

DUCOM Unofficial MS1 Survival Guide

Welcome

Hello everyone! On behalf of the First-Generation Student Organization, congratulations on your acceptance! We are extremely happy to have you and hope that your year goes as well, if not better, than ours. We understand with the current pandemic, major changes are afoot. Together with some advice from our fellow M2s, we created this little handy guide for you to use as reference or just peek at once in a while throughout your first year of medical school. However, this is merely a peek at the year. We have an incredible student body and academic support system that is always willing to help if you run into more questions through the year.

Survival Lingo/Abbreviations

Medical School is worse than the military when it comes to acronyms. These are phrases and abbreviations you will start hearing very soon. We compiled some common ones here so you can keep them as reference.

IL - Independent Learning Modules aka Your Lectures

TBL - Team-Based Learning Live Sessions

CBL - Case-based Learning - An All-Year course

M2O - Molecules to Organs - The first course of the year

HSF - Human Structure and Function - The second and third course of the year

FD - Foundations of Disease - The last course of the year

FPC - Foundation of Patient Care - All-Year course

HAP - Health Advocacy Practicum - All-Year course

HOP - Health Outreach Project - Student-led clinical volunteering opportunity

CEAC - Clinical Education and Assessment Center - Rooms designed like doctors offices but with cameras and microphones

SIM Center - Rooms that contain computer controlled robotic mannequins

SP - Standardized Patient - Trained actors who act as patients in CEAC

IPA - Individualized Process Assessment - Like CBL but taken as an individual written exam

SAC - Student Activities Center - pronounced 'sack'. Calling it S-A-C is an auto-expulsion.

High Yield - Important topic that has a high probability of showing up on exams

Dungeon - Computer lab on the lowest floor

iRAT - Short quiz taken before most TBLs

gRAT - a group quiz during TBL

Checkpoint - A decent sized (20-30 questions) quiz containing 1-2 weeks worth of material

Anki - Flash-card app widely used by medical students

"I am so behind" - A Lie

Links to Bookmark

Course Calendar/Schedule:

<https://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/FF/>

Drexel Webcampus: (chances are if you are looking for an academic link, it's somewhere in here):

<https://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/>

DragonCard:

<https://get.cbord.com/drexel/full/prelogin.php?fbclid=IwAR1xWD96OSwQ4V1RpMoazl78uzn6te7MUSvdlbJDal6049anBOb9nYCJE8U>

Gross Anatomy Dissector: <https://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/neurobio/ff/grossanatomy/dissector>

Official Resources

Official resources will be talked about more during orientation and other seminars, however we included these two most often used pages.

- Academic Resources:

<https://webcampus.drexelmed.edu/osa/default.html#/academicsupporthome>

Under the MS1 and MS2 Resources tab, you can find subject specific advice from previous academic coaches.

- Tutoring Appointments:

<https://drexelmed.accudemia.net/>

Course-Specific Information

Molecules to Organs(M2O):

M2O is your classic biochemistry course. A lot of metabolism and pathways. Topics include protein synthesis, carbohydrate metabolism, purine/pyrimidine synthesis, and more! If you are coming from a biochem background, most of these topics will be familiar. Even if you are not, you will recognize a good bunch from your pre-reqs.

Our class primarily used these resources:

ILs - 95%

Anki - 34%

Boards and Beyond - 20%

First Aid (highly recommended for biochem diagrams) - 16%

Pixorize Biochemistry - 16%

Honorable mentions:

Ninja Nerd videos

Lippencott Biochem

BRS textbook

Human Structure & Function I (HSF1):

At this point you are ready for dissections! Yay! HSF1 is primarily Limbs/Back/Head/Neck Anatomy paired with Neuroanatomy and Neuroscience. There is a plethora of resources out there to help you study anatomy, but nothing beats having M2 help you along. Tutoring is widely available and probably the busiest at this point in the year.

Our class primarily used: ILs - 91% Dr. Sessler's Neuro Tutorials (high yield) - 91% Boards and Beyond - 25% Anki - 47% First Aid - 11%	Honorable mentions: Ninja Nerd (again) BRS books Physeo Constanzo Textbooks Guyton Hall textbook <u>Cranial Nerves</u> <u>UBC Neuro</u>
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Anatomy portions of HSF I and II are probably one of the most challenging parts of the year. Below are some sessions, strategies, and resources our class used to climb that jargon-laden hill.

