

# Medical College of Georgia First-Year Transition Guide\*

## MCG FGLI Executive Board, 2024

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## Author Introductions & Disclaimer

Each of the following sections was authored and edited by members of the board of Medical College of Georgia First-Generation and/or Low-Income. Our views represent the personal opinions of students consulted, *not* the Medical College of Georgia or any other institutional entity.

In addition to the individual authors of each section, we have also included a specific component of each section devoted to our personal experiences, such as different students' insight into study methods and techniques that have benefited us in medical school, organizations we are a part of, and more.

### Author Introductions:

Danielle	<p>Hey y'all! My name is Danielle Obiri and I am a current M1 here at MCG. I am from Riverdale, GA but my family originally migrated from Ghana. I am the oldest of 3 daughters and the first person in my immediate family to attend college and now medical school. I went to UGA for undergrad, where I majored in Genetics and African American Studies. In addition to being a part of the MCG FGLI exec board, I am also one of your Class Liaisons, VP of SNMA, a Clinic Coordinator for Women's Clinic, and Outreach Chair of SIHLE. I hope to help further diversity and inclusion within medicine, especially surgical specialties. I truly hope that all of the guidance, thoughts and resources that we have pulled together in this document helps your transition to medical school feel less daunting. Definitely feel free to reach out if you have any questions!</p>
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Faheem	<p>Hello future student doctors. My name is Faheem Pottayil. I am from Marietta, GA, but I grew up in Duluth. I am American born, but my parents immigrated from South India. So I have been blessed with a great mother who cooks so well. Like many of you, I am a University of Georgia graduate. Becoming a physician has been my dream; it has been a fantastic experience sharing this dream with your classmates. Medical school is challenging, but my advice is to keep an open mind and always consider how much you grow every day. I hope this document can provide some appeasement to your journey.</p>
Alvaro	<p>Hey everyone, my name is Alvaro Cortez. I was born in Dalton, GA and raised in Chatsworth, GA. I am the oldest of five kids to Mexican immigrant parents. I completed my undergrad and received my Bachelor of Science at Biology at Dalton State College. Following graduation, I took two gap years and worked as a medical scribe and in medical billing at a family medicine clinic in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I will be the first physician in my entire family and I hope to dedicate a career in primary care for Hispanic/Latino populations. Passing along mentorship and ways to succeed as a first-gen student in medicine is my way of giving thanks to the people in my life who have helped me succeed, so I am super grateful to serve in this organization. Always feel free to reach out if you need anything!</p>
Sakshi	<p>Hi everyone! My name is Sakshi Sehgal. Though I was born in Delhi, I spent almost my entire childhood in the greater Atlanta area, growing up in Stone Mountain, attending school in Chamblee/Dunwoody. After high school, I attended the University of Pennsylvania, where I pursued my Bachelor's and Master's in Philosophy while on the pre-med track. I was also really passionate about expanding resources for first-generation, low-income students like myself in college. I then completed my Master's in Public Health at Emory University before starting medical school last year. I feel so grateful to be at this stage in my journey to becoming a physician, which has been a lifelong dream.</p> <p>The transition to medical school is a difficult one, and there are challenges in this journey to come. We believe that, with the right support system, resources, and guidance, even adjusting to medical school can be made easier, and that is exactly why this guide exists. Please feel free to reach out any time!</p>
Jordon	<p>Hello future physicians! My name is Jordon Brinkley. I grew up in Thomasville, Georgia and then moved to Nashville, Tennessee to attend Vanderbilt for undergrad where I majored in Medicine, Health &amp; Society. As a first generation college student, each transition (from high school to college and college to medical school) has presented new challenges and learning opportunities. During my time in undergrad, I helped start an organization that provided mentorship and resources to local high school students that would someday face the same challenges. I found this to be some of the most</p>

	<p>fulfilling work I did in college and look forward to continuing that work here at MCG. The transition to medical school will be difficult. Many of you will have to re-learn how to learn and challenges like never before. We hope this guide makes that transition easier and gives you a running start to your medical school career.</p>
Sydney	<p>Hey y'all! My name is Sydney Wright, and I am a student in the Class of 2027. I graduated with my Bachelors in Biology from Georgia Southern University in 2018 and ended up taking a few (or five!) gap years before starting at MCG. I spent most of this time as a scribe in two metro-Atlanta EDs and Emory ICU and working as a Virtual Instructor for ScribeAmerica, but I also completed my Masters in the Study of Law at UGA because I am interested in health policy.</p> <p>I have appreciated my gap years because it's given me time to grow as a person and pay off my undergraduate loans, but there is a big transition when you go from working full-time to school full-time, and I have had to learn how to balance medical school along with my part-time position as a Virtual Instructor and other extracurriculars. You have some leeway with finding balance since MCG has Pass-Fail curriculum, but you may feel overwhelmed at times when trying to juggle commitments and life, especially if you don't have a relative who has been through this process. Don't be a stranger and always feel free to reach out to me if you have questions or need help with something!</p>
Andrea	<p>Hi guys! My name is Andy Kadima. I'm originally from McDonough, Ga, but my parents are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and immigrated here in their 20's. I attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor for my undergrad and studied Biopsychology, Cognition and Neuroscience with a minor in Sociology of Health and Medicine. I took one gap year in which I worked as a medical assistant.</p> <p>I was ecstatic to come to MCG but nervous since I didn't have any doctors in my family and am passionate about mentoring since my mentors are what helped me reach where I am today!</p>
Jason	<p>Hello everyone, my name is Jason and I'm in the Class of 2027. I was born in NY but mostly grew up in the Greater Atlanta area and my family is currently in Woodstock now. I attended Kennesaw State University and majored in Biochemistry. I then took two gap years working as an ED technician in the ER at Northside. Coming from a smaller college had its challenges since I didn't have many resources to help prepare me for applying to medical school or transitioning. Transitioning into medical school will probably be one of the hardest things you will have done to date, but our hope is that this guide makes that transition just a bit easier. As always, feel free to reach out if you have any questions, rants, gripes, etc!</p>

## Section 1: Finances

For FGLI students, knowing where to even begin with paying for medical school can be extremely daunting. Our hope is that this document can give you a baseline on the resources available and how to make smart financial decisions that will take the anxiety off of handling your finances while in medical school.

### Insurance

The Medical College of Georgia requires you to have health insurance. Some people continue to stay on their parent's health insurance to help with the cost. Others may already have their own individual health insurance. If you do not have health insurance, the medical school is required to provide a health insurance plan to its students. The fee for the student insurance plan gets placed in your student (POUNCE) account every semester. If you already have a health insurance plan that fits the requirements of the school's policy, you can apply for a student insurance waiver. An important note is that if you pursue a health insurance waiver you must apply for this waiver every semester. You will receive an email with further details with the deadline for waiver submissions. The waiver period is kept open after Augusta University payment deadline to assist those students who are accepted late. Please check with the Business Office to verify the payment deadline.

It is worth mentioning that the student health insurance, which is provided through United Healthcare, does not include vision or dental coverage. Dental and vision insurance through MCG is optional. To find more information about the health insurance that is offered to Augusta University students, click the following link:

<https://www.augusta.edu/shs/availableplans.php>

### FAFSA & Loans

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form is how



you will be able to apply for federal grants, work-study, and loans for medical school. Unfortunately, for graduate students, there are not many federal grant/scholarship options. Most medical students apply for federal student loans. For anyone who hasn't applied for student loans before, start by getting yourself educated on the types of loans, what do you qualify for as a graduate student, how much can you borrow, and what to consider when taking out loans. For an overview of medical school loans, click here: [Loans | Federal Student Aid](#)

Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized Student Loans		
	Subsidized	Unsubsidized
Loan Qualifications	Must be an undergraduate student demonstrating need	Can be an undergraduate or graduate student and do not have to demonstrate need
Maximum Loan Limits	Lower loan limits	Higher loan limits
Interest Rates	2.75% for undergraduates	2.75% for undergraduates and 4.30% for graduates
How Interest Works	U.S. Department of Education pays interest while student is enrolled	Student is responsible for paying interest for the entire life of the loan

Source: U.S. Department of Education

If you have taken out student loans as an undergraduate student, specifically a Direct Subsidized Loan (DSL), it's important to note that medical students do not qualify for this loan. The majority of medical students who take out loans apply for what is known as Direct Unsubsidized Loans and Direct Plus Loans.

If you are applying for student loans, it is very important that you submit your FAFSA before the deadlines provided by the AU Financial Office in order to make sure it gets processed in time.

