

USMLE Step 1 Survey

by Raman Veerappan (IEA President - Fall 2017)

August 2016 Entering Class: took test in Summer 2018

The Numbers

Responses: 69/118 (58%)

USMLE Step 1 Score: 249.4 ± 8.5

WMPG: 92.92 ± 1.90

Average NBME practice test score: 244.9 ± 10.0

Average BSCE 2: 86.4% ± 4.6

weeks studied: 6.79

hours studied per day: 10.4

- 10.1% Felt not enough / 73.9% felt just enough / 15.9% felt too much

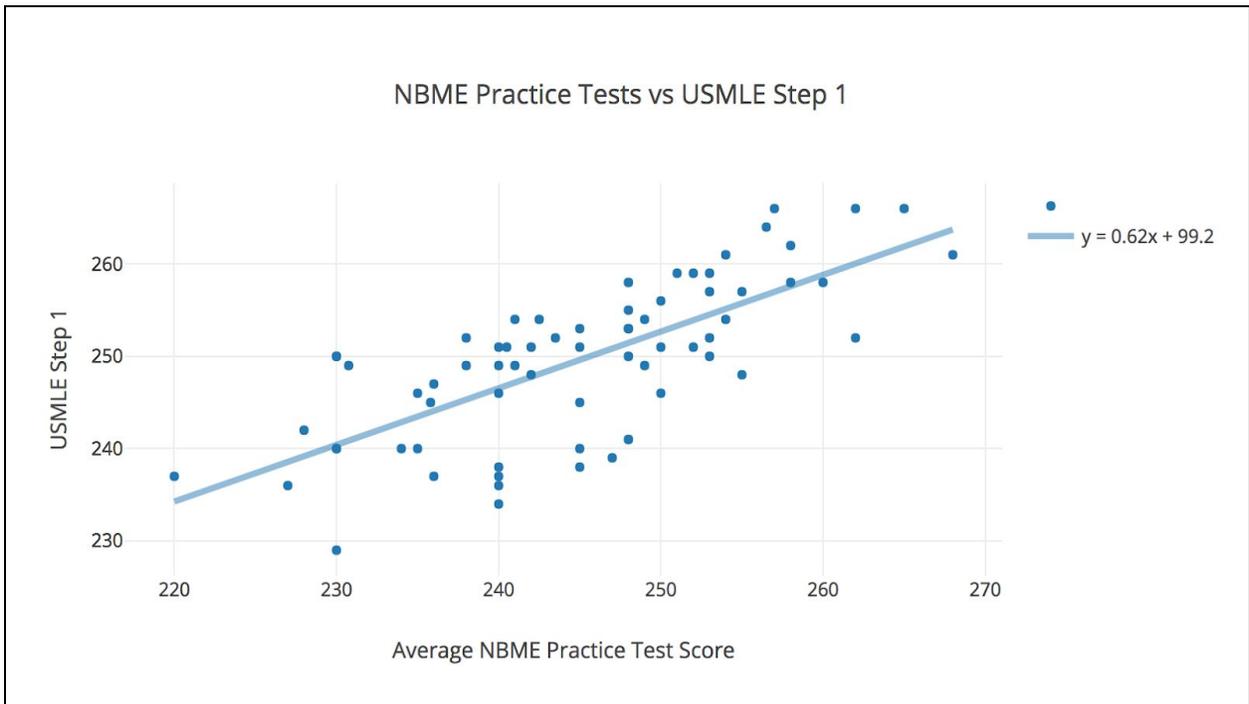
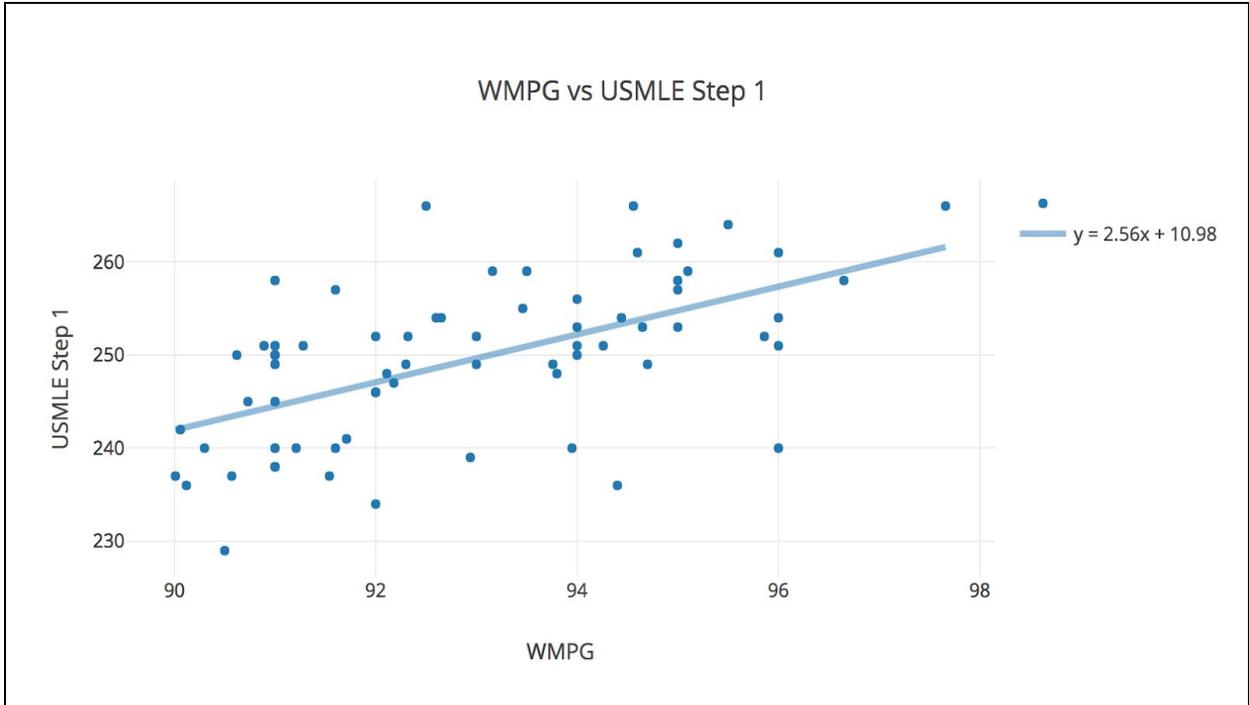
Studied with others during dedicated study period (outside of in-person courses):

