



AAMC

PREview®
Professional
Readiness Exam

The AAMC PREview® Exam Examinee Preparation Guide



Association of
American Medical Colleges



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AAMC PREview® Exam: Examinee Preparation Guide

Overview

Congratulations! Reviewing this guide is an important step to taking the AAMC PREview® professional readiness exam. The AAMC PREview exam is an opportunity for you to showcase competencies that go beyond your academic readiness, such as empathy and compassion, teamwork and collaboration, resilience, and reliability. Just like students need to enter medical school with knowledge about basic science to be successful, students also need to enter with basic professionalism knowledge. Your performance on the PREview exam will provide medical schools insight into your knowledge of effective and ineffective professional behavior and potential to develop into a doctor who demonstrates compassion, empathy, and professionalism.

The exam includes written scenario sets that present hypothetical dilemmas that you may encounter in medical school, which are linked to nine professional competencies. The scenario sets are developed in collaboration with the medical school community, including faculty, admissions officers, and student and diversity affairs officers, and thoroughly reviewed to ensure validity and fairness for all applicants.

The AAMC is providing multiple free resources to help you prepare for the PREview exam. We recommend that you take advantage of the advice, strategies, and preparation resources as you prepare to complete the PREview exam.

This guide walks you through the format, scoring, competencies assessed, and instructions for taking the PREview exam. It also provides strategies and directs you toward multiple free resources provided by the AAMC to help you prepare for the exam.



Format

The exam includes written scenario sets that present hypothetical dilemmas linked to professional competencies. The scenarios are based on real-world situations you may experience in medical school. They are set in educational, healthcare, or other real-life settings.

Following each scenario are items (also referred to as “responses”) which reflect a range of possible actions you could take in response to the dilemma presented in the scenario.

Sample Scenario Set

You are pursuing a two-week volunteer opportunity at a well-regarded local clinic. When you receive your course schedule, you realize the volunteer opportunity would conflict with your weekly required lab. This is the only time that the lab is offered this semester, so you are not able to make up the lab. Participation in the lab will count toward your grade.

Please rate the effectiveness of each response to the situation.

1. Skip your lab for two weeks to attend the volunteer opportunity.
2. Ask your lab instructor to identify a solution that will allow you to attend both.
3. Stop pursuing the volunteer opportunity so that you can attend the required lab.
4. Tell your lab instructor in advance that you will miss two of your scheduled lab sessions.
5. Attend the lab and investigate if similar volunteer opportunities are available at another time.

You will be asked to rate the effectiveness of each response using a four-point scale:

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
The response will cause additional problems or make the situation worse.	The response will not improve the situation or may cause a problem.	The response could help but will not significantly improve the situation.	The response will significantly improve the situation.

There are 186 items on the test, and you will have 75 minutes to complete the test.

Note on scenarios in healthcare settings. While the PREview exam includes scenarios that are set in healthcare settings, you do not need medical knowledge, knowledge of hospital protocols, or healthcare experience to understand the scenario and accurately evaluate the effectiveness of a response. The PREview exam was designed for pre-health students to measure their understanding of professional behavior, not their healthcare knowledge. All test content is reviewed to ensure prior healthcare knowledge or experience is not needed to perform well on the exam.

Scoring

Your PREview exam score is based on the extent to which the effectiveness ratings of your responses (items) align with medical educators’ consensus ratings. Full credit is awarded for an item if your rating matches the medical educators’ rating. Partial credit is awarded if your rating is one rating away from the medical educators’ consensus rating but still on the same side of the scale (i.e., Effective/Very Effective responses or Ineffective/Very Ineffective responses). For example, if an item is keyed “Effective” and you rate it “Very Effective,” you receive half credit. If you rate the same item “Ineffective,” you do not receive credit as the item key is on the opposite side of the scale.

Higher scores suggest that your ratings align more closely with medical educators’ consensus ratings, whereas lower scores suggest your ratings align less closely with medical educators’ consensus ratings. PREview exam score is based on the extent to which your effectiveness ratings of each response (item) align with medical educators’ ratings. Full credit is awarded for an item if your rating matches the medical educators’ rating. Partial credit is awarded if your rating is close to the medical educators’ rating.



Competencies

The AAMC PREview exam assesses examinees' understanding of behavior across essential professional competencies for entering medical students. It is helpful to keep these competencies in mind as you read scenarios and evaluate the effectiveness of items.

Commitment to Learning and Growth

Growth: Practices continuous personal and professional growth for improvement, including setting and communicating goals for learning and development; reflects on successes, challenges, and mistakes; pursues opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding; and asks for and incorporates feedback to learn and grow.

Cultural Awareness: Appreciates how historical, sociocultural, political, and economic factors affect others' interactions, behaviors, and well-being; values diversity; and demonstrates a desire to learn about different cultures, beliefs, and values.

Cultural Humility: Seeks out and engages diverse and divergent perspectives with a desire to understand and willingness to adjust one's mindset; understands a situation or idea from alternative viewpoints; reflects on one's values, beliefs, and identities and how they may affect others; reflects on and addresses bias in oneself and others; and fosters a supportive environment that values inclusivity.



To assess applicants' knowledge of behaviors related to Cultural Awareness and Cultural Humility, some scenarios include more sensitive content. While it may be a challenging topic, Cultural Awareness and Cultural Humility are important parts of the foundation upon which medical schools will train students for physician practice. The AAMC intends to measure these competencies in a fair and appropriate manner. All test content is reviewed to ensure it does not contain situations, actions, or language that might be offensive or distracting to some examinees.