## Tuition & Scholarships

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is a federally granted scholarship for students pursuing a career in primary health care. Students receive funding for their education in exchange for practicing in urban, rural, and tribal communities with limited access to care, upon graduation and licensure. The program involves a service commitment after completion of residency and the number of service years depends on the number of years of scholarship. This scholarship will pay a 4 year maximum amount of funding, required fees, and reasonable educational costs. Recipients also receive a monthly support stipend. If you are sure that you want to specialize in primary care (ex, family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, general surgery, psychiatry, OB/GYN, Med-Peds) and serve



underserved communities consider applying for this scholarship. For more information, click here: [NHSC Scholarship](#).

Another major scholarship available is the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP), a military scholarship that can fund your medical school education in exchange for service. For more information, click here: [HPSP Overview](#).

Other notable scholarship resources can be found here:

<https://nmfonline.org/scholarships-programs/scholarships-and-awards/>

<https://www.shemmassianconsulting.com/blog/medical-school-scholarships>

## Financial Literacy

Here are some additional resources that can help you have a game plan with handling your finances.

[Budget Worksheet for Students](#)

[AAMC Education Debt Manager](#)

## Miscellaneous Fees

Medical school tuition and living expenses are already expensive, but unfortunately there will be additional expenses that arise during your first year of medical school. Here are some extra items that have come up during the school year that we wish we had been made aware of; please note that this may change from year-to-year as the school may use different softwares and programs:

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
MCG Student Technology Orientation Materials	Prior to orientation, you will need to purchase subscriptions for multiple online tools such as Point Solutions, ExamSoft, etc. You will get more information about this just before orientation.	\$150
Anatomy Lab Dissection Materials	You will learn more about these requirements prior to starting the MSK Module, but you will need to purchase an individual subscription for an online dissector. Additionally, you will need at least 2 lab coats, goggles, and a pair of scrubs and shoes that	\$125

	you don't mind wearing (it WILL smell bad!). Your dissection group will also need to work towards purchasing an in-lab atlas, glove boxes, and set of scalpels.	
Class Dues	These are set by Administration and your class Treasurer, so they may be subject to change but are usually paid in the Spring each year and are used for class events.	\$100
Parking Permits	You will need to get a parking permit each semester.	\$75 per semester
Doctor Prom	Doctor Prom is usually held in the Spring and will be extra beyond class dues.	Depends, but plan for tickets around \$40 for each student and \$50 for non-student dates
"School Spirit" Wear	Throughout the year there will be multiple class organizations selling MCG merchandise like shirts, hoodies, pullovers, cups, bags, etc. The lecture halls can get very cold, so having a hoodie or jacket on standby is good to consider.	Depends, though most shirts will cost around \$20-25, while hoodies and jackets are closer to \$30-45
Technology Equipment	Outside of a laptop, you are required to have an ethernet cord for quizzes and exams. You may need to purchase an adaptor if your computer doesn't have a built-in port. Additionally, some students decide to purchase tablets for lecture or use Anki remotes (most popular model is 8Bitdo).	\$20 for cord + adaptor

\*One note about study resources– we recommend that you wait until Orientation before attempting to purchase Amboss, Sketchy, Pathoma, etc.

## Jobs

Having a good work-life balance is key for succeeding in medical school, and it will likely take you a few months to find this balance. While it may be tempting to find a job and make money when you look at the cost of tuition and fees, it's important to consider that medical school will require as many hours as a full-time job (if not more!). For the small minority of students who do maintain some form of employment in medical school, many choose to ask for several weeks of time-off or switch to PRN status if they continue to work in the same position that they had prior to school (ex: scribe instructor, MCAT tutor, EMT/paramedic).

There is some flexibility at this stage in medical school because the curriculum is Pass-Fail and attendance is not mandatory for all lectures. That being said, don't lose focus – it has taken a lot of time and hard work to get to this stage, so you should prioritize your success as a student above having a small income.

MCG does have some paid positions for medical students, like the Tutoring program and the Anesthesiologist Externship. These will not be available for several months, but keep in mind that you do need to have good grades to be eligible for these positions– that is why it is key to take time and find balance before you overload yourself with extracurriculars, research, and external employment.

### **Author Anecdotes**

1	I was fortunate enough to have been awarded scholarships to graduate from undergrad debt-free and I lived at home with my family, so I didn't have to deal with applying for student loans until starting medical school. Knowing the logistics of applying for loans was very new and daunting for me. I like to consider myself resourceful and take the initiative to acquire knowledge that will help me get through new challenges, so I encourage you all to take the time and educate yourself on the financial aspects of medical school. I am actually a recipient of the NHSC Scholarship, so if that is something that interests you feel free to ask me about it! It was a game changer and makes worrying about paying for medical school stress-free. Again, there are resources out there. You just need to go out and search for it! And hopefully this document helps you out on your journey. It all works out in the end!
2	Understanding the financial dynamics of medical school was one of the biggest challenges I had to face. School is financially demanding and can be difficult to manage. Take an hour of your day to learn the types of loans with their respective interest rate. I am a numbers guy, so seeing a proper breakdown of semester fees and how much I need to budget really put my overall spending in perspective. When I get discouraged by the cost, I always remind myself that MCG is one of the most cost-conscious schools in the country. Also, do not neglect your health; go to your routine health and dental checkups. I used the university insurance, which was a great way to cover my titers and vaccination.
3	For me, I fund my medical education solely through loans given via FAFSA. I usually budget the loan money I receive for rent, utilities, food, gas, and entertainment. Because this is my first time taking out loans, I wasn't quite versed in how the whole process

	<p>worked, but we do have financial advisors to help us out. A challenge regarding scholarships I have also faced is that many scholarships are geared toward students pursuing primary care specialties outside of the HPSP, so I have been researching other avenues to find scholarship opportunities. Additionally, there are job opportunities like becoming a tutor where you can make a bit of money to help out with your expenses.</p>
4	<p>Evaluating and understanding financial costs in medical school can be challenging. Like Faheem, I really benefit from looking at numbers on a spreadsheet, so I used that before starting medical school to understand the cost of attendance breakdown, what rent, utilities, and other fees would look like monthly, and other expenses. I am fortunate to receive scholarship funding that has covered my cost of attendance, but I continue to use resources such as FAFSA, as well as AU and MCG's financial resources and guides, to inform my budget, not only for the school year, but for the rest of medical school.</p>
5	<p>The financial side of being a medical student can be one of the most overwhelming parts of medical school. Maintaining a budget on a monthly basis is a great way to start. Navigating the financial aid and student loans can be daunting, but our financial aid office is more than willing to help and will make sure you get what you need. The resources and information provided in this guide is also a great place to start if you feel overwhelmed with the process.</p>
6	<p>I did have to take out loans for my undergraduate and graduate programs before starting at MCG, but medical school loans have been much more expensive. I watched an AAMC Webinar about their free program MLOC (MedLoans Organizer and Calculator) and have used it to keep track of my loans and accrued interest. I budgeted my loans to be as minimal as possible (tuition, rent, about \$400 for food and gas each month, and about \$1,500 extra each semester) because I did save money while working before medical school and have accrued PTO with my job.</p> <p>Currently I work about 13-15 hours a week as a Virtual Instructor with ScribeAmerica, and I have found it manageable because I'm well-accustomed to my role and have a good rapport with my managers so that I can request time off for exams. I also took off for about 3 weeks so that I could move to Augusta, attend Orientation, and complete a few weeks of school without worrying about extra commitments. I work mostly over the weekend but have a few sessions on Monday nights when there isn't much content, and I occasionally pick up classes during weeks when I don't have volunteering, PCE, anatomy lab, etc. While I do find my schedule manageable, I also want to emphasize that it can be challenging because my work does keep me from participating in some clinics, going on weekend trips, etc. If you would like to talk more about managing school with a job, then please don't hesitate to reach out to me!</p>
7	<p>I do not have any external support for my medical school or living costs and fund myself through federal loans. At first it can seem a bit exciting being "gifted" such extensive free money initially but you have to remember that it all has to be paid back and it is accruing interest, so try to take out the most minimal amount as possible, but also not restrict yourself too much. You get two payouts each year at the beginning of</p>

	<p>each semester, so you have to budget for about 6 months which can be difficult to think so far ahead. I try to set a monthly budget and adjust it as I see fit at the end of each month.</p>
8	<p>Understanding how to manage your money is probably one of the best life skills that can help set you up for success in the future. I fund my education solely through FASFA loans and try to set up a monthly budget so that I am able to last until my next loan payout. Keeping a financial budget including ALL of your expenses is crucial so that you can decrease your stress levels and focus on studying. I highly recommend spending some time learning about different loan types so that you know what loans you have and how interest accrues. This is an ongoing learning process for me so give yourself grace and adapt your budget as you see fit!</p>

## Section 2: Social Life and Getting Involved

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Adjusting to a new school and environment can be challenging, and so finding ways to socially connect with others is very helpful as you adjust to medical school. This section will discuss ways to reach out to FGLI mentors, joining interest groups that align with your identities, finding your friend/study groups, and some social activities you can do in Augusta!