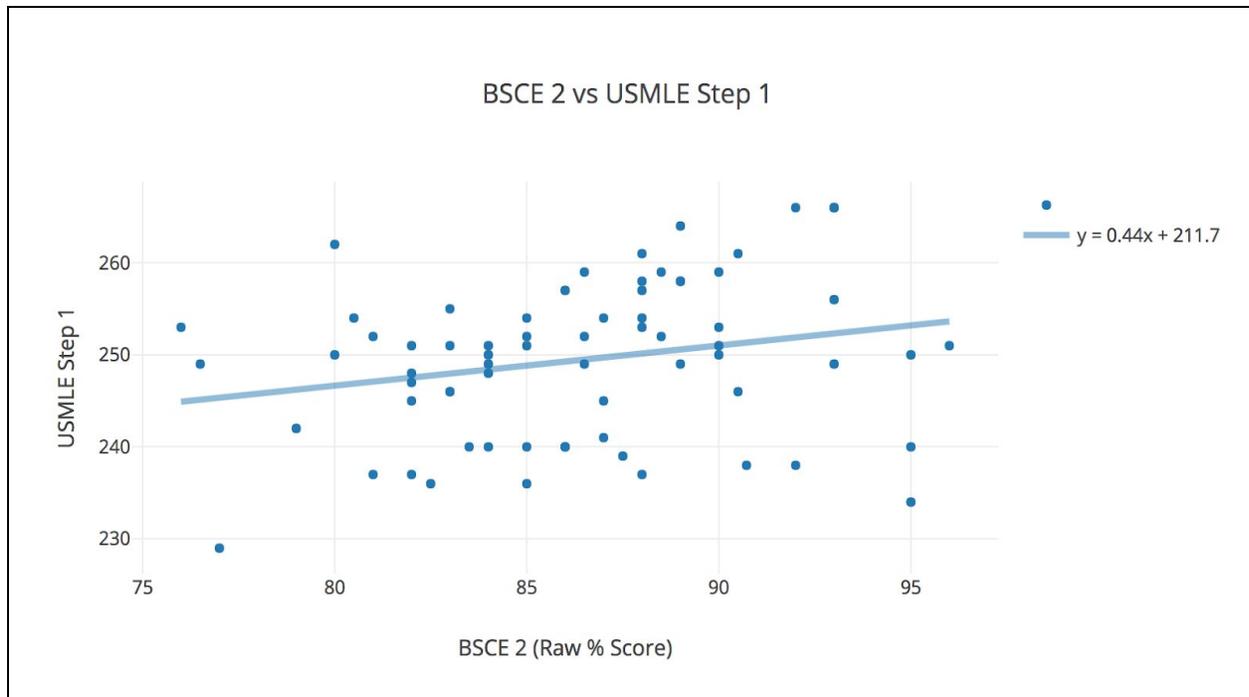
- Yes: 36.2%
- No: 63.7%

hours/day studied with others: 3.63

Exclusive Step 1 studying during Term 5:

- 5.8% Not at all/ 26.1% Infrequently/ 43.5% Frequently/ 24.6% Significantly





Resources

Study Materials

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
First Aid (98.5%)	88%	10%	1%	
Pathoma (74%)	53%	25%	22%	
Boards & Beyond (68%)	49%	43%	9%	
Sketchy Micro (45%)	68%	32%		
Sketchy Pharm (42%)	45%	45%	10%	
SGU Lecture Notes (33%)	13%	30%	48%	9%
Firecracker (19%)	8%	38%	46%	8%
DIT (17%)	8%	58%	33%	

Goljan (13%)	22%	33%	22%	22%
Kaplan Videos/Books (10%)	14%	43%	43%	
Anki: Brosencephalon (6%)	25%	50%	25%	
BRS (1%)			100%	

Question Banks

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
UWorld (100%)	97%	3%		
USMLE-Rx (38%)	4%	31%	54%	12%
Kaplan (25%)	12%	41%	47%	
First Aid Q&A (3%)	50%		50%	
Pastest (3%)			50%	50%

- **UWorld Stats**

- Average # questions done: 4144.5
- Average percentile rank: 83.5th

Practice Tests

- Percent of students who used resource in parentheses

	Vital	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
NBME (100%)	71%	20%	8%	1%
UWorld (96%)	64%	26%	11%	

Courses

Did you complete any courses?

- Yes: 35 % (24 students)
- No: 65% (45 students)

Which courses (# of students who took course in brackets)? How useful (1 = unimportant, 6 = vital)?

	Vital	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant
Doctors in Training [10]		60%	30%	10%	
The Institute of Medical Boards (Kansas City) [7]	57%		29%	14%	
Kaplan [6]	17%	33%	50%		
Med School Tutors [1]				100%	

Advice

Advice for Term 5

After the first test erase anything they teach from your brain
The lecture notes for Pharmacology are wonderful. In order to achieve a good grade in Pharmacology, I would recommend using the lecture notes in conjunction with First Aid so that you can annotate some things which First Aid may have overlooked. I would really recommend the use of UWorld before BSCE 2 and CBSE to better acclimatize the students for questions that will be asked on these exams. This would really help to enhance your thought process and reasoning skills which would be really good for Term 5 exams.
Using a program like Boards and Beyond is a great way to start annotating your First Aid. I really recommend doing this in Term 5. It helps you to prepare for BSCE II and CBSE and will allow you to do a first pass of your first aid before you have even started dedicated prep. Try to make it through a first pass of Uworld during Term 5 as well. It's okay if you are not scoring where you want to - this is a learning tool and you will improve drastically by the time you get to your dedicated STEP prep. Use BSCE and CBSE as opportunities to cover everything in your First Aid. The more you do in Term 5 to remind yourself of everything you have learned in the past 2

years, the easier your dedicated time will go!

Do your best to focus on the courses being taught during term 5. Pharmacology and pathophysiology are incredibly important for the exam. People get very strung out on trying to focus for step 1 but don't realize that this is preparing for step 1. I ended up using boards and beyond along with first aid during term 5. If the topic of the week for pathophys was cardiovascular then I would watch the CVS boards and beyond videos along with first aid. Towards the weekend, I would do the designated CVS uworld cardio questions. That helped put things in perspective. For pharm, I really only focused on the class lecture notes (really amazing!) and did sketchy pharm to cement the drugs in my head. I also used pharm ninja but had to make a lot of corrections on them to keep it current with class notes. This took a lot of time and I shouldn't have spent it on it. But if you like it, go for it. Don't worry what others are doing. Let me repeat, DON'T WORRY WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING. Focus on your own goals at your own pace. Everyone's end goal is step 1 but the road to get there is a many. Trust that you can get through it using the methods you've perfected for yourself throughout terms 1-4.

Don't get ahead of yourself with step studying. Focus on consolidating pathology from Term 4, especially cardio, pulm, renal, and neuro. Study HARD for pharm because it will make your life so easy during dedicated. Don't get too obsessed with annotating first aid, just read along with it as you go through Term 4 and 5, making as few additions as possible. I saw people with books covered in notes that had no idea what they had written. If you can't explain it in a sentence simply, you probably don't understand it well enough. Pay attention in lectures because they will direct your critical thinking in the right way even if the material isn't presented ideally. Try to avoid doing UWorld till dedicated. Use USMLERx and/or Kaplan if you really want to do questions. Most of all, enjoy your last term on the island and PACE YOURSELF because dedicated is around the corner.

