

USMLE Step 1 Survey

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January 2015 Entering Class: took test in Spring 2017

The Numbers

Responses: 34/52 (65.4%)

USMLE Step 1 Score: 248.3 ± 11.7

WMPG: 92.36 ± 1.39

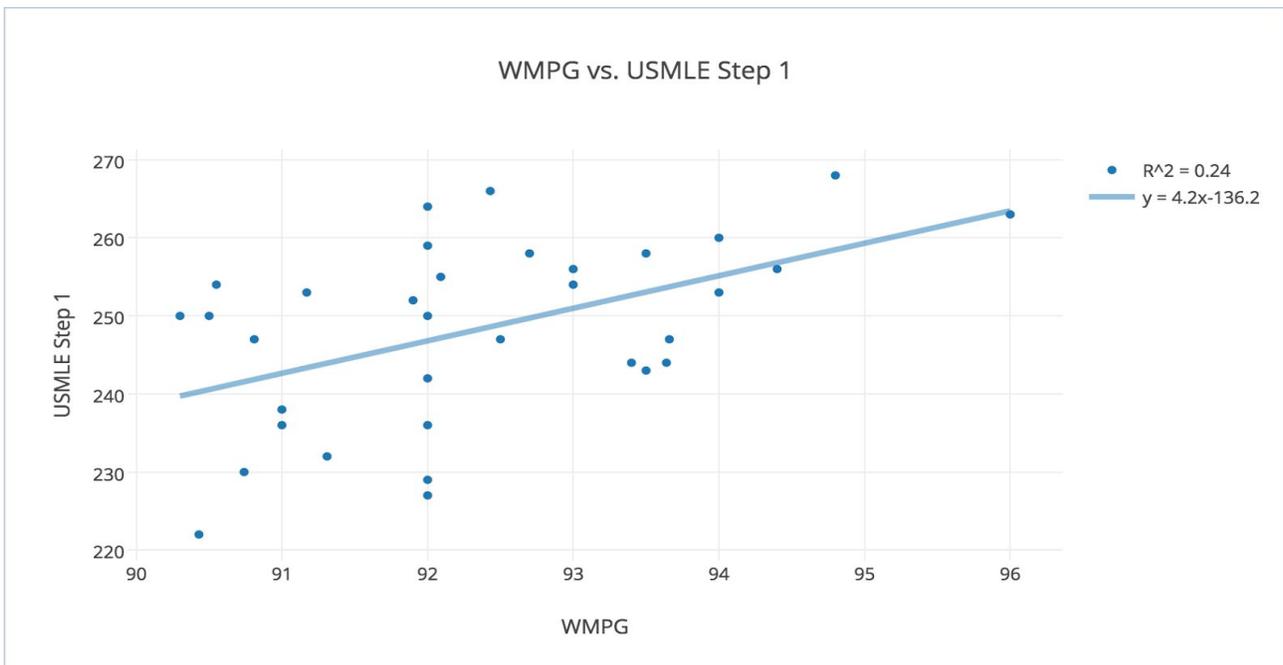
Average NBME practice test score: 240.8 ± 9.2

