



# IFMSA/IEA T5 Post MNI module Talk



**Done with MNI module, so what's now?**

**How to study for BSCE, STEP?**

**How to manage Clinicals?**

**How to study during dedicated?**

**ECFME new pathway & OET explained!**

**Saturday, Feb 27th**

**6:00 - 7:00 Pm EST**

**(7:00 - 8:00 Pm AST)**

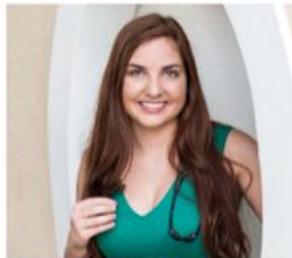
**Zoom meeting info:**

**Meeting ID: 97096722374**

**Password: Step21**



**We've got your back! Come join us and hear how our speakers figured it out!**



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## **Pre-Dedicated**

### **How should I study for SGU BSCE?**

STELLA - I still get a lot of questions about this. [For context], I started with a lot of NBME questions from the school prior to the evacuation [in March 2020.] I don't know if SGU-style questions are similar to BSCE vs. NBME...so because I was preparing for NBME (not SGU-styled) I did prioritize *external resources*. That said, I have friends who didn't open a single Boards and Beyond and did great on all the exams. I mostly used Boards and Beyond.

### **How should I approach SGU lectures and IMCQs?**

STELLA - I only looked at SGU lecture to ensure I didn't miss anything from Boards and Beyond. Didn't really look at old IMCQs. Didn't touch UWorld until Dedicated. Rx was another main source for me with some Amboss.

### **Any recommended study resources?**

STELLA - Sketchy, Pepper Pharm Deck, etc. I only use Anki for Pharm and Microbiology only. I also went through all of Pathoma in Term 4.

### **What was your approach for pre-dedicated? (Term 5)**

STELLA - First, show up to everything you need to show up to for SGU in order to get all points possible for your grade. "Pre-dedicated" in my opinion is every term prior to Dedicated. Term 5 focus should be the material you're given by SGU and to hone in on your weaknesses to then highlight them for review during Dedicated. You will still need to focus 2-3 hours/day to work on SGU lectures. I used "Cram-Fighter" in Term 5 to break up the day. I didn't have a specific hour-by-hour schedule, it was more of a checklist.

GRACE - It's not about the hours, it's about the ratio. The best advice I got was to keep 70% of my time on content, 30% on questions. Then it's flipped in Dedicated - 70% questions, 30% content. As you know, I am a big fan of schedules [more on this in later questions].

MO - I made my own schedule--it is not as difficult as you think it is, but it does take time to plan to make sure you properly review all the systems by the end of term 5. So, for example, I divided term 5 by saying, saying OK, I have 30 weeks -- I divided each system by 1 week, then do UWORLD questions by subject to test my knowledge. I covered all the content, used pathoma,

BnB, annotating into FA. When Dedicated came, I switched to randomized (2-3 blocks/day) in UWORLD and reviewed FA annotations.

GRACE - I studied very similarly to Mo. I will say, use UWORLD whenever--dont wait until Dedicated. Just do questions and get through the concepts. UWORLD is a little bit harder than Rx and Amboss, but with Rx you can change the difficulty. The specific tool of those options doesn't matter, it's just nice to pick something and stick with it.

LARRY - I made a conscious effort to take a 1st pass of UWORLD w/n Term 5. I put all the questions on Tutor mode by subject, then later I mixed it up. I didn't care about timing myself; I wanted to read every little bit of info to understand the concept. I also reviewed my answers and would consider how I would change the stem to make my answer option correct. Then later with Dedicated, I timed myself. I know a lot of people say content first then questions -- but for me if I'm passively reading, I tend to ignore the content. If I'm active and engaged with questions, I'm more likely to retain the content.

### **How should I prioritize SGU vs. Step 1 material?**

LARRY - I was the last term to do NBME (non-SGU style). I'll just say, if your exam scores in Term 4 were lower, focus on SGU material. If you're consistently B/B+/A, etc. -- focus more on Step. You just need to pass Term 5.

*Grace echos Larry's above point.*

### **What Q-Banks did you use?**

All agree - NBME and UWORLD are a MUST DO.

GRACE - I liked Amboss and Rx because I like to adjust the difficulty.

LARRY - Rx feels too easy and basic, buzzword-based. Amboss is good, but don't do it too closely (cross out 4 and 5 hammers because the questions 'are stupid hard')

MO - I agree with Larry. UWORLD by far is the best. I did it twice. If you go through it you will be fine. NBME is an absolute must. Amboss has some tough questions and can be good for challenging yourself.

### **Do you recommend starting Anki?**

GRACE - I think Anki is the best thing ever and starting for the first time in Term 5 is totally fine. Even if you've never touched Anki before, it's a valuable resource to review your weaknesses. It's not a great MAJOR study resource.

### **What's a sign that you're behind or not at a good place in your pre-dedicated studying?**

STELLA - your exam scores. I know it sucks and can be discouraging. But you know, if you're in a grade range where you're barely passing each term (72-78?). I'd sit down and consider different approaches.