Studying for your classes = studying for step 1. If you do well in pathophys and pharm you will do well on step 1. Take pharm very seriously. If you lay a good foundation you will not, I repeat NOT have to study pharm before step 1. The easy, piece of cake, SGU pharm questions are the hardest questions from step. As for pathophys, I watched all of DIT videos throughout the term that corresponded with whatever we were reviewing, with the intention of watching DIT again during Dedicated. That got me through. Also I did one pass of UWORLD during T5. I highly recommend doing this and corresponding the week of pathophys with that week's UWORLD questions (ie do all cardio questions during the week of cardio pathophys lectures). ANNOTATE FIRST AID while doing your first pass of UWORLD. oh, and I used cram fighters to stay on track of uworld and DIT and it was basically my saving grace during this time. highly worth the money

Study pharm, ignore everything else and do step prep. Do B&B.

Don't do anything the school tells you do during term 5. The ONLY thing that matters once you

leave the island is your USMLE Step 1 score. Remember that.

Focus on killing term 5.

Go hard on lecture notes for the first exam, then swap over to a chill timetable doing UW and reviewing subjects using whatever resource you prefer. Honestly as long as you're getting the stuff done and it's working for you, choice of resource doesn't matter. Also don't talk to people about their plans because it will only unnecessarily freak you out. Do your own thing.

Forget the course material for pathophys after the first exam. It is taught too specific. Do boards during lecture time

Supplement lecture notes with boards and beyond. Tackle 1 system per week - study the lecture notes for that system, the B+B videos for that system, and the UWorld Q's for that system. This provides a comprehensive review of all the important materials, and allows you to see information presented in multiple different ways. I also recommend using a blank first aid at the beginning of term 5 and annotating notes from UWorld and B+B.

Make sure you do Uworld questions every night, it is VERY important. Do them by subject so you can prep for Term 5 while you study for the step.

Devote 2-3 hours per day to Pharm using whichever resources you prefer (watch the lectures, sketchy pharm, your choice of Q bank) And devote 3-4 hours per day on Step 1 studying by following along with the pathophys subject for the week. For example, on cardio week - do every single UW cardio question. Take notes into first aid, do a set of cardio flashcards, and constantly target your weaknesses. It is so easy to fall into the trap of reviewing stuff you know... Instead, you should be actively seeking out stuff you suck at. Write it down, make a list, make an anki deck, and figure out a way to remember it. It's common to consistently miss the same material on questions. Hone in on these weaknesses and fill the gaps. In general - if it's a topic you love put it down. If it's a topic you hate pick it up. Consistency > intensity. Chip away at the material day by day. (If you're not good at this, use cram fighter - It breaks up the material in a very manageable way). Check the boxes each day and don't save anything for dedicated. You've been studying for Step 1 for 1.5 years and now you only have a few months... Don't expect to make huge score leaps in 8 weeks. Take breaks. GET SLEEP. Don't even try to study when you're tired - it's a complete waste of time. If you're in front of your computer - be effective.

Focus hard on the SGU notes for the 1st exam where SGU is controlling what questions are given. They focus in more on topics less covered by First Aid or Kaplan. Once the tests shift over to the BSCE's and NBME's, Boards and Beyond as well as 1st Aid were great study tools more geared for success on those exams.

Use your time wisely to ensure you have mastered (I.e understand and can apply) foundational concepts that are consistently tested on Step. You won't have time during dedicated to do this.

Use uworld and pathoma in term 5 to make sure you get all the path down as this is the most

important section of the test. Try and review the anatomy, physiology, biochemistry etc as you go through that topic for the week. Make sure to get the most you can from pharm. it's extremely useful not only for step 1 but also for clinicals and step 2.

use boards and beyond. In depth understanding is key for step

I would take the rest of term 5 to try to annotate your First aid book. The best source in my opinion that will give you the supplementary annotations is Boards and Beyond. Do your best to go through all of those videos and annotate the accompanying pages in the book. Because when your doing dedicated you don't want to have to sit through multiple hours of videos and your time would be better spent just reading over what you have already read. After you finish the first pathophys test never look at those lecture notes again and solely focus on staying up on pharm, Boards and Beyond, and UWorld. Try to get all of the UWorld questions done before the CBSE and make sure you do them on tutor mode and go through the wrong answers and right explanations.

Complete a first pass of uworld during term 5. Do all the questions for whatever is being covered that week in pathophys. Put the time in to learn pharm well so you don't need to spend as much time during dedicated.

Studying for Pathophysiology is a great preparation for Step 1. I would focus on term 5, rather than trying to jump ahead to studying for Step. Building a foundation of knowledge during term 5 makes it a million times easier to get through material quickly during the dedicated study period. DO NOT neglect pharmacology. Taking the time to learn pharm during Term 5 will go a long way.

They will throw a lot of stuff at you, and try to weed you out till the end. But the name of the game is to stay afloat. Make sure you use your time wisely and effectively. Study for Pharm its super high yield, but Pathophys is the backbone of medicine and shouldn't be forgotten. I highly recommend using both Sketchy Pharm and Sketchy Micro, it was vital for my success. Additionally, for pathophys I recommend coming into it with a strong Path background, otherwise things will be a lot tougher.

Find a drug sheet compiled by students that lists important information to study by, so you don't have to waste time making your own from scratch.

Focus on your classes during term 5. I tried to do maybe 20 UWorld Q's per day. Don't listen to everyone else and get yourself all worked up about STEP. Stick to what you need to do to study and you'll be fine.

Treat term 5 before exam 1 as any other term, but after exam 1 gear up for step prep. Take a couple weeks to figure out what kinds of resources you want to use and limit yourself to ~4 (UW, FA + 2 others). The amount of resources can be overwhelming. Then break down the chapters and material in accordance to whatever you're doing in pathophys/pharm so it will supplement

lecture at the same time. Don't go crazy with uworld yet. Some people did but I would recommend max like 20-40 Qs/week [save it for when it really matters]. Dr. U will recommend doing sakai questions, IMCQs from past terms, and nbme questions- DO THIS incrementally. It really really helped for BSCEs!!! but don't forget to enjoy 5th term. De-stress to prep for dedicated.

Even though pathophys was worth more credits, I focused more of my time on learning pharmacology. Although this is probably why I didn't get an amazing grade on the first pathophys exam, I scored very high on BSCE2 and CBSE. It also paid off during dedicated since pharm was still fresh in my mind, I didn't have to spend too much time on it and it showed on step 1. Sketchy is still to this day how I remember most of the drugs so I highly recommend using it, even if (like me) you didn't use it or didn't like it for micro.

Enjoy your last bit of time on the island. Don't go crazy studying for STEP before dedicated.