Most used: ILs - 80% Med Scholar Review Sessions - 78% Practice Practicals - 82% Tutoring - 75% Independent group study - 75% Drexel Dissector - 60% Complete Anatomy - 31%	Other resources: Pocket Anatomy TeachMeAnatomy.com Netanatomy.com Gray's Anatomy for Students Netter's Flashcards
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Human Structure & Function II(HSF2):

Anatomy continues! But now it's focused on your torso. Heart, lungs, GI tract, and reproductive. However, it will not be as extensive as HSF1. This is also the beginning of your Physiology studies! Cardiac, Pulmonary, Renal, and Reproductive Physiology! A dash of biochemistry mixed in as well for Lipids. The transition from heavy anatomy study to physiology/biochem studies can be a bit difficult for students. In those situations, we recommend reaching for the closest M2 you can find to figure out strategies.

The resources used in HSF2 are similar to HSF1 with the exception of some new textbooks that are used often:

Costanzo Textbook Guyton Hall (Practice Problems) BRS Physiology (Good for practice as well)
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Foundations of Disease:

And finally, for the main event, we have Foundations! The transition course into microbiology, pathology, some pharmacology, and a great big chunk of immunology. This is the course where people use third party STEP resources a lot more to supplement their ILs.

Our class used: ILs - 91% Pathoma (excellent for pathology!) - 60% Anki - 51% Boards and Beyond - 33% First Aid - 24% Sketchy - 33%	Honorable mentions: Ana-Kay's session on charting Pixorize immunology
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Advice from Current Students

We asked our class what advice they had for incoming students. They were extremely generous with their responses. We recommend you take a few minutes to read each of them. M2s wrote them with love just for you!

Make sure you make time for yourself even when things seem very overwhelming	Start Anki right away.
Get started with Anki. It's an incredibly scary topic and may be intimidating for people who have never used it, but spaced time repetition is KEY to not being overwhelmed come studying for boards. Some of the professors suck at writing ILs (yeah make that part PC pls) so use Boards and Beyond / check in First Aid (for a diagram/easier explanation) for clarifying any topic that is difficult for you to understand. Utilize M2s for learning anatomy. I recommend trying new tutors out until you find one that you really click with, and asking if you can stick with them throughout the year. Go to the Microanatomy and Neuro learning sessions (you have to ask Sessler for the Neuro session times). They go through super long powerpoints of images that you can annotate. Exposure is key to understanding imaging.	Spend some time thinking about your "system" for the year. Be ready for that system to change. After every week, make a little note of what worked in your system and what didn't. Tweak accordingly. Don't be afraid of making radical changes to the way you learn. Always ask for help when needed. Upperclassmen and your classmates are phenomenal resources. I truly believe that the greatest skill of all times is knowing when to ask/look for help. Remember that when you need help. You were born a doctor nor a medical student, you were born with the skills to learn and ask questions. With time, everything will slowly come into place: you will feel slightly more of a medical student, and you will learn to learn, and learn to ask questions. Be kind to yourself along the way <3
Don't compare yourself to other students, no matter how much you want to. It's a pointless endeavor that only hurts you in the end. Focus on doing the best you can for yourself and you will succeed. And don't be afraid to ask for help!	Try to over study at the beginning until you figure out what works and what doesn't work. If possible study groups are the best for difficult topics
The first 6 weeks of M2O will allow you plenty of time to determine what study methods do or don't work for you, personally. While M2O is still a lot of work, it's a good intro course to get you used to the workload, and then HSF is a slight tier up in	Group study is incredibly helpful, especially in the days leading up to an exam! Find a few people who you click well with and go over areas you're uncertain about, both in reviewing ILs and practice questions.