Empathy and Compassion: Recognizes, understands, and acknowledges others' experiences, feelings, perspectives, and reactions to situations; is sensitive to others' needs and feelings; and demonstrates a desire to help others and alleviate others' distress.

Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: Behaves with honesty and integrity; considers multiple and/or conflicting principles and values to inform decisions; adheres to ethical principles when carrying out professional obligations; resists pressure to engage in unethical behavior; and encourages others to behave honestly and ethically.

Interpersonal Skills: Demonstrates an awareness of how social and behavioral cues affect people's interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; recognizes and manages one's emotions and understands how emotions impact others or a situation; and treats others with dignity, courtesy, and respect.



Reliability and Dependability: Demonstrates accountability for performance and responsibilities to self and others; prioritizes and fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; and understands consequences of not fulfilling one's responsibilities to self and others.

Resilience and Adaptability: Perseveres in challenging, stressful, or ambiguous environments or situations by adjusting behavior or approach in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles, and recognizes and seeks help and support when needed; recovers from and reflects on setbacks; and balances personal well-being with responsibilities.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Collaborates with others to achieve shared goals and prioritizes shared goals; adjusts role between team member and leader based on one's own and others' expertise and experience; shares information with team members and encourages this behavior in others; and gives and accepts feedback to improve team performance.

Exam Instructions and Guidance

Read each scenario and response carefully before rating the effectiveness of the response.

As you evaluate the responses, please follow the instructions and guidance below:

- Each scenario describes a situation that students may encounter during medical school. You should **assume the role of a medical student** in each scenario.
- Consider each response as an **immediate next step** in the scenario, unless otherwise noted.
- Everything you need to know to evaluate each response is included in the scenario and the response itself. Do not assume anything beyond what is written in the scenario or response.
- Evaluate and rate each response independently. Do not compare the responses to each other or rank order the responses.
- Within a scenario set, each effectiveness rating can be used more than once or not at all. Not all scenario sets will include responses that reflect each effectiveness rating.
- As in real life, there may be multiple ways to respond to a situation. The response you think may be most or least effective may not be present. Each scenario set includes a sample of possible responses to the situation.

Some scenarios are more complex and include multiple and/or competing dilemmas. Consider the entire context of the scenario when evaluating each response. You may see similar types of responses across scenarios. Remember that a behavior that appears in two different scenarios may have different consequences based on the context in which it occurs.



Preparing for the PREview Exam

Preparation Strategies

The AAMC developed multiple free resources and practice materials that are available on the [AAMC website](#). During the 2023 administration, 95% of examinees who responded to the post-exam survey reported that they prepared for the exam and approximately 50% spent 3 hours or less preparing. Over 80% of examinees took the AAMC practice exam and over 70% utilized AAMC's other preparation materials. More than 90% of respondents found AAMC resources to be useful. A small percentage of examinees (7%) reported purchasing preparation materials focused on the PREview exam from a private company.

When preparing for the exam, there are several steps you can take.

- Review the [nine professional competencies and definitions](#) measured by the PREview exam, as each scenario you encounter will address one or more of these competencies. Reflect on situations where you demonstrated or developed these competencies. What actions did you take in those situations? What resulted from your actions?
- Complete the practice exam to familiarize yourself with the test format and the types of scenarios you'll see on the actual exam. The AAMC developed the practice exam in collaboration with subject matter experts in the medical school community just like the actual exam.
 - Compare your effectiveness ratings to medical educators' effectiveness ratings in the scoring key to better understand your performance.
 - Review the scoring key rationales to better understand how medical schools evaluate the effectiveness of different responses to the scenarios.
- Prepare for test day:
 - Watch the [PREview Test Day Experience Video](#) to become familiar with the remote-proctored online experience. The video will highlight the check-in process, key functions and features of the exam platform, and submission of your exam after completion.
 - Review the policies and procedures on the [AAMC PREview Essentials](#).
 - [Log in](#) prior to test day to walk through a tutorial demonstrating the features and functions of the online test system.

Practice Exams

The AAMC developed two practice exams in collaboration with subject matter experts in the medical school community, including medical school staff in admissions, student affairs, diversity affairs, and faculty. Subject matter experts reviewed all test content and created the scoring key to help ensure a valid, fair test for all applicants that is scored in accordance with medical school expectations and standards.

Each practice exam has the same look, feel, and length as the actual PREview exam, includes a variety of types of scenarios, and addresses the nine professional competencies measured on the actual exam.

The purpose of the practice exams is to help you become more familiar with the test format (i.e., scenarios, responses, and rating scale) and types of scenarios used to measure the professional competencies. If you plan to use a practice exam to practice timing, we recommend allotting 75 minutes to complete the exam, the time allotted for the actual PREview exam¹.

¹ If you were approved to take the test with accommodations, we recommend practicing with the amount of time indicated in your approval letter.



Each practice exam booklet includes a scoring key and scoring key rationale for each item. We recommend comparing your effectiveness rating for each item to the scoring key after you have completed the practice exam to better understand your performance. The purpose of the rationales is to help familiarize you with the process for evaluating the effectiveness of responses, including how to apply the effectiveness rating scale. After completing the practice exam, we recommend comparing your effectiveness rating for each item with the scoring key and review the corresponding rationale to get a better sense of the reasoning applied by our medical school experts.



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