### **Finding FGLI Mentors:**

Finding a mentor can seem intimidating, but it is important to find someone who can support you and help you navigate medicine at both a personal and professional level. Finding a mentor who also has identified as FGLI provides a connection that brings comfort knowing someone with my identity has succeeded, therefore I know I can to. There is no list of mentors who may be FGLI, but I suggest getting to know the physicians you interact with and you will learn so much about them and connect with someone who may share a similar background as you do. Through courses such as Case-Based Learning (CBL) and Patient-Centered Learning (PCL), you will have preceptors that you will get to know and learn their stories - that is an avenue to finding a mentor. You can also find mentors by reaching out to lecturers you liked, shadowing physicians, and meeting advisors of interest groups. Although reaching out to physicians may seem daunting, they want to see us succeed and are open to mentoring us so we may reach our goals.

### **Interest Groups/Organizations:**

The Medical College of Georgia offers a vast amount of opportunities for you to get involved. There are various organizations representing a variety of interests, ranging from different specialties to mentorship. If there is something you are passionate about and notice there is not an organization for it, you can definitely start your own!

If you are interested in a leadership position, there will be an opportunity to apply to the interest groups via a common application in the fall. Getting involved in

organizations allows you to meet people with similar interests as you and provides a space to form meaningful relationships with your colleagues.

Below is a list of the student organizations here at MCG:

Always Active Augusta	Junior Medical League	Public Health and Preventative Medicine Interest Group
American Medical Association	Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)	Red Cross at MCG
American Medical Women's Association (AMWA)	Leadership Through Ethics	Ronald McDonald House Charities Club
Anesthesiology Interest Group	MCG Pickleball Club	Salvation Army Homeless Healthcare
Association of Women Surgeons	MCG Regenerative Medicine Interest Group	SeroTONEins
Cardiology Interest Group	MCG SAVES	Simulation Interest Group
Citizen Physicians	MCG's Got Talent	Sports Medicine Interest Group
Dermatology Interest Group	Medical Spanish Interest Group	Student Interest Group In Neurology (SIGN)
Diagnostic Radiology Interest Group	Medical Students for Choice	Student National Medical Association (SNMA)
Emergency Medicine Interest Group	Military Health Care IG	Student Patient Allies
ENT Interest Group	Music in Medicine	Students for a National Health Program
Exercise Physiology in Clinical Practice Interest	Narrative Medicine Interest Group (The	Sun Protection Outreach Teaching for Students

Group	Antidote)	
FaithCare Free Medical Clinic	Neurosurgery Interest Group	Surgery Interest Group
Family Medicine Interest Group	OB/GYN Interest Group	Teddy Bear Clinic
Food Pharmacy Clinic	Oncology Interest Group	The Black Men of MCG
Georgia Food4Health Clinic	Ophthalmology Interest Group	Ultrasound Interest Group
Global Health Initiative	Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group	Urban Farms Alliance
Graduate Muslim Student Association	Pathology Interest Group	Urology Interest Group
Healthcare Innovation Club	Pediatrics Interest Group	Veggie Park
Infectious Disease Interest Group	Persian Student Association	Walk With A Doc
Internal Medicine Interest Group	Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery IG	Wilderness Medicine Interest Group
Interprofessional Education Interest Group	PM&R Interest Group	
Interventional Radiology Interest Group	Psychiatry Interest Group	

Additionally, MCG has multiple student-run clinics catered to various patient populations who are underinsured or uninsured in Augusta and the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). Volunteering with a student-run clinic provides you with hands-on opportunities to see patients and you can also apply to become a

coordinator of a clinic if you are interested! Clinic coordinator applications will also go out in the early fall.

Compass For Hope Clinic	Free Mental Health Clinic	Asian Clinic
Dermatology Clinic	Greene Street Screening Clinic	Pediatric Clinic
Equality Clinic	Clínica Latina	Musculoskeletal Clinic
Faithcare Clinic	Druid Park Clinic	Women's Clinic
Halo Clinic	Empowered Health Clinic	Ophthalmology Clinic

### **Friends and Study Groups:**

The first week of medical school during orientation week is where everyone is meeting each other and creating new connections. It can be overwhelming meeting 200 people in one week and figuring out who your friends are going to be. A strategy is to take each day at a time and use the social events to widen your horizons when it comes to meeting others. You may never know who you will connect with and have similar interests to. As you continue to meet your classmates and create new friends, you also begin navigating finding a study group. With the rigor of medical school, having a study group is beneficial to learning and mastering the material. Some people can study with their friend groups, others may have a separate study group and friend group. In this case, choosing these groups of people depends on how you learn and if studying together is productive. A good strategy is to be open to rotating study groups when things may not be working to find the best group for you!

### **Fun things to do in Augusta:**

Augusta actually is the second largest city in Georgia, and with that there are actually more things to do here than you might think! Augusta is also roughly 2

hours away from various major cities like Atlanta, Savannah, Athens, Charlotte, and Charleston - so day trips and weekend trips are definitely possible!

In Augusta, you can find activities that may fit your interests. If you like the outdoors, there are numerous trails such as the Augusta Canal Trail and the Riverwalk Trail. If you love to eat, there are also a bunch of restaurants to try around Augusta as well. For example, Mellow Mushroom in Downtown Augusta has trivia nights every Tuesday from 7-9 pm!

Here's a list of some fun activities in Augusta that you could do on the weekends or a day you feel like you just need a break!

- Entertainment:
  - Topgolf
  - Dave and Buster's
  - Mastermind Escape Games
  - Augusta Riverwalk
  - Riverwatch Cinemas
  - DEFY Augusta - AirStrike Extreme Air Sports
  
- Restaurants:
  - FarmHaus Burger
  - Taqueria El Rey
  - Nacho Mama's Burritos
  - Taj of India
  - Metro Diner
  - Frog Hollow Tavern
  - The Boll Weevil Cafe and Sweetery
  
- Bars:
  - Sole Augusta
  - Garden City Social
  - Soul Bar
  - Southbound Smokehouse

**Author Anecdotes**

1	I am more of an introvert, so once the week is over I tend to relax at home. But, find times to hang out with friends and family during those weekends! Go to the movies, do something that gets you moving, try some local restaurants. Take full advantage of what Augusta has to offer!
2	Every week, I try to find a day to get in the AU gym and play some pick up basketball; games are constantly going on. Saturday morning, the gym puts up the nets and welcomes any volleyball lovers. AU has a vast net of intramural sports so find a group of friends and just play! Try something new. The gym also has rafts that you can take for free and you can row on the Savannah River. Every week, I try to do something human and enjoy.
3	Since our quizzes are on Fridays, my friend and I would usually hang out on Friday evenings, whether it's going out to try a new restaurant, watching a movie, or a night out downtown Augusta. I recently started going to Mellow Mushroom's trivia nights on Tuesdays with a group of friends and it has been pretty fun. I also started going to the gym more often so sometimes a friend and I would go together.. The AU gym offers a bunch of fitness classes ranging from cycling to dance, so those are also fun to go to and also get a good workout in!
4	I love going on drives around Augusta and into North Augusta across the state border as well as walking along the Greenway Trail in N. Augusta. My friends and I love to check out new restaurants all around the area, going to places in downtown like Metro Coffeehouse/Bar, as well as my favorite dessert bar, Vance's.
5	I went to college out of state and knew very few people coming into medical school. I had to put myself out there and form a new group of friends. Small group sessions are a great way to get to know people on campus and you will make some great friends this way. Early on, I tried to go to as many social events as I could without burning myself out to meet new people. Most people are friendly and also in the same position. Finding fun things to do outside of school once you have a group, like Mellow Mushroom tuesday trivia or hiking the trail at the Rapids Pavilion are fun things to do in your free time.
6	As an "older" student in the class, I was very nervous when coming to medical school because I didn't know anyone in the class. However, I found it helpful to attend nearly all of the events during Orientation week so that I could meet people and find similar interests. One thing that I enjoy doing each week is attending a dance class called WERQ at the on-campus gym– it's free so long as you have paid your student dues, and it's like hip-hop Zumba. I started going a few weeks into school and have met tons of classmates and upperclassmen. Outside of that, I try to go on Hot Girl Walks and hang out with people when I'm not in late-night study sessions with my best friends.
7	A good thing about going through such a difficult program, is that you are all going through it together. There is nothing more satisfying than hanging out with people after you all went through the same difficult module exam, or a particularly taxing week. Even if you are an

	<p>introvert like me, try to go out to some of the many events your classmates will put on. Everyone is generally friendly and wants to get to know each other!</p>
8	<p>I am a social person by nature and thrive off human interaction. Meeting so many people in a short amount of time can be a daunting task and you don't know who you might vibe with. I recommend going to the social outings that they plan in the beginning and talking with as many people as you can (you never know who you might click with!). I also participate in an intramural league of volleyball with other M1s which is a great outlet. Once you find a group of friends in your class, planning small events at each other's places like charcuterie boards, game nights, holiday events, etc are great to get closer to them! I also love nature and the Rec center has a plethora of items that you can rent out. I recently rent a kayak and went out on the river with some friends which was a great time!</p>

## Section 3: Logistics: Housing, Food, & Transportation

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Going to medical school comes with the process of moving to a new city! It is not easy accommodating to the vast aspects that a city has to offer. For FGLI students, some resources may not come easier to others. This section tries to lay out logistical facets that Augusta has to offer to help make the adapting process more fluid.