Boards and beyond was a great resource to use to annotate your first aid and prepare for the bsce and cbse

First Aid (FA) is very useful for study and review but only if you understand the material. FA has a lot of important information but does not provide adequate explanations. Try to use it as a guide that points you towards important information that you need to build on for Step 1. Use the internet, UW, osmosis, pathoma, firecracker, etc. to help you with understanding what is presented in FA. Unfortunately, there's no best resource for this process so you will have to find what works best for the specific topic you're trying to learn. Also, make sure to take the BSCE and CBSE exams very seriously. They will give you a valuable prediction on where you stand.

Use BSCE and CBSE as a gauge for where you are starting dedicated.

Use your time wisely. Time management is important. Do not slack because this time is crucial for helping you to re-form a base for Step 1 dedicated. I went through the material 3-4 prior to the end of term 5 by reviewing lecture notes, First Aid, and 1 complete pass of UWORLD. Make sure you make Pharm a priority because you will not have time to learn all of Pharm during dedicated.

don't stress yourself out. eyes on the prize; Step 1. Try to master one small thing each day or two, and you won't overwhelm yourself. You'll learn a topic or concept solidly, and that mindset will help with every single term 5 exam, as well as step one.

Uworld. Uworld. Uworld. Start the day you get it. Finish first pass well before end of term 5 (I finished around BSCE2 time). Complete second pass during dedicated with time to review and redo all the questions you missed.

Make the absolute most of your study time in Term 5- none of the material is "new" as the foundations have been set across your previous 4 terms, so in order to maximize your efficiency it is worthwhile to really ask yourself what specific areas were you 'weak' on during your first two years. What I mean to say is that look beyond just how well you did on the exams at the time, and

instead identify those topics which you know deep down never did quite hit home for you the first time around- be it Reproductive Endocrinology, Abdomen & Pelvis Anatomy, Viral Microbiology, Hemostasis & Coagulation, etc. and start your Term 5 reviews from the ground up. The most important thing you can do during this time is address any and all conceptual challenges from your Term 1-4 material during the school year- you've got nothing but time! There isn't a single topic tested on Step 1 that doesn't have its foundation somewhere in the Basic Sciences Curriculum

No information is a waste, even those provided by lectures. Any learning opportunity should be taken seriously.

Doing well in Pathophys and Pharm will set you up well. Use FA and UW to study for BSCE and NBME.

Bananas isn't worth it. Study your ass off instead and it will pay off.

Try to focus on pharm and pathophysiology equally, and learn pharm well because it will greatly benefit you during dedicated as you won't need to study it as much.

Also try to cover each system at the same pace pathophysiology covers it (usually one per week), using First Aid and UWorld. This will both help with the course and prepping for Step 1.

Don't go crazy with studying purely for Step 1 during the term, but try to integrate a little bit of First Aid review every day so that by dedicated you've passed over most of First Aid. That being said, term 5 is not easy so make sure you are studying for the classes!

Take care of yourself. It's a grind. Take a day off if you need it. Schedule in your breaks and your beach time. You will be fine.

Do B&B in term 5 and annotate it into your first aid. Then your suped up first aid will be a great study tool for you during dedicated. Do 1 pass of uworld during term 5. Then during dedicated, aim to do a full 2nd pass then do your wrongs. An alternative method is to do kaplan Q bank in term 5 then uworld during dedicated, many people swear by this.

I found that it was pretty helpful to follow the general schedule that pathophys provided and approached each week by watching the Boards and Beyond (BB) videos and reading along in First Aid (FA). After I did that for each section, I would review it again and then do all the relevant UWorld (UW) questions. For instance, if I had just finished the cardio section in BB/FA, I would look over all of it, check the cardio organ system, but I would also exclude a few disciplines that I knew I was going to cover separately (biochem, genetics, immuno, micro, pharm). The logic behind my approach was that I should have been at my theoretical peak for each subject/organ system after going through BB/FA. Therefore, I could maximize my yield from questions by picking out fine details that I likely would have otherwise missed if I hadn't

just reviewed the material recently. There were some downsides to this approach in that I ended up with an inflated UW percentile and would automatically know to exclude certain answer choices in a small minority of questions. (For example, if I was doing a cardio block, I probably wouldn't pick a pulm or neuro answer.) Nevertheless, I decided that overall, the pros outweigh the cons and I stuck to my approach and ultimately ended up with a >265 (99th percentile) on step 1.

Try to hammer home concepts that you have struggled with during first/second year. I struggled with anatomy, so I made sure I reviewed it a lot for BSFCR every week, because once dedicated comes around you don't have time to learn anything for the first time. You need to just be reviewing and solidifying what you already know. Also, don't neglect pharm - very important that you know it inside and out before step studying. And study in the way that works best for you - don't get caught up in what everyone else is doing and how many uworlds you can do. I started off SUPER slow at uworlds. People think its a competition. It's not. It's doing them in a way that is most beneficial to you.

Be able to finish all your Board and Beyond annotations into your FA before you leave the island, that way when it comes to dedicated time you're seeing things already for a second time. FA is wayyyyyy to general.. it needs to be supplemented. Do Uworld at least 1 full pass before Term 5 is over, that way you have an idea of what your weaknesses are before your dedicated.

If term 5 is when you start doing questions from the question banks, you're already too late. Start doing questions as soon as possible and make sure you do them every single day. You don't need to be doing 40 questions every day; do as many as it takes for you to learn. Doing 10 questions in and out is vastly superior to skimming through 40.

Any time you hear something in lectures that even vaguely ties back to term 1 or your basics, go back and read. Use pharm as a way to review all your physio and biochem. If you heard a professor talk about liver cirrhosis causing bilateral pitting edema, go back and review microcirculation and Starling forces. If you heard a facilitator mention neonatal RDS, go back and review surfactant production.

Pay attention to pharm, the more you put in now the less you need to do later.

Unless you are being tested on lectures specifically, don't bother listening. Just use the time to study for step 1. The material for BSCE II etc. lines up pretty well with step 1 prep. You can do well in school and study for step 1 all at the same time.

Term 5 is the term for you to dedicate your time to doing the vast majority of your step studying, the dedicated period should only be for final touches not for you to be starting from scratch.

