

USMLE Step 1 Survey

by Raman Veerappan (IEA President - Fall 2017)

January 2016 Entering Class: took test in Spring 2018

The Numbers

Responses: 40/68 (59%)

USMLE Step 1 Score: 248.5 ± 10.1

WMPG: 92.90 ± 1.90

Average NBME practice test score: 236.8 ± 14.8

Average BSCE 2: 82.2% ± 5.9

weeks studied: 8.54

hours studied per day: 10.3

- 12.5% Felt not enough / 75% felt just enough / 12.5% felt too much

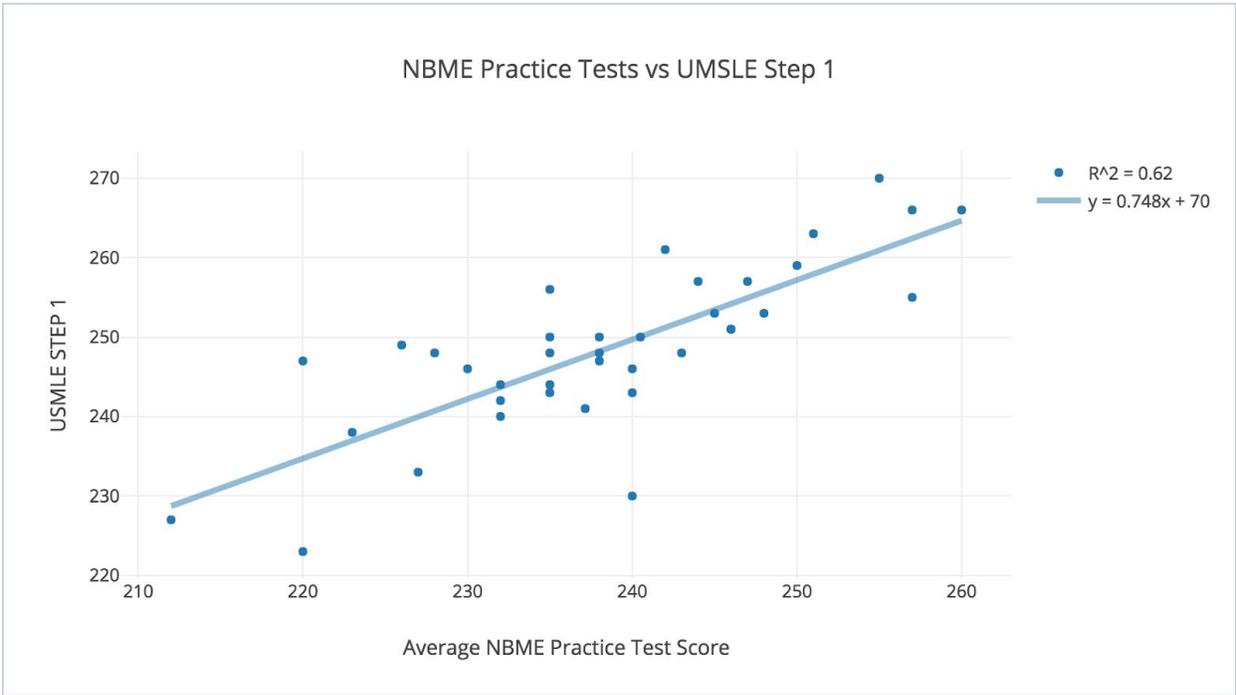
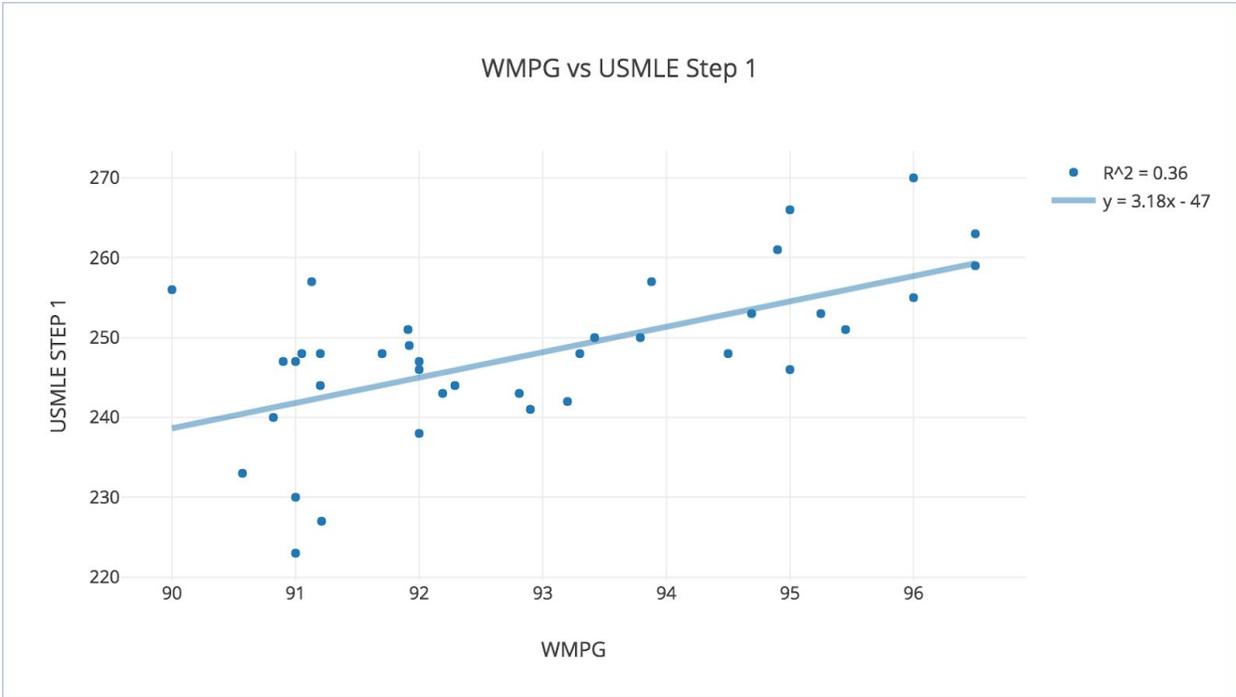
Studied with others during dedicated study period (outside of in-person courses):