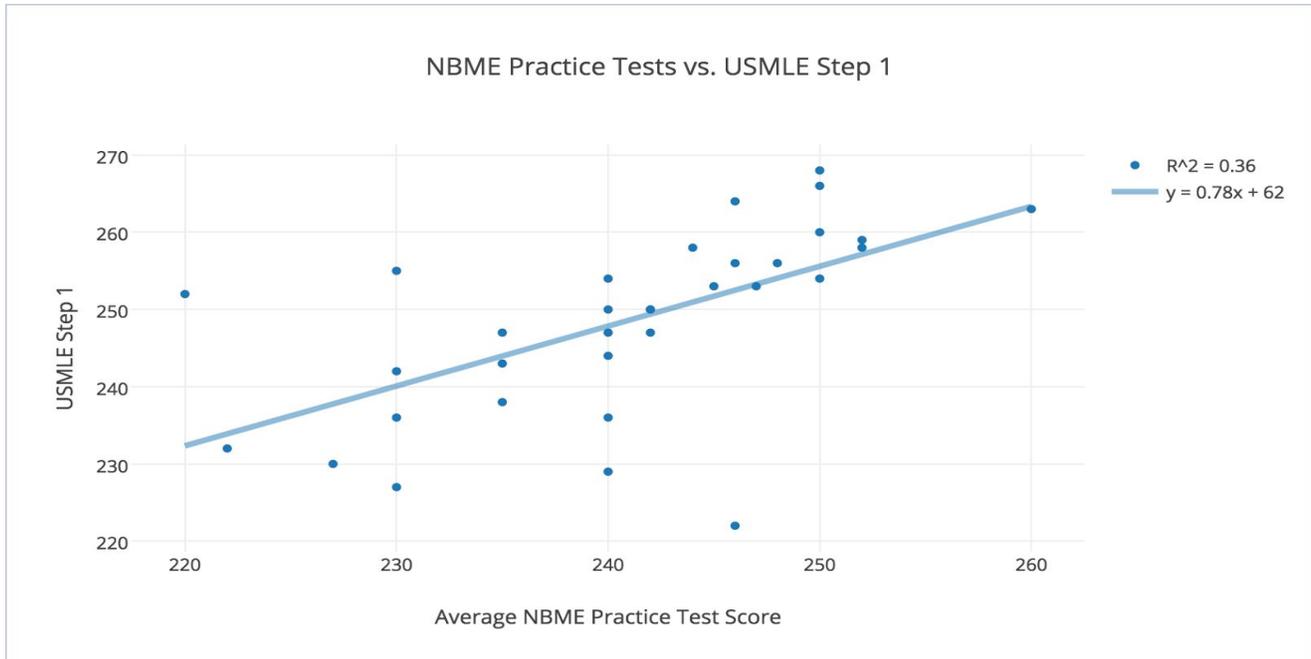
Average BSCE 2: 82.0% ± 6.0

weeks studied: 8.82

hours studied per day: 10.72

- 18% felt not enough / 71% felt just right / 12% felt too much





Resources

Study Materials

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
First Aid (97%)	54%	32%	0%	14%
Pathoma (85%)	48%	32%	16%	4%
Sketchy (74%)	60%	35%	0%	5%
Kaplan (21%)	33%	22%	33%	11%
BRS (15%)	0%	50%	25%	25%
Picmonic (12%)	0%	0%	75%	25%
Firecracker (9%)	0%	0%	100%	0%
Goljan (6%)	0%	0%	50%	50%
Anki: Brosencephalon (3%)	0%	0%	100%	0%

Question Banks

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
UWorld (100%)	94%	6%	0%	0%
USMLE-Rx (15%)	0%	60%	20%	20%
Kaplan (15%)	0%	40%	40%	20%
First Aid Q&A (6%)	0%	0%	0%	100%
Pastest (9%)	0%	0%	100%	0%

- UWorld Stats
 - Average # questions done: 4033.5
 - Average percentile rank: 84.5%

Practice Tests

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
NBME (94%)	63%	31%	3%	3%
UWorld (82%)	43%	36%	18%	4%

Courses

Did you complete any courses?

- Yes: 47% (16 students)
- No: 53% (18 students)

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

	1	2	3	4	5	6
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The Institute of Medical Boards (Kansas City) [1]						100%
Kaplan [2]	50%		50%			
Doctors in Training [9]				44%	33%	22%
Med School Tutors [3]			100%			
Success Academy [1]			100%			

Advice

Advice for Term 5

<p>Study for term 5 rather than Step 1. If you ace term 5 easily then it means you know a lot of your stuff for step already. Plus the pharm department is good and easy points on the step if you do really well in pharm class</p>
<p>I would advise to not spend a ton of time specifically studying for step one but to focus more on getting a complete understanding of topics as your review them in pathophysiology. It is also helpful to do you're first uworld pass during term 5. I found it helpful to go by topics as I covered them in class.</p>
<p>For January class - If your basic sciences foundation is strong, just focus on term 5 and do like 20 questions a day of u world. Do not worry about finishing it during the term, you have plenty of time to finish and start again.</p> <p>For may class - same as above except try and do u world twice before step 1. That may mean more questions a day during term 5.</p>
<p>Focus on Term 5. Get through Uworld at least once during the entire term.</p>
<p>Focus on term 5 coursework, don't get caught up in step prep. The things you learn in term 5 help build a foundation that will help you during your dedicated test prep time</p>
<p>Use pathophys as an opportunity to review systems. Do the uworld questions for whatever system you're covering. Get a small group and review First Aid for that system for a few hours on the weekend.</p>
<p>study lecture notes along with uworld</p>
<p>Focus on Term 5 courses. In so doing you are actually preparing for step 1.</p>
<p>START STUDYING NOW and have your FA annotated before you begin dedicated step studying. I did not start using FA until my dedicated period and i could have used a third pass!</p>
<p>Focus on term 5 material specially pharm so you won't have to worry about it too much during step studying. However doing uworld questions early is useful. It will allow you to figure out which topic will need a lot of work and which won't.</p>