Dedicated time isn't for learning things its strictly for review and nailing down small details. While in term 5 understand the pathophysiology of diseases in its entirety (not just buzzwords) so that when you look it over in dedicated it's just brushing up, not learning new things. Also annotate first aid with your notes from boards and from questions on Uworld, it takes a lot of

time, but when you have a fully annotated First aid for Dedicated it is incredibly valuable and time saving to have all vital info in on spot.
Keep studying hard and push forward because you are almost there! Also, know how to rest too because you will really need it when you are actually taking the Step exam and preparing for rotations. You will not get this much rest like in school anymore after term 5. So, study hard and rest hard!
Stay on top of everything for term 5, don't let yourself get behind by starting step studying early. Make sure to learn pharmacology! It will be so helpful for Step 1 and then for clinicals after!
Don't sacrifice learning pharm to begin your dedicated studies. It's taught well and if you learn it well, reviewing it during dedicated is much less time consuming than re-learning it when you have other weaknesses to focus on.
Use pharm as an opportunity to review physio for BSCE/CBSE.
Do as many uworld as you can and remember that you are learning. Don't get hung up on your percentage, focus on understanding the concept. Use this to identify your weak areas.
For every system study lectures with uworld, review related material from previous years.
Use term 5 as study time! I would say use B.B. or whatever you like to brush up on areas you forgot or never understood completely. Do this so that you can make dedicated study time a review
N/A. Your term 5 won't be a Kafka-esque waste of time like ours.
study more than you think

Advice for Step 1

Trust your practice test results. If you start off with lower scores that is ok as long as you are trending up! If by the time you are on your final forms for NBME and you are one to two weeks away from STEP 1 and your practice scores are not in the range you are comfortable with. DO NOT TAKE STEP 1, reschedule it for later. This test is too important to roll the dice and hope for the best.
Review Course + First Aid + UWorld
I believe that it's essential for students to use their time very effectively. It is far superior to spend 5 hours on First Aid with full attention and diligence instead of spending a total of 10 hours with moments of distraction and inattention interspersed between them. Make sure to do

the UWorld questions for a second time (if you already have finished it once) so that you can reassure yourself that what you have learnt has been retained and can be applied on questions. Do not stress yourself during the process! Make sure to take breaks in between your study sessions.

Everyone is different, and everyone's study methods will be different. If you are a group studier, study in a group, but if you have always been an individual studier throughout med school, then now is NOT the time to change things up. You know yourself best! I don't do well with hour by hour schedules, so I set myself daily and weekly goals and tried to stay on track with topics and tasks that I wanted to cover each week. This worked really well for me and allowed me to take more time with topics I found challenging. You will have good days and bad days during your dedicated time and you might feel like you are going crazy. This is totally normal! Make sure to take time to relax and take a break. Every week I did a practice NBME on Saturdays and then reviewed it that day. I would take Saturday night off for dinner with family or friends and then I took ALL DAY on Sundays off. That meant I was studying 6 days a week and that was more than enough! You will burn out quickly if you don't take breaks, so make sure you check in with yourself and do things throughout your dedicated time that make you happy and remind you why you're working towards your goal! Reach out to upper termers to go over your study schedule and if you feel like you're struggling - we've all been there and we are happy to help! Good luck!

The behemoth! Get your mind ready for a grueling few weeks. Start off with setting a good schedule that balances SLEEP with things to keep you sane and hit your study goals for the day. There are many topics to go over so don't get bogged down on super tiny details. Set 2-3 days for each major subject (cardio on Monday Tuesday Wednesday and then endocrine for Thursday and Friday). Something like that. There are many tools online to make a study schedule that best fits your needs. Best advice I can give you is do things to keep you sane! If you love basketball then schedule basketball into your day. The studying will happen, believe me.

Make a schedule if you aren't doing a prep course. I did IOMB and I jumped from 217 on the diagnostic NBME 13 before the course to 250s on the NBMEs at the end of the course and 251 on Step 1. It was mega helpful with planning, prioritizing, motivating, relaxing, and finalizing those crucial few details that can put you over the top. I highly recommend it but you should understand 2 things: 1. it can only help your score go up for things that you already basically understand and just need to solidify details about. If you are learning it for the first time in dedicated, you probably won't have a good enough understanding for Step 1. SO make sure you consolidate as much as possible before dedicated. 2. be ready to put in 10-12 hours of HARD work every day. It's exhausting and you will want to give up multiple times, almost everyone in the program had days when they just wanted to cry in a corner. But it was so so worth it.

If you decide to study on your own, make a schedule and STICK TO IT. You can't afford to

waste time going over tiny details if you have to spend time on topics you don't know well. Make sure you prioritize by least well understood topics to most well understood topics. Time is so precious in dedicated.

Do as many full length mocks as possible. That means 280 questions, or 7 UWorld blocks. Simulate test conditions and make sure you have the stamina to focus for that long, it is very tiring.

Take 1 evening a week off. In IOMB, Friday after 2pm was for yourself to relax and unwind before mock exams on Saturday and Sunday. In that time, don't even think about Step.

Finally, breathe. Relax. It's an important exam but it's not going to define you as a person. No one moment can. Just remember you earned the right to easy questions with how hard you worked to get to this point. Good luck!

8 weeks MAX. unless you're really struggling in the WMPG department, do not take more than 8 weeks. Efficiency, accuracy, etc all go down beyond that time frame. I did my second pass of uworld, and second pass of DIT in this time. I rewatched pathoma for 2nd or 3rd time. I rewatched most of sketchy micro and pharm. I annotated FA with DIT and UWORLD. These were all repeats for me, I did not use any resource I hadn't already looked at. It was a lot but I used cram fighters to create a schedule from day 1. Take one UWORLD assessment at beginning and one towards the end. they are hard af but good indicators of real exam difficulty (good ratio of normal questions to 'wtf questions'). I did 4 NBME's. They are easier than actual exam bc most questions are straight forward (infrequent 'wtf questions'). Use them to gauge if you're studying the right concepts. don't feel guilty about taking a break, grabbing a beer, watching a movie, etc. 2 hrs of productive studying is worth a million times more than 6 hrs of mediocre studying.

UWSAs were the most important prognostic factor in my opinion. NBMEs feel outdated compared to the current iteration of the Step 1. DO them but keep in mind the question style for UWSAs. Other than that trust in your knowledge, and most often, common is common.

Stay positive and optimistic. Don't compare yourself to other people, where they are or what they are studying. The only thing that matters is how you are doing and where you are. Other people are a distraction.

Don't use too many resources. It can be overwhelming. Stick to what you know works for you.

Make sure to do at least 2 passes of uworld

Spend time making a detailed schedule and plan out all your UW, NBME, and videos. Then watch as this plan falls apart 3 weeks in and you're behind on everything. Don't freak out, reset and do what you can not what you always thought you needed to. In this end, most of us aren't

disciplined enough to do everything we want to finish but try to get as close to it as possible. Also study stress incontinence because goddamn like 5 questions just on that.

Questions are gold. Do as many as possible

-Stick to no more than 2 or 3 resources.

-The step is a test of stamina. Do at least 3 full length exams - at least 2 of which are 9 blocks (1 block longer than the actual step).

-I also recommend simulating test conditions as closely as you can. Perfect your "night before" routine, your "morning of" routine, wear what you are going to wear during the exam, use a mouse (rather than a track pad), and manage your hour of break time strategically.

-Study your weaknesses more frequently than your strengths.

-Make sure you spend an hour or two every day to relax, and cut yourself off when it is time for bed. It is a marathon not a sprint - and sleep is your best friend.