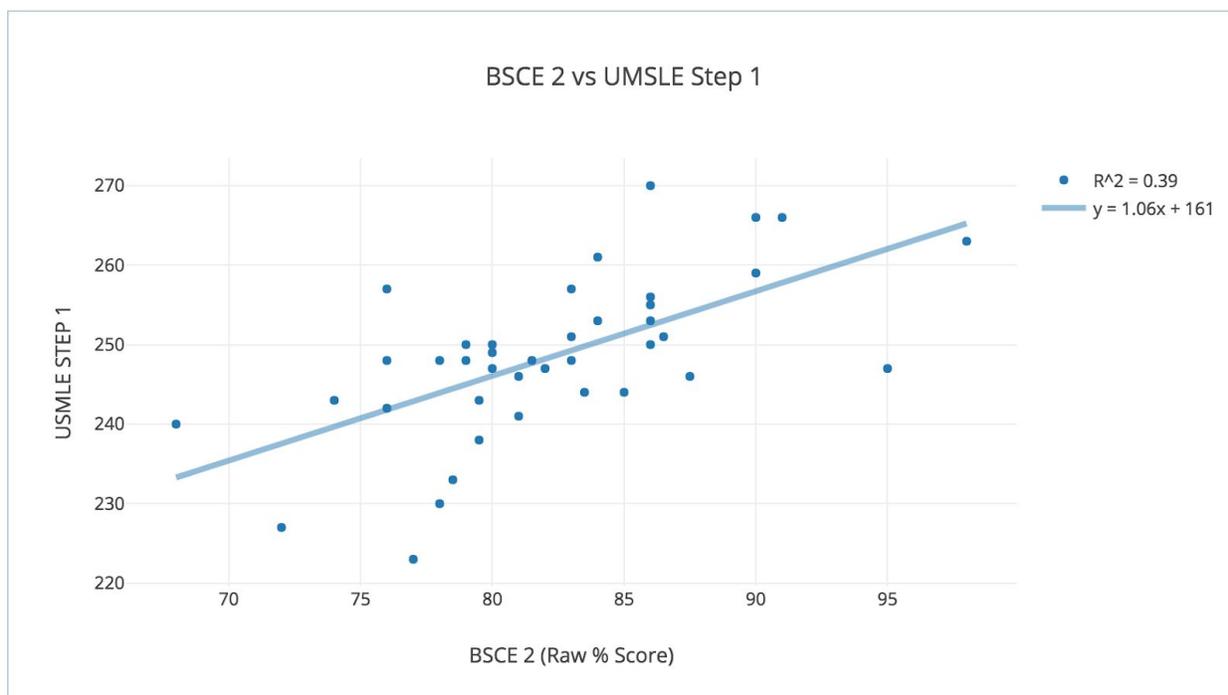
- Yes: 22.5%
- No: 77.5%

hours/day studied with others: 2.22

Exclusive Step 1 studying during Term 5:

- 12.5% Not at all/ 42.5% Infrequently/ 35% Frequently/ 10% Significantly





Resources

Study Materials

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
First Aid (95%)	68%	24%	5%	3%
Pathoma (67.5%)	48%	37%	15%	
Sketchy Micro (55%)	27%	50%	18%	5%
Boards & Beyond (53%)	29%	57%	14%	
Sketchy Pharm (38%)	40%	47%	7%	7%
DIT (28%)	18%	18%	55%	9%
SGU Lecture Notes (25%)	20%	30%	50%	

BRS (15%)	33%	33%	33%	
Firecracker (10%)	25%	50%	25%	
Kaplan (8%)	33%		66%	
Anki: Brosencephalon (8%)	66%		33%	
Goljan (5%)	50%		50%	
Picmonic (3%)			100%	
Dr. Najeeb (3%)		100%		

Question Banks

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
UWorld (100%)	98%			3%
USMLE-Rx (40%)	25%		38%	38%
Kaplan (30%)	25%	33%	42%	
Pastest (3%)			100%	

- **UWorld Stats**

- Average # questions done: 4297
- Average percentile rank: 83.6th

Practice Tests

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
NBME (98%)	69%	18%	13%	
UWorld (90%)	61%	31%	8%	

Courses

Did you complete any courses?

- Yes: 35% (14 students)
- No: 65% (26 students)

Which courses (# of students who took course in brackets)? How useful (1 = unimportant, 6 = vital)?

	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Vital
Doctors in Training [11]	9%	27%	27%	18%	18%
The Institute of Medical Boards (Kansas City) [1]					100%
Med School Tutors [1]		100%			
Kaplan [1]				100%	

Advice

Advice for Term 5

<p>Start uworld questions from now, do even 5 per week. Do not stress, it is a marathon not a race. Do not burn out, if you feel like you cannot do anymore, take a break. Set realistic goals. Do not put too much pressure on yourself, self care is important, take breaks and see family and friends! Breathe, you got this.</p>
<p>Use Pathoma, Boards and Beyond, Uworld, etc and annotate into First Aid so you will be set for your dedicated Step period. Have all your information in one place. Do a first pass through Uworld before you start your dedicated study period. You will be able to do a first pass through your annotated FirstAid as well by using it to study for Pathophys, BSCE, and CBSE.</p>
<p>Focus on term 5. You have dedicated time for step.</p>
<p>Repetition with FA and lecture notes and try to complete 50-80% of Uworld bank during the term</p>
<p>Feel free to ignore any of this if you feel something is better for you, but all of this worked perfectly for me (full disclosure, I got a 251)...</p>
<p>Treat every day like you're already studying for Step, but don't overdo it. I did about 15-20 uworld</p>

questions everyday, in addition to my coursework. DO NOT do more than that! Don't brag to people about how many uworld blocks you did (I suggest you never even complete one in a day until the very end of the term), and if someone tries to brag to you, tell them to talk to the hand. That is not how uworld works - you should spend at least an hour (maybe more) going over those 15-20 questions looking up every single little detail you don't know cold in your sleep, familiarizing and memorizing where in First Aid each factoid is mentioned. If something isn't in First Aid, then spend time writing it down! You need to do this for every single uworld question even in dedicated step studying so that First Aid is your bible (Note 1: do not plan to get a fresh First Aid for dedicated studying - that idea seems ludicrous to me. Note 2: First Aid is missing TONS of info, so be prepared for marking it up to be a job in itself).

The reason you never need to do more uworld questions per day than this is because the coursework for term 5 really sets a good pace for you to review just about everything. I wouldn't necessarily recommend doing things how your professors want you to do them, but if you're learning a topic in classes you should absolutely be reviewing that topic on your own. I only did uworld questions specific to the weekly BSFCR quiz and found that to be a perfect method. Therefore, I also don't recommend doing random/non-categorized questions until you're studying for the BSCE II. Note: make sure to uncheck the pharm sections of those topics so you don't waste questions before you've ever encountered of the material.