GRACE - the people who do end up repeating term 5, classically jump 20 points on step. It's a valuable time-period to study for step, so just think about that if you have been continuously struggling. But don't think that if you're not doing great this is your only time - do it again, go at your own pace -- there is time.

### **Favorite Step 1 Study Resources?**

STELLA - FA, Sketchy, especially Skechy Micro, Pathoma

GRACE - Sketchy

### **Is it BnB vs. Pathoma?**

STELLA - They are totally different resources, so it depends on what you're looking for. Pathoma is pathology and highly recommended during Term 4 and MNI. But BnB is more broad. They are very different.

MO - BnB is comprehensive, go through all of it. Also, Sketchy is a lifesaver. I did Micro but didn't like it for Pharm, so don't feel like you have to do if it's not working for you.

LARRY - BnB is comprehensive, but Pathoma lecture quality is maybe better. Also, if you are a couple weeks out from Step, go over the first 3 chapters of Pathoma multiple times. I had probably 15 questions directly from Pathoma's first 3 chapters. Sketchy is great because I can STILL remember stuff from back then, and I took Step1 a while ago.

### **If I didn't do great on MNI, what should I do now?**

GRACE - Move forward, it wasn't worth much -- just move on.

LARRY - If you have a trend of barely passing on term 4, seek help/change things up. It was one of my personal worst scores ever, so if it was an isolated poor score, don't worry about it.

## **Dedicated Period**

### **Tell us about your schedule and study hours**

STELLA - I used Cram-Fighter during Dedicated. I did look at Grace's schedule but oh my god it was so packed and I just couldn't keep up with it. I paid a tutor to make me a schedule for Dedicated, but I hated the schedule so much that I never looked at it ever again. I used Reddit a lot and joined Step 1 reddit and made my schedule based on this. Cram Fighter is useful to space out your resources during Dedicated. [Stella also talked about how to join and tips about using Reddit].

GRACE (commented to Stella only)- Not even I get through my schedules! It was more of a goal. I also used Cram-Fighter.

### **Do you recommend a tutor? What are tutors most useful for?**

LARRY - I tutor people for Step1. But when I studied, I actually piggy-backed off a friend who had a tutor and modified that schedule for myself (but I didn't have a tutor). Honestly, you probably **don't** need a tutor unless you want someone to hold your hand or if you're totally disorganized...and that's coming from someone who is a Step 1 tutor!

GRACE - I have a long-winded talk on my Facebook page about Step schedules and tutoring. There's a video and a question based pathway. It keeps you organized about what to focus on per day. I definitely didn't finish it every week or day, it's just a goal.

### **How does postponing my step exam work? How does it affect clinicals/graduation time?**

GRACE - It's a huge misconception that you can study for Step in 6 weeks unless you're cruising in IEA, etc. It's a lot of material, and I think most people need 10 weeks. UWORLD 1 and 2 exams are the BEST predictors. If you DON'T get the score within 10 points, postpone for as long as you need. Be open minded to get to your goals. Delaying your time only changes your first choice rotation location if you take it after July 15th. The school will still place you into clinicals whenever you finish. You still have to communicate, you can't just postpone and not tell SGU.

LARRY - So, I did postpone my date, mostly because of COVID testing locations. It was supposed to be March but instead it was July, which sucked. But I say that because you can get fatigued. So look at your recent NBME and UWORLD. If you're jumping around a lot -- keep studying. If you're plateauing, just take the test - you may be getting fatigued.

### **How did you review your incorrect concepts?**

STELLA - I made a 'smartbook' for UWORLD systems. For every Q I got wrong I made a one-liner...like a fact (using "summary" explanation in UWORLD) for all organ systems.

GRACE - I did the same but used Anki instead of making a notebook

### **Is it better to do 2 rounds of UWORLD or 1 round UWORLD + another question bank?**

STELLA - It's my opinion that it's important to see as many novel questions as possible.

### **NBME is retiring a lot of their old exams. How do you suggest dealing with this when picking exams to review?**

GRACE - It really doesn't matter. UWORLD won't catch up for a 1-2mo...so you'll do better on the 'retired' NBMEs. Its nice to go through both sections.

STELLA - You have to remember they are retiring the old ones for a reason. If you've done most of the NBMEs there are a lot of repeats and they aren't as predictive. If you actually sit for a new one, whatever grade you're getting...it isn't actually as predictive as you might think because they don't have the data for that yet. Sit for NBME 18, that's fine...but I agree with Grace, it's extra practice questions. I would definitely prioritize the newer ones because those questions are what is most likely going to show up for Step 1.

LARRY - This happened to us as well. I consciously did 5 older in pre dedicated in Term 5 (used it as a baseline) every 2 weeks (200 question exam) and then took newer ones during dedicated (1x/week). I do find that the older ones are helpful, but the Step1 exam was much more like the newer NBME.

GRACE - Agrees with Larry's approach, but said she never considered that.

