**MS3 Advice for second year**

We asked a panel of third year students for advice that they would have benefitted from at the beginning of Y2, and here’s their advice:

**Elizabeth McCarthy**

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1) Get Pathoma early. I wish I had used the introductory chapters for Intro to Pathology.

2) For IID stay on top of the lectures. This was not a class where I could play catch up the week before the test. I actually bought Microbio flashcards for boards and wish I had had a set for IID. For the third test, when I finally learned how to study for these tests (I guess I am slow), I used a chart that had been made by a former student. I attached my updated copy in case others find it helpful. The time it takes to put together a chart seems daunting, but if you can find a version which you just need to modify, I highly suggest using it. It made the information much easier to deal with.

3) Because you take the NBME Shelf for IID, it is really important to learn the information well the first time around. This way you won’t need to spend extra time preparing for the exam on top of the third IID test.

4) Use Pathoma throughout FCM. Dr. Sattar has really good explanations and ways to remember the information. I found that the information presented by him stayed with me much better than the lectures.

5) Use Dave Reilly’s notes. I would spend time modifying his notes, but having the base outline was incredibly helpful. The information is presented very quickly, so it’s hard to find time to go through the syllabus more than once.

6) I wish I had looked at First Aid more throughout the year. Even just for the corny mnemonics. Obviously, what we need to know for FCM is much more detailed that what you’ll find in first aid, but it may be a good day before the test review.

7) If anyone wants to email me, they definitely can! Even if it’s just for a pep talk after not doing too hot on the exams. I know what that feels like, and I would have loved to have someone to talk to who wasn’t AOA or star of the class, which is who commonly is asked to give advice.

Most of all, just learn as much as you can. If you’re like me, you may not be the best student, but look...I MADE IT! You can, too! Just keep trucking!

Liz
Becca Jonas

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As far as path and pharm go hm... I think they do such a good job with pathology that keeping up is the best thing you can do in terms of doing well. This next bit of information is well known but needs to be emphasized: use Dr. Fenderson's pathology book. Some of the questions from the q bank are actually some of the practice questions in the book. Maybe three or four, not a ton, but still worth it.

The other thing I might suggest from my own thoughts on the issue is that it could be helpful (some people might not want to do this because there's a cost associated but...) to purchase pathomia for a brief period (long term trial can start when FCM begins) so that you/anyone can watch how pathomia teaches inflammation etc. The reason I think this might be helpful is not because the lecturers are lacking in any way, it's only because ultimately when you start studying for the boards it's not time efficient to go back to old notes/books etc. Instead you will consolidate sources and one of those main sources will be pathomia. If you watch the pathomia portion on the topics covered in path before you start studying for boards (most people only use pathomia for FCM) you will remember the pathomia information intertwined with the detail from class and that will help you remember the information when you get to board studying.

The Sunday after post exam, scan the path/pharm section of First Aid. It will make all the difference. Just say in your head, yeah, know that, know that, as you go from page to page/topic to topic.

For pharm, draw your own pretty picture of the receptors and the rules for what neurotransmitters etc. go with each type. Study it. Then put that aside in a special place for board studying materials. It makes a difference (to me, at least) when something's in my own handwriting/style. It'll be worth keeping because the majority of questions you might get on the boards in pharm will relate back to that picture and the major drugs that the pharm professor (the elderly gentleman, not the lady) introduces. (FYI for the boards, only the major ones are necessary...) The gentleman professor will tell you (or it was a rumor, I don't remember) that the four or so major agonists/antagonists are the drugs you need to memorize to do well on the test. Not necessarily so...They slip in about three questions that are about esoteric drug on the list of various drugs you'll get in your handouts. Don't get crazy over it (there are a lot of drugs on there) but make a pneumatic or notecards to remember a bunch of the others. 3 points is not a lot, but it's enough.

Best of luck,

Becca
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My #1 piece of advice: do not worry about boards until the spring. learn everything as well as you can the first time around. at most, buy the first aid qbank and do those questions with class, or buy uworld qbank and do that once during the year (you get a reset that you can use before exam time to allow yourself to do those questions again with fresh stats). if you start to study now for step 1 you will only burn yourself out. 2nd year is a giant windsprint followed by cramming for boards.

General advice:
• make time to review material from the week if at all possible, focusing on updating ppts or study materials you have, as 2nd year has a ton of material, but a lot of it is easier to study if you group it together (e.g. bacteria or drugs or immune cytokines)
• develop a routine earlier rather than later, and it will carry into boards studying
• if you fall behind this year, it's harder than ever to catch up, and will be incredibly stressful
• many people will begin using guides passed down from upper years; i would advise against this passive learning and instead recommend making your own resources or studying ppts and the syllabus. guides are easier to cram but are worse for learning, and learning now is most important for board prep.
• 2nd year is more material, but much more focused. do not be afraid if you find you have to change your study habits.
• i would advise against most review books, as they become a distraction
• utilize Goljian audio sooner rather than later; it's a huge resource to get through during boards prep, and listening now gives you a good foundation (e.g. listen to inflammation sections before your path inflammation lectures)

Intro Path/Pharm:
• really focus on going to class and getting in the groove of 2nd year. It will be a lot of work compared to 1st year, and things start to move really fast. At least go to class for a few weeks and try to stay on top of work to see what your routine will be.
• I would highly recommend (as do most of upper classmen), Pathoma. Use this to preread/ prewatch for subjects to be covered by pathology. This resource will be useful for the rest of the year as well.
• i never used outlines passed down, but many people did. it's up to the person to decide what works best for them, but i personally feel it makes you learn less if you just read from an outline. my personal suggestion is to try learning from power points, as these are the highest yield for learning and for tests, and then skim the syllabus to make sure you have everything covered. i would mark up power points and study the pdfs on my iPad.
• what is useful and highly recommended are the summary excel sheets and word docs for diseases and drugs and bugs. use those, update them, and study them toward the end or
during the block to keep memory fresh. this is the single most effective score booster in my opinion.