Another huge thing that helped me (which I don't think was a very popular thing to do, but I do think was crucial to my success) was to do every uworld question with First Aid/other resources OPEN and UNTIMED through my entire first pass of uworld. This again comes back to the importance of using uworld primarily as a learning tool and NOT a testing tool. Especially in the first 3/4ths of term 5 when you're still trying to tie all your knowledge together, I think it is infinitely more valuable to first be able to know where to look in your book to find all the info you need and to fully understand all the ins and outs of a question before answering rather than putting down a random guess. Even if you do this you will surely still get questions wrong and you will definitely still be able to learn a lot from the explanations. In terms of resources for testing and gauging your predicted score, you will have the BSCE II, NMBEs on your own, and the uworld practice tests as great resources. I found Rx and Kaplan questions to be great for practicing "real blocks" (timed with no resources open) and did a bunch of those towards the end of term 5 and throughout dedicated studying. However, it is still just as important to spend as much time as you need to go over the answers to these as well.

Final note: its ok if you don't get through uworld once by the end of the term - preferred even. I only made it a little over halfway through by the time I got back home. I really can't stress enough how important it is to go through this bank as slowly and methodically as you possibly can.

Focus on term 5 and learn the material properly the first time for STEP

Start early and Do it Evtions is easy. Also Kaplan in 4th term and 5th term is a good safe bet.

Learn term 5 pharm well, and you won't need to spend as much time on it during dedicated Step studying. Don't kill yourself trying to get through UWorld during term 5.

Focus on learning drugs and putting all the pieces of the puzzle together in pathophys. When you do a system in pathophys do some of the corresponding Uworld to see if you are actually retaining the information and understanding it.

Hit UWorld hard from day 1. Minimum 20 questions per day. Rather than taking UWorld notes in a notebook, create Anki flashcards and review them every morning. By the end of Term 5, you will have gone through UWorld and solidified all the information that you previously did not know. Do UWorld the first time by systems, second time in dedicated, random timed.

Anki Brosencephalon is gold from Term 1 and on. Listen to Goljan on the bus, at the gym, walking to class. Do USMLE Rx Term 1-4 and hit UWorld from Day 1 in Term 5.

You need to WORK HARDER in Term 5 than ever before (terms 1-4) for 2 reasons. First, pathophysiology and pharmacology are VERY VERY high yield topics on Step 1. Second, the harder you work in Term 5 memorizing & reviewing the pharmacology and UNDERSTANDING the pathophysiology, the easier dedicated Step 1 time will be. I highlighted understanding the pathophysiology (especially cardiac and pulmonary) because they will test your understanding on Step 1 (no regurgitation questions). Overall message, work hard now so dedicated time will be easier and more "enjoyable". I worked my ass off in Term 5 and was actually able to take off weekends during Step 1 dedicated time because you are reviewing as opposed to learning drugs/info for the first time. Lastly, try to complete the first pass of UWORLD before Term 5 ends. I did that and then a second pass during dedicated time.

Boards and Beyond was an excellent tool to use during term 5 to review everything! I used this to prepare for Step, as well as study for pathophysiology. Do the videos that go with that week of pathophys and add on other subjects that were done in previous terms each week as well. I found the lecture notes as well as attending/sonicing pathophys lectures to be a waste of time. I attended class/listened to every lecture before 5th term. I started to for 5th term pathophys and realized it was a complete waste of time. You will get more out of Boards and Beyond than you will lectures. Add in Pathoma for areas in path that you struggle with.

Pharm is a great course with great instructors. Don't put it off. Study as much as you can for it now because it can be quite time-consuming later during Step studying. Sketchy is helpful if you're that kind of learner (although videos are quite long!).

Treat term 5 like it's a preview of studying for step 1. I followed first aid for each organ system and each week that we covered a different topic in Pathophysiology, I would cover it on my own in first aid as well. Know your study style and what works for you. If videos are your thing, then Boards and Beyond videos can be a helpful tool to follow along for each organ system. If not, then find

whatever works for you and stick to it. Most importantly, do not overdose on resources because that will overwhelm you.

Balance term 5 studies with step studies.

don't overwhelm yourself with resources, stick to one and use. Study for step while doing your 5th term

If possible, do your best and try to at least get a first pass at First Aid and try to get through UWORLD while studying during term 5! Study hard, but also try to take a breather when needed.