Focus on the course work. Learn pharm like the back of your hand and it'll be insanely easy on Step 1. Pathophys seems like it'd be better for step 2 sometimes but there is A TON of useful information in that course so don't blow it off. Use First Aid along with your lecture notes mainly to be more familiar with the book and to just have an extra pass through of the pages before your dedicated study time. You have PLENTY of dedicated time, trust me, so don't go crazy trying to crush step material. It'll come, just do well in classes first. I mean it.

read the corresponding first aid chapters for the topics you are doing in pathophys

Focus on your term 5 classes, especially pharmacology. What you are learning during that time is great for a general review of everything you will need to know. If you can also squeeze in a round of UWorld then do it. Read the explanations but don't get too caught up in annotating them down in first aid or making sure you remember every little bit because you're going to see the questions again during your dedicated time. I downloaded the app on my phone so I can do them whenever I had free time.

Just figure out how you study. This is so key. Getting through u world once as a teaching tool is also extremely helpful through the term and really eases the stress when starting again.

Try to see where your weaknesses are so that you can focus on those areas during your dedicated study period.

For a January class student like myself, just focus on class. If you do a little step studying throughout the term limit it to max 2 hrs a day. My reason for saying this is that the Term 5 classes still present important material and it is best to master that before beginning your review for step. The period of time following term 5 is sufficient to more than adequately prepare for step.

For a August/Fall student, I would still say to primarily focus on studying for your Term 5 classes for the same reasons presented above. I would say maybe pick up or try to study more for step maybe a month out before the end of the term. There is still a lot of time following the end of term to adequately prepare.

My best advice I would say is to be honest with yourself. Brutally honest. If you know you are a procrastinator give yourself time to account for that in your plan.

I found it very helpful to have a study program. It insures that you don't over study the topics you like and under study the topics you hate.

Concentrate on Pharm; it's vital for Step and for your future in medicine in general. Always helpful to review as much as possible! Don't put your class courses on the 'back burner' and go crazy with UWorld questions-try to find a balance. Do well in your courses to finish strong (the material is relevant) and incorporate a chunk of UWorld questions each day if you can.

I studied for my courses exclusively, but it might be better to focus on Step studying and put your courses after that.

I would have liked to have started studying for the step before I did once term 5 was over. A few Uworld questions every night and some first aid review during the weekend would have been great preparation

Try to get a head start and incorporate some dedicated step preparation into your study schedule. Follow the class schedule in terms of the topics you should cover using external resources like question banks and review books. However, don't disregard classwork as you still need to maintain good grades in the your last semester and a lot of the term 5 material you will cover is basically Step 1 preparation.

Learn pharmacology well. Do your best in pathophysiology (it helps)

Use term 5 wisely, try to watch all the DIT videos during term 5 cause you wouldn't have the chance during designated step study time. Also annotate your first aid during term 5

Focus on Term 5 - both main courses are high yield on the USMLE, so it is important to grasp the knowledge well the first time around. Also, annotate First Aid to study for Pathophys - this is super useful while studying for Step 1.

Focus on Term 5 material - it is good step prep itself

Did the DIT course throughout Term 5 using the book provided and finished it by the time doing BSCEII. Anything that they teach you in class, always reference it to FA. Pharm Ninja was helpful for Pharm. Sketchy Pharm is long, but if you pay attention to the physiology they always incorporate it is helpful for BSCE II and step.

Focus on relearning key concepts from previous terms that you have faded from.

Truly learn your pharm while studying 5th term so you won't have to go back and relearn it while step studying.

