

OSA S.T.E.P.S. to Success



February: STEP 1 and Wellbeing

As you enter the final stretch of the year, we know many of you are beginning to turn your attention toward Step 1 preparation while also looking ahead to the transition into clerkships. This period can feel both exciting and overwhelming—it marks a shift from the foundational science years into clinical medicine. Our goal in Student Affairs is to walk with you through each step of that transition, ensuring you feel supported academically, personally, and professionally.

We look forward to celebrating with you at the **Clinician Ceremony** on Tuesday, March 3rd, 12–1pm in Leadership Hall (lunch to follow!).

In this issue of **OSA S.T.E.P.S to Success**, we'll highlight key academic resources to help you structure your Step 1 study period intentionally and effectively. Equally important, we'll focus on strategies to sustain your wellbeing and avoiding burnout. We're cheering for you as you begin this next phase of your medical school journey. You've worked hard to reach this milestone! We're here for you at every step!

—Team OSA

What if I need help?

- Reach out to an [OSA Deans](#)
- Talk with Academic Success (academicsuccess@som.umd.edu)
- Contact the Peer Support Network [PSN Interest Form](#)
- Schedule an appointment with the [Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#)
- Meet with [UMSOM Financial Aid and Wellness](#)
- Listen to an [The OSA Insider Podcast](#)

To Do: Action Items

- Make a Step 1 Wellbeing Plan: [Step1 Wellbeing Plan Card](#) (and see below)
- Make a Step 1 Academic/Study Plan

Office of Student Affairs Studentaffairs@som.umd.edu

House Advisory System-OSA Liaisons
Dr. Allen: Julius Friedenwald
Dr. Flaherty: Mario Garcia-Palmieri
Dr. Lamos: Eva Dodge
Dr. Thom: Lois Young-Thomas

OSA Career Advising-MS2

- Explore different specialties and connect with faculty
- Review Careers in Medicine resources under “Career Booster”
- Engage with OSA Career Development Program
- [Career Specialty Advisors](#)

OSA STEPS to Success

S. Self-Assessment
T. Target Specialty
E. Experience
P. Preparation & Planning
S. Strategy Execution

OSA Student Handbook

[Career Advising](#)
[Commitment to Wellbeing](#)

AAMC Resources

[Four-phase career planning process](#)
[FIRST \(Financial Information, Resources, Services and Tools\)](#)

Step 1: Wellbeing Resources

It can be tempting to adopt a “study 24/7” mindset during Step 1 prep, but even in the natural world, every creature needs rest to function and survive—and so do you.

Some students fall into the trap of thinking that studying longer while sacrificing sleep, nutrition, movement, downtime, and social connection will lead to better results. In reality, this approach often leads to fatigue, reduced retention, unfocused passive studying, and ultimately burnout. Actively monitoring your energy, focus, and wellbeing helps you study smarter, not harder. Use these tips to protect your wellbeing and keep your studying effective throughout the process!

Step 1 Wellbeing Plan

I need _____ hours of sleep for my optimal well-being.

Three self-care activities I want as part of my week:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

No matter how busy I get, I will always make time for:

When I'm overwhelmed, the self-care activities that get pushed aside first are: _____

Three personal signs that I'm not taking care of myself:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When I notice any of these signs, I will:

My support system when I am overwhelmed is:

- Make a **Step 1 Wellbeing Plan** BEFORE starting to study
- Printable version: [Step1 Wellbeing Plan Card](#)
- Do not compare yourself to others→ Know/learn yourself and YOUR needs
- Establish therapy/care BEFORE a crisis- [Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#)

OSA Insider Podcasts

Apple Podcasts

- E86 SCC
- E92 Time Management
- E93 Procrastination
- E99 Tess
- E101 Habits
- E110: The Peer Support Network
- E114 or 108: Step 1 P/F
- E115: Catastrophic Thinking

How Can OSA Help You?

OSA Resources

[Administrative Support](#)

[Faculty and Staff](#)

[Financial Aid and Wellness](#)

[Records and Registration](#)

OSA Deans:

- Kerri Thom, MD
- John Allen, MD
- Marissa Flaherty, MD
- Elizabeth Lamos, MD
- Tonya Webb, PhD- Assistant Dean for Student Engagement and Student Life for Student Affairs

Important Email Addresses

ESDS

disabilityservices@umaryland.edu

Financial Aid

somfinaid@som.umaryland.edu

OSA Email

studentaffairs@som.umaryland.edu

Registration

Bwynder@som.umaryland.edu

Step 1: Academic Resources

Many students feel overwhelmed by the number of resources available when they begin studying for Step 1. Remember—you've already learned this material throughout MS1 and MS2. Students are most successful when they choose resources that fit their learning style instead of following what everyone else is doing. This is your own journey. Celebrate the strengths you've built so far and identify where you need support as you move forward.

Academic Success (Contact academicsuccess@som.umaryland.edu)

- Help with registration for USMLE Step 1
- Provide individual/group study sessions and recs for individualize resources
- Support timing for transition to clerkships
- Support for Accommodations (if indicated)

Peer Learning Partners

- Provide content review, study strategies, accountability
- One-on-one peer tutoring/mentoring

Work Smarter Not Harder

- Emphasize high-yield resources (this may vary for different people and different blocks of material)
 - o Academic Success and PLP can help tailor this for you
- Prioritize active learning (practice questions, explaining concepts to yourself or your dog/cat- out loud, practice examinations with review of questions, flash cards, interval repetition)