

PCAT Preparation
March 29, 2011

- I. Why is the PCAT important?
 - A. Standardized test
 1. Variance exists among the quality of education offered by different academic institutions. The PCAT provides a method for assessing the overall preparedness of each individual.
 - B. There is a correlation between the PCAT and the NAPLEX score.
 - C. Some pharmacy schools weigh the PCAT heavily towards admission.

- II. What is the outline of the PCAT exam?
 - A. It is a 5 hour computer based test. No calculators or scratch paper are allowed. Each individual is given a white board to work out problems. Only the test proctor can erase the white board.
 - B. Essay #1(30 minutes): The test begins with an essay regarding problem solving.
 1. Often it concerns current events.
 2. You may want to structure the essay into 5 paragraphs (1-Introduction, 2,3,4-sustaining body (perhaps 2 pro and 1 con), 5-conclusion)
 3. The essay is typed not written. Make sure you can type well.
 4. The essay will be graded on problem solving skills and grammar.
 - C. Verbal Section (30 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 questions are graded)
 1. This section will focus on analogy (60%) and sentence completion (40%).
 2. Prepare by expanding your vocabulary and learning how to dissect words.
 - D. Biology Section (30 minutes, 48 questions - only grade 40)
 1. The composite of this section is General Biology (60%), Microbiology (20%), Anatomy / Physiology (20%).

- E. Chemistry Section (30 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 are graded)
 - 1. The composite is General Chemistry (60%) and Organic Chemistry (40%)
 - 2. Most all of the Organic Chemistry material is covered in O-Chem I at WSU.
 - 3. Chem 3000 Quantitative Analysis is a very beneficial course.
 - F. After the Chemistry section there will be a break.
 - G. Essay #2 (30 minutes)
 - 1. Only one of the two essays will be graded.
 - 2. Essays are scored on a 1 to 5 scale. Seldom are they scored higher than 3.
 - H. Reading Comprehension (50 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 graded)
 - 1. Read the questions first.
 - 2. Highlight important facts in the paragraph. Perhaps color code highlighting.
 - I. Quantitative Ability (40 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 are graded)
 - 1. The composition is Basic Math (15%), Algebra (20%), Probability / Statistics (20%), Pre-Calculus (22%), Calculus (22%)
 - 2. Math completed through Calculus II provides optimum preparation.
- III. How is the PCAT scored?
- A. Immediately after the exam you will be given a rough score without the contribution of the essay. Complete score usually takes 5 weeks to be sent back to the test taker.
 - B. The raw score can range from 200 to 600, but the score that counts is the percent based upon a normalizing group (your performance compared to a control group).
 - C. A composite (overall score) > 70 is desirable with scoring above 50% in each of the areas.
 - D. Some applicants plan to take the test twice, using the first one as experience.

- IV. What is the best way to prepare for the PCAT?
- A. Complete all of the courses covered on the PCAT.
 - B. Take as many practice tests as possible (KAPLAN, Dr. Collins, Pearson View)
 - C. Review study guides from above sources.
 - D. Clear your schedule to allow for time to review.
 - E. Get a good night rest the night before.