Use first aid and don't look at lectures slides AT ALL, I studied exclusively from first aid and pathoma but barely did any uworld which I regretted.

Do uworld

Focus on your classes and schedule some uworld in between. But put more emphasis on your courses if you're struggling

Sketchy Pharm is good for pharmacology.

Advice for Step 1

You only get one shot. Don't regret it

I suggest making a notebook of wrong uworld answers. I found this one of the most important things I did. When I answered a uworld question wrong I would put the gist of the question in the book and then explain why I got it wrong and put all information from my resources about the topic. I reviewed my book every night for the questions I missed that day and at the end of the week for all I missed that week.

Another big tip is to stick to a schedule and system. Don't try to change your method because someone else is doing it another way. Keep to your study schedule and stay focused and on track. Build it half days or days off to give yourself a study break so you don't burn yourself off.

First aid IS NOT inclusive of the exam!! If you want to get a great score I suggest you read the Kaplan lecture books and annotate in FA. There is a good chunk of questions I knew only due to Kaplan since they were lower yield topics. I would not have scored as well as I did if it wasn't for using Kaplan. (How I did it was during 5th term I would annotate FA with Kaplan as pathophys topic was covered as a review for class and so I had the information for when I step studied.)

I cannot stress how important having a strong basic science foundation is. It is HALF the work of step 1 studying.

DO U WORLD MORE THAN ONCE - SO IMPORTANT. U world is the bible for step 1.

Keep resources to a minimum. 3-4 is enough.

Keep your anxiety level to a minimum because this affects how you study and how you approach questions on exam day. Relax, take some time off. SLEEP, EAT, DANCE, spend time with family. (I traveled a lot).

You reach a peak during step 1 dedicated studying, after this, your score might decline fast, do not push your exam back except you are sick or something terrible happened.

Do your best, pray and have faith. You got this!

Review from beginning then practice to inflict maximum damage.

Focus on a couple of resources.

Get a cheap notebook (or use a word doc) and write down something you learn from every uworld question you do, plus any random little fact or mnemonic you want to remember. Make it 1 or 2 lines maximum. Periodically go back and read through your collection of facts, highlight stuff you still haven't memorized yet, and go through those highlights the day before the test. There will be questions that you get right solely because of that. Also, if you bought a copy of First Aid you should have a free trial of flash facts - USE IT, and don't wait until the last minute - pay money to extend your subscription if you need to. Flash facts are a very good resource and they cover everything important in First Aid, except they are much less boring than reading First Aid cover to cover.

uworld

Make a plan and stick with it. Take time off to catch your breath. Get together with friends to check up on each other's progress.

Make sure you have a schedule and stick to it! Be realistic and stay active.

Having a study schedule is crucial. Once you have one, try to stick with it. Don't over resource yourself (having different explanations can be confusing). 2 weeks into your step study, start taking NBME every weekend. When you get tired take some time off!! Best of luck

The best first step to doing well on...step...is to do well in each course. It's rare that a student who gets under an 80% rocks step 1. So focus and apply yourself and PAY ATTENTION to what the lectures are teaching you! Avoid the trap of having a million resources and just learn. Learn, don't memorize. Go into the textbooks for deeper explanation and hence UNDERSTANDING when you feel like you're just memorizing. You'll do fine if you try hard and don't waste your time and money.

make sure you get through UWorld at least 2 times.

Uworld, Uworld, Uworld. Step 1 is set up exactly the same way as Uworld, not the NBME. The questions also have similar wording to Uworld as compared to the vague and confusing NBME questions. Personally, I hated all of the practice NBMEs. I second guessed every answer and ended up doing average or below for the majority of them. I still recommend doing them to cover all your bases because there are a few wonky facts that may be worth writing down, but don't drive yourself crazy if the results don't match your expectations. On test day, first and foremost be confident. You are smart, you do know your stuff, and you will succeed on this test. Good luck to you all.

You need to not really count the first week of dedicated studying as it takes a bit to get into the full swing of things. Upon reflection was letting the MST tutor guide how I studied. It worked but it definitely wasn't how I studied at SGU and I think that's why I ended with a result that I'm not particularly happy with. For step 2 I'll be going back to the study methods that I know worked for me

Do as many question banks as possible.