Do UWORLD questions each week based on the system you are reviewing.
If there are subjects (ie. immunology) you feel weaker in do all questions together in that system (ie. cardiology) to learn for that week.

Focus on term 5 as term 5 material includes step review

UWorld, use first aid to quick search unknown drugs/diseases.

Focus on term 5 and doing well on those exams. Do not get so hung up on "step" studying and neglect your coursework. Studying for SGU exams is the same as studying exclusively for Step 1 in my opinion.

During term 5 focus on term 5. I focused on pharm and pathophys which is basically dipping your toe into the large amount of material you have to review for the step. Throughout all of the other terms I was a major promoter of sticking to SGU notes for studying but in term five it is time to make the switch to more focusing on step stuff like first aid and world so that you can do well on the BSCE 2 and CBSE which are NBME made (not SGU made).

Study Pharm as thoroughly as you can during the term.

Try and get through First Aid fully the first time by the end of term 5. Also realize first aid is not everything. The questions on STEP1 are rarely asking about direct information or the "high yield" facts that first aid shows you. Use USMLE-Rx just to quickly test and improve your factual knowledge base in term 5, then save UWORLD for STEP1 studying.

Use term 5 to start step prep. Make sure you learn pharm well during term 5. Use pathophys as review and integration for high yield concepts covered in the past 2 years.

Use boards and beyond with your first aid to study for term 5. Some lectures can be useful. Take notes when using boards and beyond. Just watching it is not studying.

Study pharm well and save your anxiety for dedicated step period

Just study for the classes, keep step for later

I watched all the B&B videos all through Pathophys. Great Pre-STEP prep.

Live it up now you live on an island Do uworld over and over and over

Don't neglect pharm! You have time to study for step and it's easier to get it down the first time than trying to cram it during dedicated step time.

Try to get through at least one pass of First Aid while annotating along. Really figure out your weak areas and try to review those over and over again. Figure out your plan for your dedicated STEP 1 study time and stick to it. If you could, get through one pass of UWORLD as well and keep an ANKI deck of the questions you get wrong so you can review them every day.

The goal of Term 5 is to make your dedicated study period as easy as possible. Think of Term 5 as a 4-month long trial for your dedicated study period. This is when you experiment: try out different study habits, resources, test-taking strategies, and schedules. Get comfortable with the different resources. Get familiar with the content. By the end of term 5, your goal is to have a detailed, structured plan of attack for the Step 1 dedicated study period...in addition to having completed a first pass of all the content. Pharm is the best structured department at the school and the pharm lecture notes are literally all you need to ace the course AND ace the pharm portion of Step 1. Use pathophys/BSFCR as a general outline or schedule for what content you should be covering. And then use the BSCE II and CBSE exams as practice Step 1 exams, in order to gauge your progress. If all goes well, you'll finish term 5 ready to transition smoothly into the dedicated study period and kill this exam! As a final note, please please enjoy Grenada for all that it is. It is your last term in paradise...make the most of it!

Advice for Step 1

You will do better than you think. Work on timing and understanding uworld questions, do not second guess your answers. When in doubt, mark and move on. Usually the simple answer is the correct one.

Keep to a daily schedule, which DIT is helpful for. Do at least a block of UWorld questions everyday to get in the hang of doing questions for your Step exam date. Pick your test date and stick with it!! Plan accordingly. Changing your date will make you more frustrated and you could burn out. There's a reason they say ~8 weeks is the optimal study time because you retain the maximal amount of information.

Learn from questions and don't read passively (first aid is a review book... you need to know more detail because the step qs like to ask "why" which first aid assumes you know from your basic science years.

Repetition with FA, Uworld, some pathoma, and learn from nbme practice but my best predictors were by FAR the Uworld self-assessments. Both UWSA1&2 were within 3 points of my actual score. My NBMEs underpredicted on average by over 20 points... more aptitude style... just learn from the practice exams and keep believing in what you know. Study in a way for step1 that worked

well for you for term1-5 at Sgu

Resources used:

Q Banks: uworld, Rx, Kaplan

Videos: Pathoma, Sketchy micro & pharm

Practice Tests: NBMEs, uworld

Other: Netter's anatomy flashcards

I had always planned on doing a personal DIT program, but learned from a previous IEA president that it is very unnecessary to do a program if you are an A student. This was excellent advice and I would definitely urge everyone to do the same if you're feeling comfortable at the end of term 5. No need to waste the money, plus I have heard a ton of people say that they regret wasting their valuable time in all of those programs. Especially if you're a self-studier, you will be more than fine on your own.