workload. Be sure to explore multiple study spaces (whether it be at home or in different spots at school) to determine where you can attain max productivity!	Also, a piece of advice that Anna Kay gave me which I had never heard before or needed in undergrad is to make an excel/google doc with each IL and keep track of what days you go over what ILs. Make sure you do a second pass of a given IL within 2 to 3 days of your first pass, even if that puts you behind on other ILs.
Be patient with the adjustment process. It is very easy to compare yourself to others and formulate crazy expectations for how quickly you should be adapting. I am a rising 3rd year, and it took me basically all of MS1 to really adjust to medical school. You will find the right system for yourself, and trust that you are equipped to succeed.	Utilize office hours if you do not understand a concept. Go to the extra help sessions and make note of the things you do not completely understand - use for office hour discussion. Go to Dr. Sessler's review to get a preview of the week to come (it helps even if it doesn't feel that way in the moment).
Study with people! I was trying to study alone like I did in undergrad and that was not working out. My scores improved drastically once I found a group of people to study with.	Meet with Anna-Kay before your first exam even if you don't think you need any help studying. She's that good!
If you find yourself struggling academically within the first few weeks of school don't be shy to schedule an appointment with the office of student affairs to figure out what studying methods work!	Just be adaptable to having to learn in different ways. Studying for M2O is different from HSF which is also different from FD, so be prepared to potential change how you're studying.
I would say to try out different study styles but don't get overwhelmed with all the different resources. Find a few that work for you and build off of them.	Get a study pattern/method down first before really immersing yourself into extracurriculars. The amount of clubs and organizations will feel overwhelming at first but they will always be there.
Take time to relax and make sure you're sleeping 8-9 hours.	Don't hesitate to change up your study habits from before, it's worth trying out a few different things!
Make time for yourself, you don't need a 100 on everything to be a good physician	Do as many practice questions as you can before an exam
Everyone says you're going to have to change your study methods & what you used in the past won't work. This made me way overthink how I should study but I think it's best if you start with the method you're comfortable with & adjust from there. Don't try something brand new first.	Make your own schedule and stick to it! Don't need to necessarily watch all the videos, except for FD (definitely immunology or anything Larson - on that note, watch all Larson videos and in a review if you think she is mentioning a side comment or going on a tangent, it is actually important and it will show up on an exam.
Try not to stress out too much when you see 10 ILs scheduled in one day. Take your time and create your own schedule.	Make a schedule each week so you can stay on track, but give yourself more time in that schedule than you think you need because ILs always took most people longer than they expected!
If it works for you, study groups can really help you pull through any of the classes in first year.	Figure out the study strategies and resources that work for you and stick to them, once you get used to the volume it really isn't that bad.
Be confident and believe in yourself, you were accepted here because the school believed in your ability to succeed! And if you need help, ask around, SOMEONE will be able to help you~	Remember why you wanted to do medicine. Don't lose sight of your goal and make sure not to lose your loving and caring nature behind as you progress through the rigorous coursework. Love each other. Leave the competition behind.

One M2 wrote a lot to fit in the table! Their response is below:

“You're going to hear a lot of conflicting advice on how to study and what to do to succeed. That's because everyone finds different things useful. Ultimately, all this conflicting advice on what's useful becomes useless.

My advice is to go with what you normally do, but augment it with these resources. Supplement, don't change.

If you try EVERYTHING all at once, you'll run yourself wild and become exhausted. But how do you know which to use, and when?

That all depends on what you feel like you need for the task at hand. For example, in Foundations of Disease, we had to memorize a bunch of drug names that have no rhyme or reason. I'm someone that always tries to apply logic and reasoning to concepts to fundamentally understand them, but there was just no fighting these drug names like that. I needed something that could help me tackle rote memorization and regurgitation: Anki.

Another example: In HSF 1, learning the neuro content was rather tricky. Larger concepts were given that didn't have an explanation about why they occurred, just that they occurred (as is the case with most neuroscience stuff), and we were expected to apply those concepts in higher level questions. I needed a way to just know those concepts and the ways they could be applied: Dr. Sessler's Tutorial quizzes, repeated ad nauseam.

My second piece of advice is to not switch your studying/notetaking style. Those skills have already been developed in order to get you here to medical school. Yes, you may need to adapt them ever so slightly, but don't change them excessively.

I was a pen&paper guy, and taking diligent notes was my thing. In med school, I consumed half a notebook per week and also found the pace of the courses to be extreme. I felt like I had to switch my notetaking habits just to keep up. I started using my iPad to take notes and only highlighted things instead. Come exam time, I found myself needing some form of consolidated notes to review, and ended up writing notes on a piece of paper, from my highlighted text.

I began to see that highlighting was not the way for me, so I began taking small notes in the margins between the text. But that still wasn't good enough to study from. Come exam time, I began copying all that margin text onto a separate page--still a form of consolidated notes. That method was better, but still not ideal.

Finally, I settled on just taking diligent notes on a separate page right from the get-go. Ironically, it's the exact same thing I did before I started med school. Only now, it's been augmented by my iPad's digital conveniences (ex: I don't have to draw out anatomical structures, I can just copy and paste a picture).

Do the least different thing. Augment your studying habits; don't switch them to something completely different.”

Final Word

Medical school is a difficult beast to tame. Some of you will find it is not that challenging. Some will find it a seemingly impossible task. It is important that everyone finds their own groove and carves their own niche. For all difficulties that arise, the school provides a lot of support. If that is not enough, we will be here to help where we can.