### Housing

#### Dorms

Augusta University provides graduating housing, [Elm Hall](#), which is one of the closest housings from Harrison. This dorm is a mix of undergraduate and graduate students. This dorm is furnished with a nightstand, desk, chair, and full bed.

840 Spellman St, Augusta, GA 30912 (0.3 mi)

- One bed One bath (457sq ft) ~ \$4784 per semester
- Studio (395sq ft)~ \$ 4560 per semester

#### Houses

This tends to be a common route as it is more financially appealing split among housemates/classmates. \*Note some housing requires the tenants to leave during Master's week

#### Apartments

These are common apartments housed by most students. These do not include all of the apartments but are the most common. Prices are rate per person and are subject to increase. The distances noted are distance from location to Harrison.

#### [Beacon](#)

1480 Wrightsboro Rd, Augusta, GA 30901 (0.3 mi)

- 1 bed 1 bath (~700-800sq ft)- ~ \$1500 per month
- 2 bed 2 bath (~1100sq ft)- ~ \$900-1100 per month
- 3 bed 2 bath (~1400sq ft) - ~ \$700- 800 per month

#### [The Row](#)

1812 Slaton St, Augusta, GA 30904 (0.8 mi)

- **2 bed 2 bath (1645sq ft) - ~ \$1500 per month**
- **2 bed 2 bath (1585sq ft) - ~ \$900-1100 per month**
- **3 bed 2 bath (1705sq ft) - ~ \$700- 800 per month**

### Canalside

1399 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30901 (1.0 mi)

- 2 bed 2 bath (1645sq ft) - ~ \$1500 per month
- 2 bed 2 bath (1585sq ft) - ~ \$900-1100 per month
- 3 bed 2 bath (1705sq ft) - ~ \$700- 800 per month

### Millhouse

636 11th St, Augusta, GA 30901 (1.4 mi)

- 1 bed 1 bath (~625-700sq ft)- ~ \$1400 per month
- 2 bed 2 bath (~1000-1100sq ft)- ~ \$900-1100 per month

### Ironwood

339 Railroad Ave, North Augusta, SC 29841 (2.7 mi)

- 1 bed 1 bath (~650-750sq ft) ~ \$1700 per month
- 2 bed 2 bath (~1150-1220sq ft)- ~ \$900-1100 per month
- **3 bed 2 bath (~1400sq ft) - ~ \$700- 800 per month**

Argento / Residence at Riverwatch (next to each other)

Argento - 420 Topgolf Way, Augusta, GA 30909 (5.5 mi)

Residence- 205 River Pl, Augusta, GA 30909 (5.5 mi)

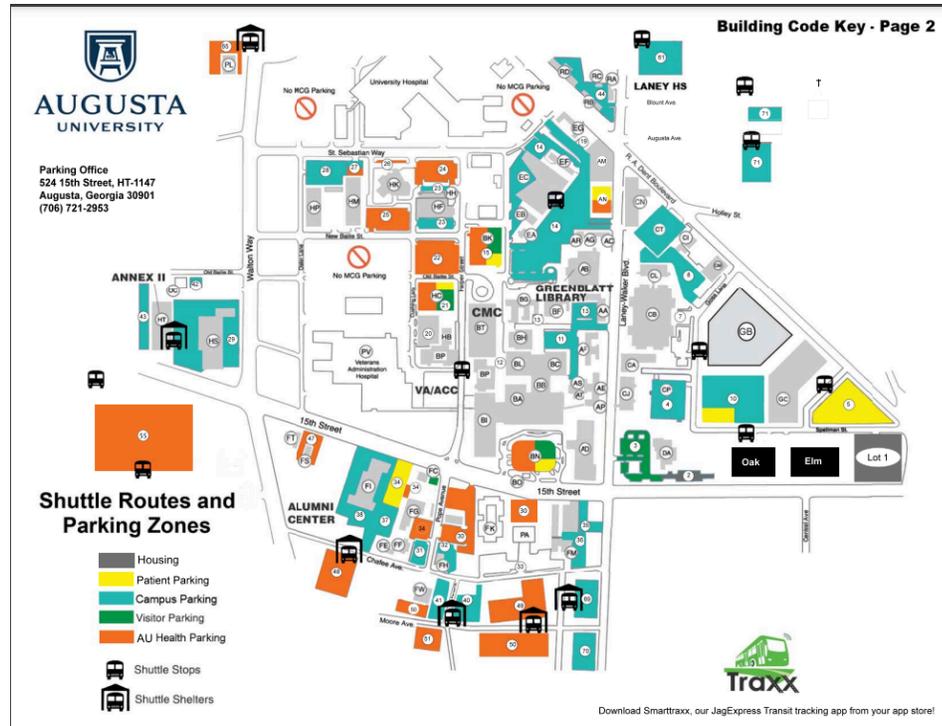
- 1 bed 2 bath (~700-850sq ft)- ~ \$1500 per month
- 2 bed 2 bath (~1140-1180sq ft)- ~ \$850-1100 per month
- 3 bed 2 bath (~1400sq ft) - ~ \$600- 700 per month

## **Transportation**

### **Parking**

The annual student parking pass is \$150 (\$75 per semester). The pass allows students to park at designated spots. The locations to park:

- Cancer Parking deck (Cancer Parking Deck, Augusta, GA 30912)
- Student Center Parking deck
- Lot 35, 69, 61



Parking during on-campus hours can be difficult. After 7:30 spots, the Cancer deck and the Student Center are usually full. 35, 69, and 61 usually have open availability.

## Augusta Transit

There is an [Augusta Transit Bus System](#) that utilizes different routes. Augusta University students ride for free with a valid ID. Depending on where you live, this is an easy and accessible way to get around the city. Download the MyAT app for hours of operation and bus times.

- Routes – <https://www.augustaga.gov/262/Routes>
- App [iPhone](#) and [Google Play Store](#)

## Food

### Food Pantries

Augusta University provides food pantries that is open to all currently enrolled AU students for students in need. If you are in need of assistance contact [deanofstudents@augusta.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@augusta.edu).

For more information, click this [link](#)

## Groceries

### Bourda Green International Market \$

- 2308 Lumpkin Rd, Augusta, GA 30906

### Food Lion \$

- 2803 Wrightsboro Rd Space 10, Augusta, GA 30909

### Aldi \$

- 227 Bobby Jones Expy, Augusta, GA 30909
- 1360 Knox Ave, North Augusta SC 29841

### KJ's Market IGA \$

- 3457 Peach Orchard Rd, Augusta, GA 30906

### Lidl \$

- 1096 Alexander Dr, Augusta, GA 30909

### Radha Asian Indian Grocers \$

- 3112 Washington Rd, Augusta, GA 30907

### Costco \$\$

- 825 Cabela Dr, Augusta, GA 30909

### Harveys Supermarkets \$\$

- 1631 Gordon Hwy, Augusta, GA 30906

### Kroger \$\$

- 2801 Washington Rd, Augusta, GA 30909

### Publix \$\$

- 2816 Washington Rd, Augusta, GA 30909
- 334 E Martintown Rd, North Augusta, SC 29841

### Walmart \$\$

- 1201 Knox Ave, North Augusta, SC 29841
- 3209 Deans Bridge Rd, Augusta, GA 30906

- 260 Bobby Jones Expy, Augusta, GA 30907

Fresh market \$\$\$

- 2701 Washington Rd Ste 12, Augusta, GA 30909

Sprouts \$\$\$

- 630 Crane Creek Dr, Augusta, GA 30907

**Dining Halls**

Augusta University provides three dining halls for students to grab some food. The Health Science Campus Dining hall is the closest. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner have respective rates.

Summerville Campus Dining

- 2500 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30904

Health Sciences Campus Dining

- Health & Sciences Student Center, 15th & Laney Walker Blvd.