On doing multiple passes through uworld...this is generally unnecessary. What I would recommend is to flag any questions you were less than ~80% sure of or got incorrect. Once you get through your first pass, go back to ONLY these questions. Don't waste your time on things you already understand. Also, a huge thing about the step is that you will have never seen anything like any of the questions you will encounter on the test. Therefore, doing multiple passes of any qbank will spoil those questions for you and will be a waste of time since you're bound to remember a bunch of them. Instead, once you get through one qbank, invest in a completely new one. I started by going through uworld very very slowly, and also throwing in a bunch of Rx blocks whenever I wanted a change of pace. When I finally got through all of the Rx questions I bought the Kaplan bank. I only made it about halfway through Kaplan before my exam, but it was definitely the least valuable of the 3, so I do recommend leaving it for last if those are the 3 that you use.

I used both a notebook to write down quick facts for memorization as I studied, as well as index cards. You might one to stick to just one method, but I found that some things just worked better in one form or the other.

Once I got into my groove, I started every morning by doing 1-2 blocks of questions, then kind of passively watching all of the video banks in series (~3 hours/day). After that I would usually do another block. At night I would go over my index cards/notebook (note: if you have the Netter's anatomy flashcards, these are a great thing to do at night as well).

I'm not sure what your timeframe will be like, but if you are someone with a lot of stamina I would recommend taking as many weeks as you possibly have to study (not just sticking to 8) and keeping your days a bit on the shorter side (~8 hours). I did experience some ups and downs like this, but I appreciated getting all the sleep I wanted, some days off whenever I wanted to make plans with friends and family, and the ability for a lot of things to truly feel like second nature by the end.

I found the NBMEs to be an underestimation of my Step score, while the uworld practice tests overestimated it. I only got around to doing 4 NBMEs, and saved the 2 uworld tests for the end. It

was definitely a confidence booster to do those uworld tests last, so I would recommend this for you as well.

Keep calm and don't get discouraged by nbme and u world percentages.

Make sure you are LEARNING the material from day 1 of the Basic Science years because it will pay off when Step 1 comes around. This will help you figure out the answer to questions when the exact information being tested wasn't covered in First Aid or lecture material. For pharmacology, focus on the high yield/most common adverse effects. Many drugs have a whole list of adverse effects and usually only the top 2 most common adverse effects are tested. As for question banks, I don't think Uworld is enough. Seek another question bank to complete and learn from AFTER completing Uworld.

Understand why you are missing questions. Don't just brush it off as if you knew that question, but only by chance got it wrong. Know your weaknesses. Biostats, Ethics, Epidemiology should be studied heavily the last two days before the test. Also Embryology is free points. Just know it

Do 2-3 passes of First Aid, annotating along the way. Do all the UWorld questions at least twice. Physiology is an important base of your knowledge, so try to review BRS Physio for each organ system. Also do Pathoma for each system.

Try to relax. I think my first block was finished in 20 minutes because of all the adrenaline. After the first block you'll settle in and just go to work.

Create a structure for your day and stick to it (ie. Anki 7-8am, 8:30-10:30am UWorld block, 1-3pm Correct UWorld block, 5-7pm Read First Aid). Avoid making the schedule too rigid. Do the second pass of UWorld random timed. Leave time in the evenings to chill, watch NBA, etc. Dedicated was one of the most enjoyable times in my life for me because I lived with my brothers for 2.5 months, studied hard, and enjoyed their company when they came home from work. I vented to them when I became stressed, and often explained difficult concepts in simple language to help solidify material. Good luck and enjoy the process!

- 1) Trust yourself: Go with your gut on questions you are not sure of and DON'T change answers. You will not always know why you pick these answers but your subconscious does so trust it! There were 15 questions I wasn't sure about for each of 2 blocks of the Step 1 yet got a great score...
- 2) Relax as much as possible during the test. I know, that sounds easier than done, but....you will perform much better if you remain calm. You need to enter the test center like you're a genius badass cocky as ever who has already crushed Step 1 before, then smile. Pretend this is just another day of doing more UWORLD Q's because in essence you are just doing 7 blocks of UWORLD. Students before me gave this advice so I took it and scored a 263.
- 3) Don't change your study habits for dedicated Step 1 studying. Do what worked for you before. Don't listen to how/what other students are studying, focus on your own strategy.
- 4) You will not know everything. There is simply too much material so don't become disheartened (I

had to tell myself multiple times to prevent burnout/meltdown). Nobody knows everything.