Just be disciplined. First Aid + Uworld is all you need. You can further supplement them with sketchy pharm/micro to cover all bases and get those easy questions right and that's about it. Get those 10+ hours in everyday during dedicated prep and it should be a walk in the park. I followed the USMLE prep schedule provided by SGU advisor and it worked out great. Never doubt yourself, you know more than you think. Godspeed!

When you're doing question blocks - DON'T BE EMOTIONAL. It's easier said than done, but if you start thinking "i suck... i don't know anything... i'll never remember this... who wrote this stupid fucking question... etc.." then you're already losing. Don't be emotionally attached to the outcome. If you get a 30% don't start crying, if you get a 90% don't think you're hot shit. Just learn from every question. At the end of the day these are multiple choice questions, they aren't real peoples' lives... yet.

You know more than you think and the UW explanations are absolutely filled with gold. Just chill out and read it. Take a deep breath, go for a walk, take a piss, and think about what you just learned. Take brief notes if you want, that way you can review it quickly before going to bed. Try to recite a few things you took away from the day or explain it to a friend. If you can do that then you're making measurable progress.

on test day - DON'T LET THE TEST FUCK WITH YOU!!! I firmly believe the test is written to try to shake your confidence and put you off your game. You have to be mentally stronger than the test (this is easier if you know deep down you put the work in). Don't worry about getting the difficult ones correct. FOCUS ON GETTING EVERY SINGLE EASY/MEDIUM ONE CORRECT. Trust what you know and if you have a hunch - go with it.

I strongly would recommend Kaplan because of how they organized which material to focus more time on. They knew exactly what the hot topics were that the USMLE liked to ask and

drilled those questions into your brain. They also gave great advice with how to make a successful study schedule. Before dedicated starts, take some time off after Term 5 and relax and plan something fun to do after Step 1. This will keep you focused when you need it most and will give you something to look forward to when you are finished with Step 1.

Limit yourself to 5 or fewer resources. Use them well. Focus on strategy and always take time after mock exams to determine how and why you got questions right or wrong.

This is where you tie in all you learned in the last two years. Make a schedule and try and stick to it otherwise you'll get overwhelmed. A typical day would include a 40 block of random uworld in the morn followed by review of those questions. Then certain system review using BnB for all topics besides path (used pathoma for path). Then Kaplan on that system. Then pharm/micro for that system at night using BnB or pathoma plus firecracker.

FA is useless. NBME is not a good gauge of Qs. UWORLD is most similar

Don't get distracted. Tell people to pretend that you're still in Grenada so that they won't bother you lol...but in all seriousness it's ok if you take a weekend here and there to not lose your mind. I myself took memorial day weekend off and the 4th of July and it was no big deal. Make sure you go through your hopefully completely annotated First Aid book at least twice, maybe even a third. Also try to make two passes through Pathoma (hopefully you also have completely annotated this before dedicated). Don't neglect biostats there is a lot of questions that will come solely from that. Do every single one of the NBME and UWorld practice tests. UWorld will overpredict your score, and a few of the NBMEs will underpredict (especially form 18 and 19, those were not fun). But the average of all of those should be close (my average was only 6 less than what i actually got). Oh and don't do that group course in KC I have heard nothing good from those who took it and it's a lot of \$\$\$\$. Do timed Uworld blocks, and if you can do others too, the more questions the better I stress this. On test day don't be nervous, just walk in there take a slow breath and kick some ass. There will be questions that you're like "wtf is this even referring to" don't worry, everyone will probably get that wrong aside from some nerds and a few lucky guessers. After the test just relax, because come clinicals you will be able to have "me time" sparingly. Good luck, you'll be fine.

Study with a partner. Quiz each other on first aid and go through some questions together. Do as many questions as you possibly can

Use your results from BSCE 2 and CBSE to create a study schedule, and stick to it as closely as possible. You should have an idea of what topics you need to spend more time on during dedicated step studying. It isn't possible to do everything, so pick a few resources that you are comfortable with and just use those. Don't try to make your study schedule based on other people's learning style. You have to come up with something that fits you, and if you really don't trust yourself to get the work done then take a course. Spread out your practice NBMEs so you don't wear yourself out the week leading up to the test. And absolutely take the day before the

test off to give yourself time to relax.

Step 1 is just like any other exam. I believe SGU does more than enough to prepare us for this exam. If you're doing UWORLD then I also recommend going through USMLE-Rx Question bank to lock down and learn First-Aid. It was one of the keys to my success. Also watch all of Sketchy Pharm and Micro. I know that Sketchy Pharm is long, but it will help out immensely in the long run. Additionally I really want to stress the importance of TIMED questions. You need to build your stamina and your confidence. Like always never forget to consult the Gurus aka Pathoma and First-Aid. But remember you won't know everything and that's ok, just keep going and persevering. It can be done!

For dedicated study prep I used DIT (Doctors in Training), completed UWorld one more time, and read through First Aid as needed for each subject.

That is it. Nothing fancy.

By this point you should have done UWorld (in term 5) to the best of your ability, seen a good chunk of First Aid (from course notes in term 5 or whatever) and be going through everything one more time. With the DIT course during that 6-7 weeks of dedicated prep (if you choose to do that—about \$800 for the course) it just kept me on track.

Do NBME exams; use flagging feature on UWorld questions as a way to bookmark topics you need to review that were addressed within the questions.

Don't use too many resources. You'll run out of time and just get frustrated. You know how you need to study so stick with that and forget about what everyone else is saying you need to do.

Limit your resources and stick to how you normally study. I did a review course but in hindsight maybe I shouldn't have- it decreased the number of hours in the day to study on my own. But I knew I needed structure too otherwise I would be a mess. Halfway through the course I called an audible and started going only to the lectures that I knew I needed the refresher [or honestly learn something new] and for the rest of the time I reviewed on my own.

Uworld and FA are essential, as I'm sure you know. I also did DIT and I do recommend it. What helped me the most out of DIT was having a schedule and resources that were organized for me, so that I didn't have to waste any time figuring out what I should be studying next. I also like that the videos were pretty short (average 15-20 minutes), which is essentially the length of my attention span. However, I'm sure other programs are just as helpful, this just happened to be the one that suited me the best in terms of structure and price point. The #1 best thing I did about taking step 1 that I believe was very effective was taking the entire day before the step completely off, going to see a movie, getting a massage and going to bed early with a melatonin. I woke up feeling rested and ready to tackle a marathon of an exam, and I didn't feel nearly as tired as I did during my practice NBME's. On that note - don't get too discouraged by NBME results, most people seem to do a lot better on the real thing. However if you are noticing that you are scoring way below your goal, consider getting a tutor. Lastly, don't forget to give

yourself a daily mental break every day - can be 15 minutes or 1 hour, whichever length you choose -- you need it and you deserve it!