Terrace Dining

- 1120 15th St, Augusta, GA 30912

For more information regarding the meal plans, click this [link](#)

**Miscellaneous**

If you are in need of a laptop, the University Library (Reese Hall) will provide you one each semester.

**Author Anecdotes**

1	Being that this is my first time living away from family, I didn't know much about renting an apartment. Honestly, I just took the easy route and decided to live at Elm Hall, which is not bad at all! It's definitely dorm-style, so you either hate it or don't mind it, but you don't have to worry about parking and it's walking distance to school. I have a car so I usually go to Food Lion, which is about a 5-8 minute drive from school, and get groceries twice a month and meal prep. I found that it was cheaper than other stores so it has become my go-to option. Also, definitely take advantage of any events that have free food! Saves time and money!!
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2	<p>I prefer bulk so I try to shop for stuff at Costco which would last for almost months. Otherwise, I try to meal prep my food for the week which makes eating much more practical and cost effective throughout the week. Pro tip: your academic houses should have coffee so try not to fall for the Einstein coffee traps even though it may look enticing. I also do my work on a PC that I have had for many years. I did not want to buy a laptop so I have been renting one out from the Reese Hall which has been so practical for quizzes and exams.</p>
3	<p>This was my first time leasing an apartment and so I did not really know how to go about finding a place that I truly wanted. I ended up living at Beacon Station, which is pretty close but pricey and the train is also a challenge. I have a car and I typically drive to Walmart in North Augusta for groceries and sometimes out to Sam's Club for larger bulk items. Unfortunately, downtown Augusta is a bit further away from grocery stores compared to other locations so they are a bit of a drive when I go grocery shopping so try to live a bit away from campus if you feel like that could be an issue for you!</p>
4	<p>Since I did not know much about housing in Augusta and committed to MCG late, I opted for a lease at Beacon Station, which has been convenient given its proximity to school, but has been on the pricier end. In hindsight, I would have felt equally comfortable with apartments a little further away, especially since I'm fortunate to have a car here, since I usually prefer parking on campus if I'm studying late, for instance. Be sure to look into options, even if they seem a few miles further away--even a 6-7 mile drive doesn't usually take more than 15-20 minutes depending on the area. For groceries, I usually drive to the Kroger in North Augusta, but it is definitely convenient having a Costco and Sam's Club in the area for a larger grocery haul.</p>
5	<p>The one person I knew that lived in Augusta lived at Grand Oaks at Crane Creek. I got a competitive price there and liked the area so I chose to live there. It is a little far and not many students live there, which can be a blessing and a curse. Most students will live closer to campus, either at Beacon Station or Ironwood. I do like the area that I live in because it is close to a lot of restaurants, grocery stores, Target, Wal-mart, and Sam's Club. This makes running errands convenient. For meals, I usually buy in bulk and cook a lot on sundays in between studying. This can save you money and time during the weekdays.</p>
6	<p>One thing that I was adamant about when coming to medical school was having my own apartment since I have lived on my own for 3 years, so I tried to shop around and find cheap-yet-safe 1-bedroom apartments. I love my apartment at Ballantyne Commons because it is about 15 minutes away from campus but otherwise under 10 minutes away from my essential places-- Kroger, Target, Mirin Fusion, Panera (btw, check out the Sips Club program as an alternative to Starbucks!), etc. It is a bit more expensive to live on your own and commute to campus, but I try to offset the expense by cooking at home, eating out no more than twice a week, purchasing items when on sale, and picking up extra classes as part of my job. I usually shop at Kroger because I have a rewards card and get fuel points to use towards gas.</p>

7	<p>I usually go grocery shopping once every two weeks. Having an idea of what meals to plan so that during the week you have a solid plan of what you are able to eat and not fall into the trap of wanting to buy fast food since you don't have time to cook is a good idea. I try to cook on Sunday and Wednesday since that is my free day. I try to buy a mixture of ingredients that I can cook into meals, but also buy some frozen meals for days that I am too busy to cook. In terms of logistics, I always come to school right before class so I have never been able to park in Cancer deck in the morning so I usually have to park in the further lots and budget a few extra minutes to walk to class.</p>
8	<p>Keeping finances in mind, I opted to try and find a house to split with other med students. I currently live in a house with 4 other med students which can be a little strained at times but the financial savings are huge. I do most of my grocery shopping at Food Lion since I live very close to it and my commute is only 8 minutes to school. Planning out your meals is the best thing that you can do so keep that in mind when grocery shopping. Meal prepping is a great way to save money, however it requires cooking a lot on Sunday (and I'm lazy lol).</p>

## Section 4: Academics

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Transitioning to medical school can be difficult in a multitude of ways, including coping with the vast academic transition. Starting medical school content is even often infamously compared to trying to drink water out of a fire hydrant--especially given the breadth of information covered, even in the early weeks of the Foundations of Medicine module. In the following, several key topics are covered: (1) student anecdotes regarding the academic transition to medical school (2) the difference between internal vs. external resources (3) a guide to setting up and using anki (4) what sample studying schedules for us generally look like, (5) studying for quizzes vs. the module exam, and (6) tips that we recommend when approaching studying, especially at the beginning of medical school while you figure out your studying groove.

### Author Anecdotes

1	<p>This takes trial and error so don't expect to have mastered your study routine early on. I found that what really maximizes my studying (and my grades on the weekly quizzes), is previewing the lecture material beforehand. That might mean I start skimming through the lectures on my own an hour before the lecture starts. If I felt I understood the concepts decently enough on my own, I immediately start doing Anki review on that material. I am someone who needs discipline, so just getting up and going to lecture, even if that means I'm just sitting there doing my Anki cards, maximizes my productivity. I decided that taking notes was not efficient for me, so instead I just try to pay attention to the lectures and try to understand the concepts. The rest of my methods are just doing consistent Anki cards from the Anking deck throughout the day and as we get nearer to Friday I incorporate practice questions. Unpopular opinion, but I don't really use Boards &amp; Beyond or Sketchy just because I feel like I have to take more time passively watching videos instead of actively learning the material.</p>
2	<p>Compared to what I used at the beginning of school, the strategies I use now have drastically changed and are continually evolving. This will most likely be the case for you as well. Before school started, I would roam the web and what ways people used to study. But I actually ended up using none of them. Instead, I found strategies that worked for <b>me</b>. Every person studies differently, and always keep this in mind.</p> <p>I personally use a combination of First Aid and lecture material for what I should be studying for the week. I use the lecture as an outline and the respective First aid section</p>

	<p>to reinforce the material. I then use Anki to tie it all together. Our lecturers are brilliant and experienced in their respective fields and provide meaningful insight, so I always try to gather something new to add to my toolbox.</p>
3	<p>Being in medical school has taught me to be flexible with how I study as each week may require me to change my studying approach. I had to learn how to study a lot of information efficiently while also retaining it, so I tried various different things. I asked a lot of older students what they did to study and what helped them, but at the end of the day I just had to rotate through their suggestions and find what worked best for me (I know, everyone will say this but it is true!)</p> <p>My current strategy is I use external resources to get an idea of what is being taught during the week along with Anki to keep up with the information, and then I watch the lectures to reinforce the material and ensure I have understood the topics of the week. I also test myself using questions from the review session, ScholarRX or some component questions created by faculty towards the end of the week to further solidify the concepts.</p>
4	<p>At the beginning of medical school, I tried to continue using the study strategies I used in college and graduate school, namely writing and re-writing (and re-writing) key topics from lecture or even all of my lecture notes for a certain class before the exam.</p> <p>Transitioning to medical school, this was difficult to replicate, even in the first week, given the sheer number of lecture slides there were. During the first semester, I ultimately ended up doing a combination of lecture slides + review, group study (where we would quickly talk through slides), and occasionally Anki for certain topics. Starting with the CP/HEME module, I started using a different approach that has worked a lot better: beginning with external resources and videos at the beginning of the week, then watching recorded lectures at a faster pace, while using Anki throughout the week before quizzes.</p>
5	<p>Now, my strategy consists of mostly watching or reading external content and doing the tagged cards associated with them in Anking, supplemented by lecture material on Thursday. At the start, I used mostly lectures and internal anki decks. This worked well for foundations, but I quickly found it easier to use external content for a few reasons. One reason is that the cards are very high quality and tend to be shorter, easier to remember, and faster to complete. Another big reason is that I can get a better head start on the week. I usually start on Sunday and space out the new content for the week based on the anki log. Starting a day early allows me to do less new cards everyday or have an extra day toward the end of the week to focus on preparing for the quiz. On Thursdays, I will skim through lectures, paying close attention to any info that was not covered in external sources. I also do as many questions as I can on Thursdays. This includes questions from Prasad's components, any questions at the end of a lecture, and any questions assigned from the professors. A good rule of thumb is that if a professor provides you with an example question, they believe it is an important topic and are likely to test it on your quizzes or module exams.</p>