## **STEP 1**

### **What's the sign up process?**

STELLA - There are lots of steps. Send a release form to give ECFMG your transcript. Once that's sent, then you apply for your ECFMG number, then you apply for Step. You get a 'permit' to schedule your exam within a certain period of time. You pay \$150 USD to get the permit to sign-up for Step w/n a 6month window (if you postpone outside that you pay \$150 again). Then you schedule, then you pay and schedule for Step using Prometric.

### **How was the exam day experience?**

LARRY - A few days before the exam, don't bother stressing out and cramming...just sleep. Because to continue my point before, Step has more critical thinking, so you need to make sure your brain is in tip-top shape. Its not as buzzword-y as SGU exams, you need to be awake!

MO - Don't get nervous. I know people who had NBMEs at target and their exam scores were lower than expected. Just trust yourself. The reddit predictor on Reddit is a great resource. Be confident and don't let the nerves get to you so you don't overthink each question.

### **ECFMG & OET**

MO - The OET is an English Exam - There are 4 sections and it's nonmedical. The exam uses medical terminology but it's just an English exam. If you're passing Step, you clearly speak English. Don't be worried about it. You just need to pass the exam. There are videos on YouTube to check a day or two until the exam that you should check because the format is Australian...so just be aware of that. One thing I would suggest is that IF OET is still a requirement, do not leave it to the last second because it can impact your timeline. Take it September, October, November, etc. The exam itself is \$600 USD, but then you must pay \$900 to ECFMG to get the certificate. If you fail any section of this exam, they offer a regrade for \$120. Remember that they are a business. Hopefully they change this before you apply.

GRACE (Comment only) - Remember that you can take loans out for these exams as well!

### **Clinical Sites**

#### **How to choose clinical rotations sites?**

STELLA - Choose your clinical site based on where you want to live. Make it make sense for you maybe that's family or save money on housing. Exposure is also important. If you know a hospital already that you know you'd want to apply to for Residency, that will help with getting a meaningful letter. It's also important to go somewhere with residents to ask them questions

about what their residencies are like. For most of the SGU core rotations they also have residencies there. Just keep that in mind.

### **Are there any special considerations we should make as Canadian students going to the US?**

LARRY - Go where you want to live. You can choose the state, but I didn't get the hospital I wanted (this is often the case). I know a lot of Canadians go to NJ, NY, and Michigan, sometimes IL. You'll need a B1 VISA and it's gonna be a pain, especially with COVID. You'll need to go back to Canada every few months to renew your visa, and you may need a negative COVID test. You'll need a J1 visa for residency. So keep that in mind because not all hospitals give our J1 visas. So do your cores and electives at hospitals that sponsor J1. There is a list online and you can also check each individual hospital.

### **What about other special considerations?**

Stella on TX, CA and NJ, - You just need to rotate somewhere that has a specific program (e.g. Family Med) somewhere they have a residency. They require you do a rotation in a program with residencies prior to matching into that program. This is pretty common, most core rotations already have this built in, but you should tell the school if you want to go to CA or TX in a specific specialty. Just talk to Clin-Ed.

### **Any housing tips?**

LARRY - I'm in NJ right now near Rutgers, so if you're rotating a hospital that's close to a university, join a FB group that is related to the university and you can get cheaper deals and sublets.

MO - I used facebook a lot, especially if you don't want to sign a long-term lease. There are several FB groups with sublets options or shared housing. If you have close friends, I recommend having a housemate...you save a LOT on rent.

### **Loan Management Tips?**

GRACE - Loans don't drop until a week or so after clinical, so just keep that in mind.

### **How are core rotations scheduled? Do we have a choice or is it random?**

MO - I've never tried to move around core rotations.

GRACE - It's hard to get ClinEd to get them to move anything. If it's not essential, please try to avoid. If you are trying to apply to EM you may need to pay closer attention to this, it's a timing issue. ClinEd will give you a lot of pushback.

STELLA - I echo what Grace says. Wycoff and Hackensack require you do EM as a part of your cores...so try to head to those hospitals. You are required to get SLOE letters for EM, and the way you can do that is applying to hospitals that have that program. Message me on FB about EM if you have more questions about EM requirements.

### **Should I be doing extracurriculars like volunteering and research?**

GRACE - YES on volunteer work. It's great to talk about and everyone wants to hear it. For research - only do it if you want to be extra competitive or are going into surgery or something.

## **Clinicals**

### **How can I choose between NYC and NJ?**

MO - not 1 specific great place or hospital...it's different depending on the specialty. Don't pick whether it's better or not, pick based on where you want to be. Don't think too much about whether the hospital is better or not.

### **When do I need to start planning for electives and SUBIs?**

LARRY - Start in third year and as early as possible and follow-up with the departments. I sent mine in January for Psych SUBIs and some spots were already full. Some of my friends were told to email back later because the applications weren't open yet.

## **Miscellaneous Questions**

### **On Residency applications**

MO - August, September and October SubIs are important for applying for Residency. Schedule those before interviews start so that you can have a leg-up during interviews. It's about who you know.

**ALL UNANSWERED QUESTION WILL BE PUBLISHED LATER SEPARATELY**