Sketchy path is very helpful for certain topics like cancers

Don't beat yourself up over every wrong answer. Go into the test confidently and do not focus on past blocks during breaks.

Take a day off to relax or just do something to clear your head. Spend at least 30 min every day just doing something for yourself it really helps keep burnout from hitting too hard

Take breaks.

You will not know everything for step 1. I had several questions where even if i had studied for another 12 months i probably would not have come across the topic. Don't get frustrated. You will feel terrible but it will be okay in the end.

Questions, questions, questions. I did a lot of whiteboard-ing to ensure I knew the material instead of passively reading only. I did two more passes of material during dedicated. Make index cards if it works for you to remember complex topics or simple memorization. Anatomy and Micro is very important, so do not just leave it for last minute.

believe in yourself. trust the process. what you're doing has been working; you're in IEA for a reason. keep doing what you're doing, don't reinvent the wheel. Do a course if you feel you want to; i felt that without one i would feel like i was missing things or forgetting to study certain topics (even if i wasn't). Basically i needed to feel that there was some sort of curated structure in place so i wouldn't miss things. but i also didn't want a big class that would steal all of my time and prevent me from doing my own thing. that's why i chose DIT. It was perfect for me, and i am happy with my choice. that said, I have friends who had great experiences with MedSchoolTutors, as well as the Kaplan course, as well as Kansas city, and all got great scores. so there are plenty of ways to succeed, there isn't one correct answer! Good luck, keep focused on learning something down-pat each day, and you'll do fantastic.

I used a combo of Uworld, first aid, and pathoma/Boards and beyond. This is how my days would go: Monday to Friday: Wake up EARLY. Do 40 uworld (timed, no tutor mode), review the block after. Miscellaneous review time: Watch boards/pathoma on weak areas (usually 1.5x speed) for maybe an hour or two. Another 40 uworld. Review. Read a whole section of First Aid and/or review my lecture notes from SGU (the notes I made for exams, not their slides). Finish the day with another 40 uworld + review. Start day at 7am finish around 5-6pm. Saturday: Practice NBME with review of exam and pathoma/boards on weak spots. Sunday: off day.

Advice:

1) It's going to be a long 6 weeks of dedicated. Pace yourself. You don't need to go all out every day. Yes, it a lot of information, but 6 weeks is a lot of time.

2) TAKE A DAY OFF EVERY WEEK. Go see a movie, play a round of golf, go to the beach, play video games, binge watch Netflix. Whatever works for you. You need a day to maintain your sanity.

3) Don't be discouraged by NBME practice tests. If your first few are not where you want them to be don't worry. The more important thing is to improve from week to week. Use them to guide your studying and topic selection for the week. My last NBME was closest to my actual score.

4) Stay focused. Stay motivated. You are going to want to slack off over the course of 6 weeks. Get a buddy and talk every day about studying that day. You don't have to study together, but keep each other honest. Keep each other motivated. Support each other.

Also, a note on the NBMEs. I felt that they were somewhat misleading as to what the actual test would be like. The questions on STEP had significantly longer stems than those on the practice NBMEs. It gave me a false sense of security in regards to my timing for sections. Uworld was a better indicator of my timing, while my last 3 NBMEs gave me a solid estimate of my score range.

One day at a time. Again- it's all about how well you cover the material, not how much of it you gloss over. Quality is everything. Every student is different in their approach to learning, but in my opinion there is nothing more valuable than revisiting the very same things that worked for you in Terms 1-4. The handwritten notes I made during my first two years of school may have been the single most valuable tool I had in preparing for Step 1. First Aid is phenomenal and its worth going through each and every page carefully- but don't hesitate to "prime" yourself before each unit by reviewing your own notes on the very same content.

I don't believe dedicated step 1 study time exists. Studying for Step 1 started at the start of term 1. Every information gotten from various classes, ties into the next.

Questions are always your friend, take your time with them. By the time term 5 is over, 80% of your study time should be dedicated to doing questions.

Stay calm and believe in yourself. Trust your knowledge base. Develop a plan, be persistent, and be disciplined. UW, FA and NBME practice exams are essential. Trust your NBME scores.

Even if you usually self study, IOMB may be worth it for you. Brought my score up a solid 20 points. Studying and testing in a different state was vital for me as I could focus entirely on step 1.

The best advice I got for preparing for Step 1 was to do UWorld twice. Seeing all of the questions twice is very beneficial, especially if you focus on questions and concepts you struggle with, which leads me to my next point.

You should 100% make a "smart book" of all the questions you get wrong in the UWorld Qbank. This means creating a document or whatever you want of quick quiz questions for yourself related to why you got the question wrong. Some people use paper, others use a word document, and I used Anki. I think Anki is the best way to do it because it forces you to recall off the top of your head what you put on the card, and you can go through many cards quickly. Keep your entries short and to the point, and this will help you master things that you may not have known before. UWorld is just as much a teaching tool as it is a testing tool.

During dedicated you simply must have a schedule that you follow. I set mine up where I had certain objectives I wanted to finish every day, and I didn't put time slots in my schedule because with that I felt like I was rushing to meet my deadlines. Having everything planned ahead of time will take away the stress of deciding what to study everyday. Give yourself breaks as needed and don't be afraid to take a 1/2 day or full day off. Burnout will ruin your motivation and focus, and its almost inevitable by around 7-8 weeks so push it back for as long as possible!

As for the actual test, my top piece of advice is to not let the test rattle you! It is a difficult exam but you are all capable of doing very well. Some of the blocks are harder than others but you need to maintain your focus and put the bad blocks behind you. I know people who had a tough first 40 questions and then it affected them the rest of the test. Try to answer every question with the same effort and focus, and don't stress over an impossible question because you are definitely going to have several of them.

Good luck to everyone!

After term 5 is over, take a few days off, maybe even a week. Reset yourself. Have some fun. Exercise. See family. Then it's off to the races.

Confidence is everything. You have made it this far so you are without a doubt smart enough to get it done. The only thing standing in your way is yourself. Tons of people have done this before you, so why shouldn't you? Approach this test with a confident swagger, picture yourself succeeding on the test every day, and it will happen. You cannot afford to waste your energy worrying about doing poorly. You got this.

Throughout term 5, I made a pass through UWorld (UW). When dedicated started, I reset UW and did it timed/random but quickly realized that it was far less challenging because I would remember some of the questions or the learning objectives. The NBMEs can be frustrating and I

saw my scores fluctuate a lot. It's important to keep in mind that those practice exams have a standard error of about 6 points, which is insane considering that we are generally very pleased with an improvement of just a few points. Step 1 will be grueling and it will be important to remember that it's not just a test of knowledge and logic. Endurance plays a huge role and exhaustion will take its toll. Furthermore, there will be a lot of material that no amount of preparation could work for. It's impossible to prepare for everything. (I was averaging in the mid 90s for my UW blocks and I still encountered at least 30 questions on step 1 on things that I had never seen/heard of before.) In those cases, just make an educated guess and move on. I counted around 15-20 questions that I had missed for sure, but apparently that still lands a good score (>265, 99th percentile). It will be a tough exam, but remember that in the end, it's still just an exam, albeit an important one.