	<p>My biggest piece of advice is simple: consistency. Figure out what works, continue to do it, and be open to making adjustments to improve. Another area of consistency that will make your life easier, in my opinion, is anki. Yes, getting through cards every day can be a pain, but so too can sludging through notes without guidance of what you actually need to review. Being consistent and doing your reviews every day from the start will make module exam prep and step 1 prep much less stressful. It can also give you more time to do other important things like research, volunteering, leading orgs, and enjoying life!</p>
6	<p>The best advice that I have heard has come from Dr. Sturgis: you should choose to either master the lecture content, or you should choose to master the material from third party resources (Boards and Beyond, Pathoma, Sketchy, etc.). It may take a few weeks (or modules, in my case) to find an approach that works for you, and the beauty of having a Pass-Fail curriculum is that you have time to experiment. That being said, you will burn yourself out if you try to memorize every minute detail from both lecture and third party videos.</p> <p>The “sweet spot” for me has been to attend lecture, then find corresponding Anki cards within the Anking deck to keep reviewing the material. If there are cards that are completely unrelated to lecture, then I will suspend them until after I have completed the module exam. The anatomy lectures do not always correspond with the Anki cards, so I have scanned pages from an anatomy coloring book and find it helpful to color the structures while also noting down key facts from the Anatomy lectures. Coloring is also therapeutic to me, so it’s a good way to “study” when you get tired of staring at a computer.</p>
7	<p>I follow a largely lecture focused study method. I personally try to watch lectures in real time at home at the end of the day that they are given. My weaknesses are anatomy, development, and histology. So if I see any of those on the schedule I try to read and take well written notes on the Scholar Rx bricks on the corresponding topics before the corresponding lectures those weeks so I can stay on task. If it is any other topic I am able to suffice with just skimming the brick.</p> <p>Depending on the topic I do certain supplemental resources depending on the topic. A pharmacology lecture will always come with a sketchy follow up. Histology will always come with a ninjanerd explanation. I am a visual learner so I watch youtube videos to visualize the anatomy, and draw it repeatedly on a white board until I can do it from memory. I also utilize group study earlier on in the week (usually Tuesdays) because it’s easy to think you know something until you try to explain it to someone else, which offers more time to review.</p>
8	<p>In Foundations and MSK/Skin, I mostly listened to lectures, did lecture anki, and lots of practice questions either from prasad, ScholarRx, or whatever was available. Moving into CP/Heme, I transitioned into starting with external resources and doing the associated AnKing cards. This made it much easier for me to review the lecture slides and understand the main points. I will advise that with this method, it is imperative to still watch lectures, or at least review the slides so that you do not miss lecture specific</p>

questions that will be on the weekly quiz. Using anki also helps keep you on a schedule to continue to review past topics that you might have forgotten. This will help you later on in your step dedicated period tremendously!

## Internal vs. External Resources

In this guide, we describe using internal and external resources frequently. In this context, we refer to **internal** resources as those in-house or MCG-specific, such as lecture slides, content directly from professors, etc. **External** resources refer to additional study materials, such as First Aid, Board and Beyond, Sketchy, Pathoma, and more. Many students use a combination of *both* internal and external resources to supplement their studying, whereas others rely just on lecture slides or just on external resources, for instance. Others will prioritize one kind of studying earlier in a module and then shifting more to internal or external resources during module studying time. As with most other aspects of medical school, see what works best for you, but *remain open-minded*. Several of us personally did not use Anki before medical school and now use it as our main tool to test content understanding; many other people change up their study strategies module-to-module, so feel free to try something different.

## Anki 101: Setting up and Using Anki

**Introduction to Anki:** Anki is a powerful tool that uses spaced repetition in the form of scheduling algorithms and active recall in the form of flashcards to improve your retention of previous material. Current research in the field of memory indicates that active recall (being forced to retrieve information rather than just passively reading and highlighting) and spaced repetition lead to the best retention of material.

Anki is not a way to learn things for the first time; its primary use is for retaining and remembering content over the long term. Whether that be from the beginning of the week to the end of the week for a weekly quiz, from the beginning of a module to the end of a module for a module exam, or from the beginning of pre-clerkship to the end of pre-clerkship for Step 1. Allowing Anki to schedule your review over time allows you to focus on the content, which there will be a lot of. Another benefit is that having a set number of reviews each day allows you to keep up with new content while avoiding both overstudying and understudying. You can have a great deal of confidence that after completing your reviews and any new content you need to cover for the day that you can take some time to do other things, including relaxing. Contrast that with not having a defined task, where you can easily spend too little time studying things you do not know or spending far too much time on things you do.

### Getting Started with Anki:

- **Installation:** The first step will be downloading Anki to your computer. Navigate to the Anki [website](#) and select your operating system. Follow the detailed installation instructions provided.
- **Algorithm:** Decide on the algorithm you are going to use, the SM-2 algorithm or the more recent FSRS algorithm. FSRS is tailored to each individual, using a desired retention that you set and scheduling cards based on that and other factors including review history, performance, and card stability. It also allows for easier manipulation of your workload by allowing you to alter desired retention and other tools. Most importantly, FSRS leads to a lower review count over time because it is better at predicting your retention for a card. Less reviews means less work in the long run. For these reasons, we recommend FSRS

### Anki Settings:

- **Enabling FSRS:** The FSRS algorithm is recommended for its personalized scheduling. To enable FSRS, toggle the FSRS button under the advanced section. Ideal retention lies between 0.80 and 0.95. Understand that the higher your retention, the more frequently you will see cards. A retention between 0.8 and 0.9 is recommended. Initially, you will not be able to optimize your parameters. However, after accumulating a certain number of reviews, you will be able to optimize your algorithm based on your review patterns. We recommend doing this once every month or two. Please note, selecting reschedule cards with change option may front load some reviews in the days after change.
- **Learning Steps:** When learning a new card, pressing again will start back at the first learning step. Pressing good advances through the learning step until all steps have been passed and then it will become a review card. Setting 3m 15m is a good start here. Ideally, you should have no learning steps greater than 1 day. A potential issue you may encounter is that FSRS sometimes schedules the first review of a card 2 days after you learn it. This can pose a challenge for learning new cards later in the week, as you will only see the card once before the quiz. In such cases, setting a learning step of 1 day could be a solution
- **Max Interval:** Set your maximum interval to at least 9 months to ensure long-term retention. Although 9 months may seem like a long interval, FSRS works to maintain your desired retention rate regardless of the interval, ensuring that reviews are spaced appropriately
- **Maximum Reviews per Day:** Set your maximum reviews per day to 9999, the max Anki allows. This prevents you from missing reviews based on scheduling. You will never have this many reviews per day unless you have gone weeks without completing reviews or something else is wrong.
- **New Cards per Day Limit:** Set your new cards per day limit to 1000 to avoid missing new material as you unsuspend cards throughout the day due to daily limits. Note that you will never have anywhere close to 1000 new cards per day.

If you have any more curiosity about FSRS, an in depth video of the parameters and other information about it can be found [here!](#)

### Helpful Add-ons:

- **Image Occlusion Enhanced:** Import pictures, edit them, and add occlusions directly in Anki, helpful for anatomy and other visual subjects.
- **Amboss Integration:** This add-on highlights terms and gives you access to Amboss directly in Anki, useful for defining terms without interrupting your workflow.
- **FSRS Helper:** This add-on allows you to postpone or advance cards based on their stability and lifespan. It also allows for load balancing so you have a more even amount of reviews every day. You can set easy days far in advance and plan around life or school events. This add-on is extremely useful.
- **Review Heatmap:** Keep track of statistics and streaks on Anki. Look ahead and see how many reviews you have due for the rest of the calendar year, which can be helpful when trying to plan ahead for busy days.

### Choosing Decks:

- **Internal Resources:** Consider making your own cards or using decks shared by classmates. The pros of this method is that these decks are tailored to your curriculum and can be particularly useful for weekly quizzes and module exams. One con is that the cards don't always come out in a timely manner and if the lecture has changed from year to year there could be things missed. The cards also tend to be of lower quality (less visual aids, basic note types, long cards with too much information, etc).
- **External Resources:** The gold standard is the Anking deck. Version 11 can be found free online. Version 12 can be purchased on the Anking website for \$5 month, which can then be canceled immediately. There is also a scholarship option for a year long subscription. Pros include that this deck is tagged well in relation to external resources such as Boards and Beyond, Pathoma, and Sketchy, allowing for efficient integration of these resources into your study routine. The cards are also very high quality in terms of resources included. Cons for this method are that it is not as tailored to lecture, but generally the same information can be covered, especially when using a log created by previous students that relates lecture to third party content.

