Should I Retake the MCAT?

Barring any disastrous or distracting events happening around the time that you took your first MCAT exam, the following are suggestions to consider when evaluating whether to retake the MCAT.

1. Your MCAT Score
   - How does your score compare to your timed practice exams?
     Were your timed practice exam scores higher than the actual exam score you received? Previously, AAMC data on retesters suggested that those scoring three points higher on practice tests should consider retesting. Because the MCAT scoring scale recently changed, students should consult a Prehealth adviser.
   - How does your score compare to your MIT peers? To applicants nationally? To the medical schools you are most interested in?
   - Are you significantly below the mean accepted MCAT? Is your score within the range of admitted MCAT scores?
     → MIT mean admitted MCAT = 34.5 (under the old test scoring scale, which translates to approximately the 95th percentile), more data can be found in the CareerBridge Resource Library.
     → National mean admitted MCAT can be found at https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/
     → Mean admitted MCAT by school is available in the Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR) book located in the E39-305 and at AAMC.org.

2. Preparation
   - Did you devote enough time to studying for the first exam?
     → Individuals typically take 1-3 months to study for the MCAT based on their individual test taking study needs and confidence in the material being tested.
   - Did you use all resources at your disposal to help you study and prepare for the exam?
     → Practice exams provided through the MCAT website http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm
     → Prep courses or prep course materials from friends who have already taken the MCAT.
   - Does your first MCAT exam warrant a retake (see #1)? If so, will you be able to devote enough time now to retake the MCAT? Will the time devoted to studying for this second MCAT exam detract from time you need to devote elsewhere?

3. Timing
   - Is there an open MCAT exam date available for you to take the exam by June of your planned application cycle? (Ex. For individuals seeking 2017 matriculation to medical school, we recommend completing the MCAT no later than June 2016 to allow for early applications to medical school. For current students, it is advisable to take the MCAT no later than January of the year before you intend to matriculate.)
→ Exam seats fill up quickly. You may not be able to register for a convenient exam location depending on when you register. The May and June exams tend to fill up quickly.

- Do you have enough time to study for a retake of the exam and attend to the rest of your application responsibilities? (Writing a personal statement, collecting letters of recommendation, researching schools, etc.)

4. Value Added

- Is another area of your application weaker than your MCAT score? (Ex. Volunteer work, community service, GPA, leadership, etc.)

→ If your MCAT score is relatively good in comparison to the mean and range of admitted MCATs, it may not be necessary to retake the exam.

- Can time better be spent developing other aspects of your application versus studying for a second MCAT? To determine this, please speak with a member of the Prehealth Advising staff and/or your Prehealth Advisor.

**Important MCAT Information to Note:**

- MCAT exam scores are reported 30 days after completing the exam.

- All MCAT exam scores are sent to the medical schools you designate on your AMCAS** application. (Provided that the exam was taken within 3 years of application.) Applicants do not get to select which scores are provided to the medical schools.

- July, August or September MCAT exams taken during the application cycle for the year you intend to matriculate to medical school will delay your AMCAS application. (June 2016 starts the application cycle for applicants pursuing medical school matriculation for Fall 2017.) AMCAS will wait until all scores are received before sending your primary application to the medical schools you designated on AMCAS.

*AAMC - Association of American Medical Colleges

**AMCAS - The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) is a non-profit, centralized application processing service for applicants to the first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools. Regardless of the number of AMCAS schools to which you apply, you submit just one application to AMCAS via the Web.

https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/

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