Make a plan. Stick with it. But be flexible. Also don't panic if you start to get a little behind or if your practice scores are not where you want them at first. They will jump as you review more and more material.

Having a set schedule and sticking to it is vital.

Although I passed within the US/Canada average range, given my status in IEA and my GPA, my Step 1 score was nowhere near where it should have been and is definitely an outlier within this group. After some rather embarrassing reflection, I realized that my two biggest mistakes were such: 1) Thinking I could do it alone. I didn't join a prep course and I had no student peers around me. This made the mental marathon of a struggle even more difficult. 2) ***Not listening to my gut and staying true to myself.*** My study habits revolved around what my older SGU peers advised me to do; what they did and what they thought was best. 90% of it was "Do UWorld questions!!!". Although UWorld questions are very important, I harped on finishing ALL of them in each question bank just for the sake of doing so. I then couldn't review my personal notes, FA, and Pathoma as thoroughly as I'd liked to. I did more questions and NBMEs than 'personal study time', the latter which boosted my NBME scores the most. You know yourself best, especially how you study best (habits, resources, peers, etc.) so stay true to that and you'll do as well as you always have.

Studying for more than 6-8 weeks can be a waste of time and you burn out easily. It often causes the information to become too confusing and jumbled in your brain.

My first block was really difficult. I almost had a panic attack when I imagined the rest of the blocks being like the first one. Just focus on one question and one block at a time. Luckily everything after the first block was much smoother for me. Time wasn't really an issue, it was more whether you knew the question or not.

Don't study for too long in your dedicated step preparation. I think the sweet spot is eight weeks which is more than enough time. In my view, practice exams are essential and can be used to judge your progress as you get through more material. Also, don't freak out; I can guarantee SGU's curriculum has you very prepared for the exam.

Uworld Uworld Uworld

Trust what you know and when you feel like you're getting burnt out take a break. There is nothing worse than forcing yourself to study when you're burnt out. Take your sundays off, go to church (if you're religious), watch a movie with friends. You will need friends and family more than ever during this time and always remember to say your prayers. I also recommend you have a study partner that you review nbme and concepts with. Really helped me a lot

Make a dedicated schedule ahead of time, and stick to it! I looked at the number of questions in UWorld and gave an appropriate number of days for a system based on the # questions. It is important to take one day off a week, and as many practice tests as you can. I had an 8.5 week schedule, and by the end of week 2, I took my first practice NBME, and did one every weekend until the real thing.

Make a study plan to ensure you cover UWorld twice and FA twice (or DIT instead of FA). Do not get overloaded with multiple resources.

Did 40 UWorld questions every day and reviewed them. Cover FA in depth front to back at the beginning of your intense study period and then at the end. I took the Kaplan on demand course which was a waste of time. The videos were long and boring. They covered absolutely everything, but didn't go into teaching or giving memory hooks to help remember concepts like DIT did. The anatomy and Biochem was by far the most useful resource from the Kaplan on demand. Pathoma was better than Kaplan for pathology and I used sketchy for micro and pharm. Any resource I used I always referred to the areas in FA as well. I didn't do questions the final week before your exam, but instead focused on questions and concepts that I had gotten wrong in the NBME's and UWorld exams. The NBME's are easier and more accurate than the UWorld exams. The UWorld exams are hard but I found that the answers were super beneficial going over them. I probably had about 10 hard questions on my actual step that were very similar to the hard questions in UWorld. Make sure you do both exams. Stay calm, relaxed and don't stress too much on the scores from the practice exams. I ranged from 234-251 on my practice exams, and then ended up with a 255 on the actual step. Good luck.

Do lots and lots of questions. Try to do them in 40 question blocks because that's how Step 1 is set up. Also try to read up and relearn concepts/material you may have forgotten or were just never good at.

Don't use too many sources. Pick a few good ones you're comfortable with and stick to just them.

Keep the number of resources to a minimum, and know those well

Don't overwork yourself. Take days off regularly. Do the NBME'S. Make sure you review high yield clinical anatomy.

Keep working until you're happy with your practice scores. Then don't delay any longer!

Try to get through most of uworld during the semester and one pass of first aid during Term 5. During your dedicated study period ensure you're gone through uworld twice and USMLE-Rx as a secondary question bank is good. Go through first aid a second time and third time is possible.