**Conclusion:** Anki is an incredible tool for long-term retention of information. Because of how the algorithm works, it is best to be consistent – i.e. every day. Putting in a little more work each day leading up to your quizzes, exams, and Step 1 will lead to less cramming and less stress. When big tests come around, having stayed on top of content review allows you to focus on doing questions and honing the bigger picture, which is a much less stressful process. By incorporating Anki into your study routine and staying consistent, you'll not only excel in your exams but also build a solid foundation of knowledge for your future medical practice.

### Sample Studying Schedules

Though there are several ways to approach weekly studying, here are sample schedules of what has worked for us:

***Schedule Idea #1: Incorporates Both Internal/External Resources*****Everyday:** Anki reviews**Monday:** Anki review in the morning, attend CBL/Anatomy/other requirements; evening studying time: watch covered lectures at 1.5-2x, watch associated external resource videos on difficult concepts and unsuspend related cards. Doing the cards for both internal and external will be cumbersome and redundant, picking one source will be helpful.**Tuesday:** Use morning studying time to finish Monday's lectures and do Tuesday review and new Anki cards; use afternoon studying time after CBL/PCL to watch Tuesday's lectures at 1.5-2x**Wednesday** (i.e. free day): Finish reviews and use this day to catch up on any remaining lectures from the first part of the week, unsuspend new cards related to content covered, and do Anki for histology quizzes (if applicable in a given week) & complete Histo quiz**Thursday:** continue Anki reviews, unsuspend any remaining new cards; watch lectures live today and combine all lecture slides for high-level review; use afternoon/evening study time post-CBL/PCL to make tables or concept maps for any challenging concepts, explain to one another, and go through as many lectures as possible.**Friday:** last-minute lectures' review and group study prior to the quiz***Schedule Idea #2: Prioritizes Internal Resources*****Saturday/Sunday:** Review schedule and topics for next week. Review corresponding Scholar Rx bricks. Review and outline lectures for Monday. Watch any pre-posted podcasts or flipped classroom lectures.**Monday:** Spend early morning watching lectures after CBL. Early afternoons are usually used for histopathology or anatomy lab. Review corresponding BNB, Sketchy or preferred 3rd party resources to consolidate difficult information for previously attended lectures. Take histopathology quiz. Outline lectures for Tuesday.**Tuesday-Wednesday:** Utilize morning to watch lectures. Attend CBL/PCL in the afternoon. Review corresponding BNB, sketchy, or preferred third party resources to consolidate difficult topics from lecture. Group study and condense lecture notes for midway point in the week. Start incorporating practice questions for review by Wednesday.

**Thursday:** Review and actively recall condensed lecture notes and high yield information from external resources. Finish practice questions with priority to questions distributed by lecturer.

*General Lecture Advice:*

Watch lecture, understand key details, and review points emphasized by the lecturer. Learn to “find the red rose” as Dr. Lokeshwar will tell you to truly get the STEP and clinically relevant concepts. Then study utilizing concept maps, charts, tables, Anki, and other methods of testing yourself to evaluate where you are in your studies and what areas you need improvement in. Be active in your studying and don’t be afraid to change study methods in your journey through medical school.

***Schedule Idea #3: Prioritizes External Resources***

**Everyday:** Reviews

**Sunday/Monday-Thursday:** Start the morning off with getting through reviews first. Then follow the anki log (older students will share), watching or reading related third party content for understanding and then using the tags in Anking to unsuspend the related cards and doing them. If there is a histopath lab, use an in house deck like Tiff’s to study for the quiz and take it.

**Wednesday-Thursday:** Get through reviews in the morning. Depending on progress with new material for the week, use the afternoon to start a light review of the lectures for the week. You will find in many cases that you know all of the content from work earlier in the week. Focus on lecture unique content, especially if it is emphasized in the slides. Many weeks, there is not a lot of this, so learning it, even on Thursday, is a reasonable task. Completing all the questions, like Prasad’s components, Dolen’s scholar rx bricks, and any questions at the end of slides, is likely to get you extra points on the quiz.

**Friday:** Last-minute lecture review and group study prior to the quiz. Get your reviews done and then enjoy your Friday evening!

**Saturday:** Knock out your reviews and take the rest of the day to yourself, you deserve it!

## **Studying for Quizzes vs. Module Exams vs. Other Assessments**

During the pre-clerkship phase at the Medical College of Georgia, students primarily have several assessments as part of the curriculum. On a weekly basis, students have the end-of-week quiz that assesses content covered in lectures throughout that week. The pre-clerkship phase is divided primarily into 5 modules (in order: Foundations of Medicine, MSK-Skin, CP-Heme, GI-GU-Renal, and Brain and Behavior) that each have an end-of-module exam. In addition to these assessments, there are also other evaluations/assessments as part of our curriculum, including Anatomy Lab practicals (2 in MSK-Skin, 1 each in subsequent module), Case-Based Learning evaluations (mid- and end-of-module, for each module), and other evaluations for the Patient-Centered Learning (PCL) and Patient Clinical Experience (PCE) portions of the curriculum.

### **Quizzes:**

Weekly quizzes will focus on content from each week's lecture slides. Usually between 20 and 40 questions, each quiz counts for a fairly small portion of the module grade, especially since there are usually 6-9 quizzes per module.

Studying for these quizzes often includes a combination of internal and external resources for most people, relying more on one or the other depending on weekly content.

### **Module Exams:**

For module exams, many students will review condensed lecture notes, concept maps/flow charts/tables they might have made, lecture-specific Anki, etc. There are also several practice tests that module directors may disseminate through ScholarRx. These are very high yield. They will help solidify your knowledge and give you an idea of what questions will be on the test. When working through these, go through and understand every answer option, why the wrong choices are wrong, and in what scenario they would be right. Third party questions and resources such as medbullets and amboss can also be helpful for this review.

### **Other Assessments:**

For CBL evaluations, students just need to schedule meetings with their facilitators to discuss participation; no other studying or preparation is needed.

For PCL/PCE evaluations, specific guidance is sent out by those course directors for evaluations such as Clinical Progression Assessments (CPA).

For Anatomy Lab practicals, students often go into the lab with friends/classmates, M2 tutors, and anatomy faculty to work through the various “tag sheets” with anatomy labeling for the practical. Going through an anki deck with Michigan Blue Link images of covered structures makes this process go much more smoothly.

## General Tips for Approaching Studying

Here are general tips to approaching studying in medical school, particularly during the early transition into school:

- **Take your time.** Transitioning into medical school is truly a *transition*, for everyone, in a variety of ways. It is **more** than okay to take longer than a few quizzes or even modules to get the hang of studying that works best for you.
- **Try to manage your time outside of mandatory requirements so that you are still able to eat well, sleep well, maintain hobbies, and more.**
- When watching videos or listening to lecture, sometimes the material can feel *really* overwhelming. **Try to pay attention to what the lecturers are saying**, as opposed to knowing everything on a particular slide--this will allow you to better understand what they are really trying to emphasize for a certain concept.
- **Space out reviews.** When module studying time comes, try to focus more on big-picture ideas, review your weakest weeks first, and try to space out reviews of the same material to really reinforce it by Test Day.
- **Test your understanding.** It is often easy to feel like you’ve understood a concept through passive reviews--really try to test your understanding by explaining concepts to other students, using spaced repetition study tools like Anki and RemNote, and doing practice questions, both for quizzes and module exams.
- **Be open to new study strategies and ways of learning.** For many medical students, if not most, the academic transition to medical school will require at least minor, if not major, adjustments to their previous study methods and strategies. Though it can be uncomfortable to change a style of studying that has worked throughout college and other graduate programs, it is important

to adjust to kind of content and testing that occurs in medical school, so be open to changing your study style.

### **General Study Resources:**

#### **Study Tools:**

1. [Anki](#)
2. [RemNote](#)

#### **Study Resources:**

1. Lectures → These are recorded and posted immediately after lectures through Echo360 videos on D2L.
2. D2L → This is where your schedule for each module will be posted, along with lecture slides.
3. External resources → Talk to an M2/upperclassman for resource suggestions.