5) Take NBME exams every other week during dedicated time (they represent the actual Step accurately). Plus, they test concepts in ways you haven't seen before, again, just like Step 1. Don't get worked up over some of the ridiculously detail oriented Qs because I didn't see any of those bastards on the real Step 1.

6) Prevent burnout by relaxing/drinking/whatever calms the brain on Saturdays or Sundays. This is a necessity.

7) You are ALL highly intelligent individuals for even getting to this point so remain confident and do not psych yourself out (I had low confidence because of doing poorly on previous standardized exams but worked hard and crushed Step 1). So be confident damnit! You got this!!

If you did well in terms 1-5 and had consistent, efficient study habits that worked for you in these terms, then continue with these study habits/techniques. Do not second guess yourself and your study habits and don't compare yourself to others and how they study/what they are studying. If your study habits have been working for you throughout basic sciences, then they will work for you during your designated study period. Secondly, focus on material that you are not good at. Utilize the UWorld, BSCE and NBME results to determine which areas you need to focus more time on. Take this into consideration when planning your schedule.

Begin preparing for Step 1 from your term 5 semester as this buffers the workload that you will have to cover in dedicated step 1 time. I would try to cover all of first aid at least twice before taking the term 5 NBME and that way dedicated study time will be basically repetition. For step 1, find a program or a method of studying that has worked for you in the past and don't try to adopt anyone else's method. Also be confident in yourself and try not to compare yourself to anyone else. Be proud of your progress each week even if that progress is slow.

Don't delay step. Brain peaks around week 6 of studying.

At this point, you know everything you can possibly know, stay calm and kill it

Repetition is key!

It is a long and difficult exam that tests your ability to critically think and apply your knowledge. My best advice for everyone is to not study alone. The dedicated step prep period is arduous. No matter how much you study you will not know everything. The exam's question bank is randomized and can throw any subject question at you on test day - whether it is something you are most comfortable with or your worst subject.

It is important to study with a strong support system beside you. I like to study by myself, but have my friends studying next to me. I thought this was helpful since I could ask them concepts that I was weaker on if needed. Don't be shy or embarrassed that you don't understand a concept. It is okay to be wrong. Keep in mind each person has a different perspective on the material that we have been exposed to in the past 2 years. You will have something to share as well. Each person has different

strengths and weaknesses - asking those questions and sharing certain facts/questions will help in the long run to filling those gaps of knowledge. Many times during my step exam I thought back to my friends sharing concepts with me or questions that they thought were good ways of testing a concept.

I used DIT for step prep. I felt that it was helpful in the areas I was weaker in like molecular biochemistry and immunology. But over the course of videos per subject, I thought it was slightly superficial. About half way through the course, I decided to speed through the video content to allow more time to do questions in each subject area. I knew the material, but the work I needed to put in was to do and see more questions.

After doing a few NBMEs, you'll get the feeling of what concepts are asked, but in a different way each time. I'm not the best test taker because I misread or misinterpret questions, so the more questions you expose yourself to, the better you'll do. Initially, you may not see any improvement in your practice exams until you have finished a thorough review of each subject. Stay on top of the material you are set to review each week. Take an NBME exam and add 2 blocks of UWORLD each weekend to build your stamina.

Do not get discouraged. You will peak on test day! Good luck!!

Questions questions questions

Breathe, watch your time. Barely had enough time to finish each block. Felt like there was more time for Uworld. Don't try and over think the questions. Go with your first impression of the right answer. Don't change any answers. Took three 10 minute breaks in between every two blocks.

Set aside a dedicated study period for which a daily schedule is made. Follow that schedule day-to-day and do NOT fall behind. Put in the work. Minimum 10-12 hour study days, 7 days a week. Get through FA during term 5 and then again at least 2-3 more times during your dedicated Step 1 studying.