- i'd highly recommend buying an old version of first aid for the year, and then the most up to date version when it comes out in spring before step 1. use the older version to clarify concepts or to give yourself a general picture of things. i never found time myself to do this, but in retrospect it wouldve been helpful.

- this class literally flies by, and the final exam day has 2 hr exams, so it's very important to take this class seriously and get yourself in a good routine for 2nd year. don't be too worried about extracurriculars or anything yet.

**IID:**

- the immunology part of this course is terrible, and way too detailed for boards. use the immunology section of first aid as a good guide and study point, but focus on class as well. they will recommend a book to read over the summer, and i'd read it but don't worry about memorizing anything.

- the ID part of this course is great, with great lecturers, including DeSimone, who is one of the best lecturers of the year.

- i would recommend going to class for ID

- what is useful and highly recommended are the summary excel sheets and word docs for diseases and drugs and bugs. use those, update them, and study them toward the end or during the block to keep memory fresh. this is the single most effective score booster in my opinion.

- you don't need any extra materials or sources for this course, but some people find flash cards or summary books useful. i personally used none. they are low yield for exams and too complicated for step 1, but are useful if class is not explaining things well enough for you.

- use the first aid flow sheets for microbio (they will help you memorize lab tests and everything, and learning it now makes it easier to relearn later)

- many students find microbio made ridiculously easy very useful, but i personally did not use it

- the blocks are not too hard, but you have a large final exam with an nbme shelf that same day that you must pass. thus, learn everything as best as you can the first time, and do not worry about board studying. focus on class.

- at this point, if you feel comfortable, i'd say it's safe to start extracurriculars.

**FCM:**

- this is something you cannot put into words

- there are many pre FCM meetings with upper years that give advice and let you ask questions; GO TO THESE

- by now, hopefully you have a good routine, which will be important as this course moves ever quicker

- going to class becomes less important, but watch out for good lecturers and go to their classes (e.g. Pavri for cardio)
do not get bogged down in memorizing board stuff or first aid. exams come from class material, and studying for boards too much may lower your FCM scores

its up to you to know if you want to begin studying for boards (personally, i only studied 6 weeks for boards and did really well), but if you're not a good test taker or want to ace boards, just beware that FCM goes far into detail and requires time to do well on exams

now more than ever, do not fall behind if at all possible. that being said, there is lots of free time, so don't forget about CV boosters or your extracurriculars

a lot of students used guides for this course passed down from uppers years; i'd suggest against it as you need to learn these topics well for boards, and passive learning (reading a guide) is never as good as active learning (making your own guide)

Let me know if you have any more specific questions, and i'd be happy to answer.

Also, feel free to pass my email along bblumhof@gmail.com and i'd be happy to answer personal/any questions.

Best,
Brian
Monica Dilorenzo

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For second year...the immuno book is essential. I also found “Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple” helpful— you can find a used copy online. It has great pictures and mnemonics to help you remember tons of facts. I didn’t get a pharm book, but you can if you want. Pharm changes faster than anything, so you will want the latest editions of those materials. The Fenderson path Q & A book was a great review before each exam—they stop giving you practice questions second year, so this book is one of the few resources for them. Plus, many of the pictures in the book show up on the exams. I did not buy the Rubins path text—they will assign reading from it for heme onc, but digital copies will circulate, which is what I used. That said, of all textbooks, that one does seem the most useful of all of them recommended for second year, so it wouldn’t be a terrible investment.

Then, being familiar with First Aid was extremely helpful when boards came around (and apparently the more times you read it, the higher your board score, statistically). I started later in the year, but strongly advise starting early and at least skimming each section before or during each block—it’s not detailed enough to study from, but gives you an idea of what the boards focuses on, especially the pharm. Use the 2014 edition until the 2015 comes out in January then decide if you want the new edition (most people I know did get it).

The best advice I got, truly, was “keep your composure.” Second year is way more intense than first—much faster pace and way more info to absorb, with much less free time. It is easy to melt down and get overwhelmed. You just need to do your best & keep pushing forward one week at a time.

Pathoma is the best investment you will make second year—I watched his videos along with each block all year and then re watched them for boards. Dr. Sattar has a phenomenal ability to elucidate complex material and make it easy to understand. It is worth every penny. I don’t know of anyone who wouldn’t agree.

Lastly, everyone will use different resources. Be sure to find ones that work for you and stick to them. You can waste a lot of time trying out new things throughout the year. Don’t panic, limit yourself to 2–3 sources that you like, and use them.

I hope that is helpful!!

Cheers,
Monica