Take breaks when you're studying so you don't burn out

Take breaks and exercise, study where you're comfortable. Know yourself - if you need someone to keep you on track and are easily distracted, find a course or someone to keep you in check. I took DIT just because I knew I wouldn't miss anything that way - it forced me to stay organized and have a checklist. I love checklists and someone telling me what I need to get done each day to cover everything in time. Study how you've always studied to do well, don't change anything because it's just the same as any other test. and relax the day before, get lots of sleep. Don't kill yourself.

BREATHEEEEE! THIS TOO SHALL PASS! It is not as bad as everyone over exaggerates it to be. Leave NBME 18 to be your last one, it is most indicative of your score and its level of difficulty is relative to the exam. UW assessment 1 and 2 both over estimate your score. Read FA a couple times, even if it is just casually, i felt like i learned something new each time i read it. They really get you on the random disease that you think they'll never ask. In real life what's common is common but not for this exam. What is uncommon is tested! UW is life, read the explanations thoroughly, even the ones you get right. And don't spread yourself to thin on resources during your dedicated step prep. If you want to use B&B, DIT, firecracker, whatever it is, use it before your dedicated and annotate what you want into your first aid.

Become a slave to your schedule when you start isolated step prep. Your step prep time is not just a holiday where you can relax and talk to friends occasionally; you need to be giving it your 100%. Put your friends and family in your schedule and ONLY for those times. Although there is a lot of material to cover for this exam, the bulk of it is about being a good test taker and having stamina (yes, that means you have to work out during step prep as well). When you're doing the exam, take it one block at a time. Do NOT let a previous block influence your performance for an upcoming one.

If you're a minimal resource kind of person- you can do well with just First Aid, Uworld, and sketchy micro. I did NBME practice tests once a week and went over the answers with a friend

on the weekend.

Also, don't put off the exam if you can help it, especially if you're August starting class. It will make it more difficult to graduate on time, and make the next two years more stressful than they need to be.

Breathe, it's okay to get a few questions wrong, compose yourself, this test is long, so it's as much of a mental game as it is about how much you know. Use appropriate test taking strategies, and be easy on yourself, the test is never as hard as you have made it out to be in your head! You've made it this far you'll do well!

Take practice tests and mimic breaks as you would do on test day. I did the practice test at the center just to get an idea of the check in, check out, break and bathroom process, it definitely isn't necessary but it put my mind at ease. Even if your exam says 830 start, you can get there early and start early, these Prometric centers have multiple exams going on at once, so you are in your own little world. I also found that being early meant I took my lunch break and other breaks before other people which made for more quiet and less hectic breaks waiting for others to check in before me.

For me personally, I would recommend doing a lot of questions for studying because that really helped me. It helped practice your endurance and time management, and also it helped test if you actually know the concept. You might think you know it, but if you are not familiar with how they word the questions, then you might not get the questions right. I used both UWorld and Kaplan for step studying. Kaplan's questions are really good too, in my opinion (and not that expensive ;))

I would recommend doing Uworld twice, this is such an important resource. I would also recommend to do rapid review facts every day. The NBME exams are also very helpful to work on timing and to get used to the types of questions for Step 1.

Understand the concepts in first aid, don't memorize it.

Make a list of things you know, things you don't know, and things you could know with extra time. Focus on what you don't know, not what you do know.

Review pharm, micro, biochem every day.

Take care of yourself. The struggle is real and you don't want to burn out. It's hard to want to do anything but study, but sleep 8 hours, eat some veggies, draw a picture, or do some yoga.

Make sure to do all NBME practice tests, review your answers and learn from them. Make sure

to do UWorld questions and study First Aid in light of those questions. You will almost find everything you need to know mentioned in First Aid. Doing questions will emphasize the importance of little details on First Aid.

Get the high yield questions right.

Trust the process, and yourself. You know what works for you, don't start second guessing and freaking out then trying new things.

Being anxious is part of it, learn to work through the anxiety. Understand that you have good days and bad days; days when you get 90s in uworld and days you may do average or worse it's part of the process.

Be Brave! on step day. Keep yourself motivated through every section and keep going!

Take an NBME practice exam the first day of your dedicated period so you can get an idea of what the exam feels like and to see where you are at.

A general piece of advice for the dedicated period is to get a good amount of both review (whether that be BnB/Pathoma videos or first aid/textbook review), and a good amount of practice questions done. What I would usually do is review during the morning, then after lunch sit down and do blocks of Uworld.

At the start of dedicated, I went through all of my Uworld incorrects and really spent a lot of time on those areas that I was having trouble in. Then after that, I reset Uworld and went through the whole thing again from start to finish on timed mode just to get in the habit of thinking/doing questions faster. When I would get bored of Uworld I would throw in some Kaplan Qbank questions. The Kaplan questions are a lot nitpickier, but sometimes those stupid details would come up so who knows. Looking back Kaplan was probably not that necessary.

In terms of the rest of the NBMEs, I just took them in order starting from about a month before my test date. Don't cheat yourself and try to look up the answers during the test, treat it like the real thing. In my opinion, the NBMEs were very similar to the actual test, and very predictive of the score that I got. After you take an NBME, make sure to go through every question in detail (even the ones you got right) and try to fully understand it. It can help if you have someone you study with to go through some of the trickier questions, if not you should be able to find the answers/explanations online. You will start to realize that certain topics/questions keep coming up and they end up coming up on the real thing. Some of these topics are glossed over in Uworld, so don't make the mistake of not doing all the NBMEs, they are vital. Also don't listen to anyone who says that "Ohhh NBME 18 is harder than 16, 15 isn't predictive, NBMEs underpredict your score, no NBMEs overpredict blah blah blah." If you ask 20 different med students about the NBMEs you will get totally different answers, it's all just a bunch of stressed

out students trying to rationalize whatever score they got so don't listen to any of it.

Lastly don't forget to have your lifestyle dialed in during all of this. Listen to your body, if you are continually exhausted and can't stay awake to study without 3 coffees, that's probably not a good thing, try and sleep more. Get exercise in some form, whether that be running, working out at the gym, sports, you name it, just get moving and this helps tremendously with sleep, energy, dealing with stress, and even learning/remembering things. Try to eat relatively healthy so that you can have the energy to sit there for extended periods of time without crashing. And don't forget to do something fun at least once a week, whether that's going to get dinner with friends, seeing a movie, what have you. Schedule at least a day or two completely off to do whatever you want. Or if you are just feeling really burned out, take the day off and recuperate. In the long run 1 day lost of studying isn't going to make a difference, but your mental health will.

"High-yield" only goes so far. The real Step questions will be more petty and trivial than you feared.

study more than you think