I have mixed feelings about the review course I took (DIT). I felt like going into step studying I already had the "high yield" stuff down pretty good- and that's what this review course is going to give you. It was a great review and helpful for little things I kept forgetting but there was a lot of times where I was asking "okay I know this but what do I need to know to get me that excellent score." I felt like I needed more details to put me over the plateau of scores I kept getting. So if you feel the same- maybe look into something that is more detail oriented- I think I have heard Kaplan has more detail. Also I NEVER used questions to study previously so getting used to doing UWORLD was a struggle but UWORLD is essential and needs to be done. You need to remember the questions and explanations. I have a separate notebook where I wrote down the explanations of questions I didn't know. I remember seeing like at least 3 exact questions on my test that were from UWORLD- now in a test of 200 something questions 3 might not seem like a lot but you wanna get

every question right that you can! UWorld assessments are usually an overestimate of your actual score (especially 1) and the NBMEs are more accurate. Final note- definitely do not overwhelm the senses with resources- pick something and stick to it.

Too much time is actually detrimental. Focus and when you feel ready take it asap.

Study, even when you're down or having a mental breakdown, don't take more than a day or so to recover. The more time you put in the better you'll do. Also the SGU notes are more helpful than you think. I remember several obscure questions on my STEP1 exam that I tried to look up in first aid after and couldn't find the answer, but I found the answer in random SGU power points. Take the DIT class (I wish I had) because it woulda kept me on track better and I wouldn't have taken too much time off while studying. The biggest thing I can recommend is to be ready for the unexpected, which is hard to do, but if you can prepare for the material that isn't what you would expect you'll score a lot higher. I say that because I don't think I had a single repeat question from UWORLD or any other question bank/resource. When you get a UWORLD question and think "wow I've never seen that before", that's what a lot of STEP1 was like; so UWORLD is great for making you realize that and learn to use your knowledge and make the best educated answer selection you can. They've gotten really good at giving a standard scenario and then asking the question in an obscure or detailed way, similar to UWORLD but I would say even worse. You just have to remember that you know the material, and make the best educated answer you can, and do not change your answer unless you know you made a mistake or read the question wrong.

I cannot stress enough how important Uworld questions and First Aid are. Know them cold! Also choose your resources wisely. Figure out what resources work for you early and stick to them.

Use as many question banks as possible. Practice questions and tests are vital to assess how you are doing and to be exposed to how they will ask the material you are learning.

Learn as much as you can but you're only human.

Review first aid as much as possible, use uworld, and use boards and beyond to fill in blanks of first aid

If you know what works for you, don't switch it up. I started with the DIT course which is video based when I knew I was a question-based learner. I realized this within the first week that I had made a mistake and completely changed my schedule to incorporate questions all day alongside the video series. I ended up doing all the Firecracker questions again within the last week as rapid fire (all 15,000 of them) but that's how I learn! Reading does nothing for me so First Aid was useless. The content is gold, don't get me wrong. But sitting and reading FA I absorb nothing, so I recognized that and avoided it. FC is basically FA in question form. Don't be afraid to adjust your schedule if you feel that it's not working! There is no perfect way to study, but if you know how you learn best you'll be gold.

uworld 2x, sketchy, pathoma, look up stuff in first aid

Practice time management and testing endurance early and often.

Remain calm and study on. Get enough sleep the night before the exam and don't underestimate the toll it will take on your stamina. Other than that, study hard with whichever resources you decide to use and stick to them. Phone a friend in times of dire need.

Pick a study schedule, strategy, and list of resources...AND stick to it! Only you know what works best for you. Trust in yourself. It's easy to get discouraged by a bad block of UWorld or a bad NBME exam. Resist the urge to chase after a million new resources or a completely new strategy. Instead, stick to the plan you have (Term 5 is for experimentation; dedicated study period is for execution). Focus on incremental improvements and use UWorld and NBME's to gauge progress. UWorld and the NBME exams are your best resources. Do them all and you'll have done about 4000 questions...you'll thank me when you see the same or very similar questions appear on your actual Step 1 exam. Do not underestimate the power of breaks and social interaction --> these are what kept me sane and also what kept studying from being too boring and monotonous. I chose to live with 3 of my friends and even though we mostly studied independently, being around other people going through the same thing motivated me...and the social aspect kept me from going crazy. We all supported each other and kept each other going. Don't be afraid to create the perfect study environment and spare no cost. Don't leave anything on the table. You want to walk out of that exam feeling like you gave it everything you possibly could. You only get one chance and you have to do everything humanly possible to make it count!