#### **Other**

1. [AAMC Resources for First-Generation Medical Students](#)

## Section 5: USMLE Step 1 Preparation

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### General Resources:

During the dedicated study period, a variety of study resources can be used to help you. Firstly, it should be noted that everyone will be in a *different* spot when beginning the dedicated period--some may need focused content review, whereas others can begin with a focus on practice questions. Remember, regardless of where you start, with dedicated effort, *you can and will pass the finish line!*

- Content Review:
  - Pathoma - Video resource with specific chapters devoted to organ system pathologies, excellent for high-yield overview of most-commonly tested diagnoses, along with their histological/pathological descriptions; Book can also be used to annotate notes
  - Boards & Beyond - Video resource providing overview on diagnosis, treatment, and physiology of organ systems
  - USMLE FirstAid Book - Book that can be annotated with detailed information on each organ system, includes chapters on public health/biostatistics
  - Sketchy (Micro & Pharm) - Video resource with excellent mnemonics/ “stories” to help remember high-yield microbiology and pharmacology, i.e. for cardiac pathologies
  - Anki - Spaced flashcard review method, can use “high-yield” tags to filter out cards for Step 1 Review
- Review Questions:
  - UWorld - Widely-recommended question resource with review questions broken down into systems-based and subject-based classifications. Up to 40-question blocks to mimic the real test that can be random, in timed vs. tutored mode, and focused on specific subjects/topics. “Reports” also lets you monitor trends and specific topic-based weaknesses.

- Amboss - Another question resource with subject- and systems-based questions for Step 1 Review. Can be used for additional questions, particular to focus on content area weaknesses.

**Author Anecdotes:**

1	<p>Step 1 is definitely one of the hardest, if not the hardest, exam you will take during your medical school journey. There is so much information to cover and it can be extremely daunting to fathom retaining hundreds of pages worth of information. Despite the challenge, know that thousands of students have taken this exam before you and they passed, so there's no reason why you can't too! My biggest advice is practice questions! UWorld is an impressive study resource and will make the most impact on your score in my opinion. However, don't tackle your UWorld questions with the goal to make passing scores on all your practice question blocks. You will only feel defeated and discouraged. Instead, use it to LEARN the material. I know it might seem counterintuitive to learn from practice questions when you haven't mastered concepts, but this will give you more bang for your buck. Even if you get 10 questions correct out of 40, take that opportunity to UNDERSTAND why you got those 30 wrong, fill in those knowledge gaps, and master the concepts. I personally did 100-120 UWorld questions a day, and while it was difficult to carry that on for two months, it is doable and you will cover a lot that way. I also used my First Aid book as a reference when reviewing my incorrects. Also, once you do a good amount of UWorld, you can view your reports and specifically see what subtopics are your weakest and really cater your last weeks of study to improve only your weak points and maximize your score.</p>
2	<p>Preparing for Step 1 requires a balance between mastering content and the ability to decipher questions. Remember, Step 1 is pass/fail, so you don't have to be an expert in both areas, but you should feel confident in both. If you've made it to medical school, you're more than capable of conquering this test. While it may seem challenging, persistence and hard work always pay off. Your school typically provides ample time to prepare for this exam.</p> <p>It's tough to keep up with all the material throughout the year leading up to dedicated study time. Don't worry if you feel the need to relearn everything; relearning is often quicker. However, entering the dedicated study period with key topics especially <b>bugs</b> and <b>drugs</b> already mastered can give you a significant advantage which are manageable to keep up throughout the year..</p> <p>Before your dedicated study period begins, Blueprint offers a Step 1 schedule maker that allows you to customize your study plan with your chosen resources. I highly recommend using this tool and sticking to your schedule. If life gets in the way, don't be discouraged it happened to all of us!. Focus on mastering the high-yield material;</p>

	other information can be supplementary. I also cannot recommend Pathoma enough.
4	<p>As has been previously echoed, the Step 1 exam is a daunting challenge at the end of pre-clerkship, marking the transition before beginning clinical rotations, but also testing a HUGE breadth of content knowledge that can be difficult to master in relatively short dedicated study time. My biggest two pieces of advice while studying for Step 1 would be to: (1) identify your weaknesses early on &amp; reach out for help and (2) try your very hardest not to compare yourself to other students during the dedicated study period. Regarding (1), I found that I started the dedicated period with UWorld questions right away without recognizing large content deficiencies that I had from prior modules--some aspects of content you may have mastered earlier in the year may be rustier now, or it may have been presented in a different format than what is focused on in the Step 1 exam period. Regarding (2), it is extremely easy during this time period to feel that others in a better boat than you are, or that they have figured out studying and what works for them. Remember, you are on your own path, and you will figure out what works for you, too. Be there to support one another and try as difficult as it may be to appreciate your own growth and not compare yourself to others. We each have a different starting line and paths to get to the same end goal, and you can do this! For instance, if you find that certain test-taking strategies are a greater area of weakness for you, it may be more beneficial to focus on taking timed, non-tutor mode practice UWorld blocks to simulate the real tests. If you struggle with certain content areas, reviewing Pathoma/Boards &amp; Beyond, other resources, or reviewing consistently with Anki can be tremendously beneficial. Finally, reach out for help early--the Curriculum team is <i>incredibly</i> supportive and there to help you in your own individual journey, and they work closely with you to support your success. You can do this!</p>

## Section 6: Transition to Clerkship

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### **Clinical Rotations:**

Following completion of the preclerkship or preclinical curriculum, students transition to the clerkship phase of the curriculum. In this phase, third-year medical students are exposed to the clinical practice of six core specialties: family medicine, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, and neurology/psychiatry. Students work closely with attendings and residents, conduct histories & physicals, assist on procedures and surgeries, and more.

### **MCG Schedule:**

During the third year, students rotate through 6 6-week core rotations listed above, along with 2 6-week electives dispersed throughout the academic year.

Rotation/elective schedules are contingent upon campus placement, along with lottery-based schedules.

### **Studying for Shelf Exams:**

Students utilize several approaches for studying for NBME subject, or shelf, exams, that take place at the end of 6-week core rotations (or following each 3-week block of neurology and psychiatry, respectively) for students on non-LIC schedules. Students frequently utilize UWorld for the subject areas of their rotation, supplementing with D2L-provided materials, such as board resources from the national organization overseeing that specialty. Content review can further be supplemented through Online MedEd and the White Coat Companion book, along Anki/AnKing for Step 2.

### **Author Anecdotes:**

1	Here's my pieces of advice for clerkships: Clerkships will either be your favorite or scariest time of medical school because you'll finally be seeing patients and honing your critical thinking skills to evaluate different diseases. First, you really need to treat clerkships like your full-time job and plus some, because you will spend a lot of time in the hospital or clinics and then have to study outside of that time. Take it seriously, put in the work, but also enjoy it. This is the time where you really start to find your
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	<p>identity as a soon-to-be physician. Secondly, always be willing and eager to learn. Even if you're dead set on a certain specialty, don't blow off your chance to learn as much as you can in each rotation. Personally, I think we are in such a place of privilege to be a part of someone's delivery, someone's life-changing surgery, the growth of someone's child, or the day of someone's healing. Honor your future patients by growing your skillset as much as possible. You'll also make your preceptors like you and want to teach you more if you are engaged and interested. Lastly, be kind to yourself. Having to transition to new environments, people, and expectations can wear you down. There are times where you feel like you're not smart enough or you're not cut out for this. Everyone feels like that from time to time. You are learning something new, and learning takes time. Don't be afraid of failure. Failure can sometimes be our greatest teacher.</p>
2	<p>Clerkship comes with a lot of anticipation, as we've been working towards this moment for a year and a half. While you'll encounter a variety of advice and perspectives, one excellent piece of advice is to approach this experience with excitement and positivity. This is a unique opportunity to focus solely on learning, which will be a brief phase in your medical journey compared to the responsibilities you'll have in residency and beyond.</p> <p>Maintain a positive attitude every day, and your attendings will notice. Remember, clerkship is a learning experience, and while gaining confidence may be challenging, trust in your hard work and continue to put your best foot forward—one step at a time. Many have found success by doing practice questions and flashcards daily. Additionally, make sure to master the NBMEs provided; the boards often reuse similar concepts</p>
4	<p>Transitioning to clerkship can be a difficult, exciting, and scary time. Going from mostly working with standardized patients to spending whole days working amidst real patients and active practice of medicine, surgeries, and procedures provides a whole new challenge and potential for tremendous growth. During this time period, it is most beneficial to talk to upperclassmen, adopt a growth and open-minded attitude during each and every rotation, and maintain a consistent study schedule. It is definitely difficult to come home after an exhausting day of clinic or surgeries and have to study, but having an organized study plan, such as the number of UWorld questions, cards to do, or chapters to read that day, will help keep you on track.</p> <p>Regarding shelf exams, it is most beneficial to distribute studying throughout the 6-week block, focusing initially on content weaknesses and then reinforcing concepts and doing practice tests, including old and new NBME practice tests later in the rotation. This combination, as well as spaced repetition and reviewing practice tests, is helpful to focus your learning and review, particularly after tiring rotation days. Above all, maintaining an attitude of learning, curiosity, and grit will pay dividends during</p>

	third year.
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