

USMLE Step 2 ck experience 274

My name is Aya Abugharbyeh, and I have graduated recently from An-Najah National University – Palestine . I took the exam on 23/1/2017. I would like to share this experience with you and I hope it will be useful. You absolutely don't need to do it my way, but you need to work hard, study with passion, make your own experience, Turn your weaknesses into strengths, and as Abraham Lincoln said "If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six hours sharpening my ax."

Overview : Total preparation Time: 6 months. Haven't done step 1 yet.

Materials used :

1. U world offline subject wise once, then online in timed mixed mode once.
2. Used UTD as a source whenever I felt I need to understand more about a topic.
3. Books: MTB 2, Kaplan lecture notes in obgyn, psychiatry and biostatistics, U world biostatistics review. 100 cases for ethics.
4. Worked on my weaknesses with step 3 u world, CMS and step 1 u world for behavioral and psychiatry
5. Self assessments : nbme4 : 265. Nbme 7: 264. Nbme 6: 267. Uwsa 1 268. Real deal : 274.

First 3 months :

I have started with psychiatry and biostatistics because I didn't have any background about those particular subjects , I watched Kaplan videos and read the lecture notes. Then for derma I used MTB2 , u world and UTD , for ophthamo U world and MTB, and Emergency medicine from MTB.

Then I moved to internal medicine I read MTB step2 as well as offline u world subject wise ,I have read Kaplan lecture note for internal medicine during the last year of college so I didn't feel that I have to go over it again. It took almost 2 months to finish IM . I was studying 6-8 hours/day and more during the weekends.

Then I moved to pediatrics did u world offline, I also checked FA for step 2 ck it helped a bit especially in congenital diseases because I don't have step 1 background. For obgyn I went through Kaplan lecture notes rapidly , then decided it was time to subscribe for online u world.

I watched Kaplan videos for the subjects that were bothering me only, like biostatistics, psychiatry, infectious diseases and hematology.

I made a special notebook for preventive medicine from u world tables and the USPSTF guidelines and went through it over and over.

Last 3 months :

I was putting a lot of my time and effort for the exam during those months, I basically forgot about all other things in my life. I was dedicating my whole time for it. I used to study for 14-16 hours/day. I took a break on Thursdays.

I subscribed for u world, I begin doing it in random , timed mode while taking extensive notes. I was very slow at the beginning, finished only 1 block /day but I got faster with time. It took approx. 2 months to finish it .my percentage was 87% . then I went back and reviewed only the marked and incorrect questions (approx 700 Q's).

I got a bad performance in psychiatry and biostatistics so I needed to work on those areas, I did all the CMS for psychiatry , step 3 u world for both and most of step 1 u world for behavioral

I took my first assessment 1 month prior my exam date(NBME 4) , but I don't advice you to do so , I think you should start with your NBME'S as early as possible so you can find out your weaknesses and work on them. I don't encourage you to take them to estimate your score, using it wisely to diagnose your weak areas is a much better strategy. I used to go back to CMS and step3 u world if I had any borderline performance in a particular subject.

The final month: I went back to my u world notes , did it over and over until I felt that I have mastered its concepts.

My advices for you :

- DON'T delay your assessments to the last . use it as a diagnostic tools. Know your weaknesses and work on them.
- The best way to master your weak areas is by practicing more and more questions, the CMS, and u world step 3 are good for this purpose
- Your U world notes are your best source during the last month keep revising it over and over.
- Doing u world in timed random mode is a very important strategy, this way you will train yourself to finish each block on time. (very crucial) .

- you won't get questions same as u world, but It will be about the same concepts so UNDERSTANDING u world concept is the key here.
- I know this could be a bit hard. But try to be as relaxed as you can especially in the day before you exam . this way you can be mentally ready for your big day.
- Your effort will never be lost as long as you put it in the right direction, never give up no matter how hard it gets.
- Don't overwhelm yourselves with a lot of books and sources, seriously UWORLD and MTB are enough

The real exam:

The exam is doable and focused on the common diseases , FRED Q and uwsa were the closest to the real exam.

The exam tests your knowledge as well as your clinical sense and your ability to deal with situations so doing questions as much as you can will help with that.

The time was not really a problem. It's very important to make sure that you can master the time before you go to the exam, try to finish u world blocks 10 minutes earlier and use your NMBE in standard time based mode.

In Each block there was about 8-13 questions that I was really confused between 2 answers or more , 2-4 of them I had no prior knowledge of the concepts

No need to plane your breaks ahead, take one whenever you feel the need to. Try to be 100% focused before each block. Save your big breaks to the last.

Its normal to leave the exam center expecting the worst with such an exam. But keep believing in your dreams and your hard work.

I wish you find this experience useful. Study hard and may the scores be on your side

Good luck to everyone. Plz let me know if you have any questions

“If You Are Working On Something That You Really Care About, You Don’t Have To Be Pushed. The Vision Pulls You.”- Steve Jobs