tips on what's good for the boards - but just do what you're used to.
- Do NYNTK. It kept me on track and added great advice.
- Do more than I did.
- Do lots of questions. The actual exam is very variable from easy sections to hard sections so be prepared for anything.
- Decide which study materials/books you want to get through (be reasonable with the volume of material). Then make a schedule that will allow you to get through them, and stick to it. Study several subjects every day so you don't get bored. It is ok to take a few hours off every night to relax with friends and loved ones; you'll be less stressed that way.
- Concentrate on pathophysiology and try to integrate material. Class work prepares you well for regurgitation questions, but you have to understand disease processes in order to answer integrative questions
- Choose book early (BRSS, FA, etc) and use them along with courses. By the time the finals are over, you will have read them at least a couple of time.
- BRS for Path & Phys
- Be sure to be organized and disciplined. If you take WYNTK, schedule your test five days after the class ends. Anything longer than that will cause you to forget information
- Be serious about your study. Studying for the step includes doing well in your second year courses. Be efficient with your study time and maintain a schedule