



First year JUMC Survival Guide

Second Edition

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Survival Guide Disclaimer

Do not solely rely on this Survival Guide for passing rates for exams and number of absences. This can change without us knowing.

About StudyAid

StudyAid is a student organization at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Throughout the academic year we host seminars in the major theoretical subjects: anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, immunology, pathophysiology, supplementing the lectures provided by the university. We are a group of 25 tutors, who are students at JU, each with their own field of specialty. To make our seminars as useful and relevant as possible, we teach in an interactive manner often using drawings and diagrams to help students remember the concepts. In addition to most seminars we create booklets, on which the seminars are based to aid the students in following the presentations. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact StudyAid at www.studyaid.no, we are always happy to answer any questions you may have academically related or not.

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Section 1 - Introduction

1st year of medical school is an academically challenging year. It requires you to challenge and push yourself, most likely more than you have ever done before. It requires a lot of studying, hard work and discipline, but hopefully you are prepared for this and excited to start learning!

With this in mind, here are some tips from all of us in StudyAid:

Study Clever: The clue is not how long you study, rather how efficient you are while you study. Our tip is that you study for short intervals, approx. 45 minutes, and then take a 10-15 minute break. Use these short breaks wisely: your brain relaxes a lot more if you take a breath of fresh air or get a snack, rather than scroll through your Instagram feed.

Take Breaks and take care of your mental health: You will have long days in the lecture halls and reading room, and you will get exhausted. Therefore, it is very important that you take some time off - find something you enjoy and prioritize time to do it: doing sports, being social with friends, playing music, cooking, etc. If you do not find a balance between studying and taking breaks, you risk burning yourself out. Being active is very important as you will be sitting a lot, and there are a lot of ways to do this here in Krakow; walk around Planty, do yoga, play soccer, or join a lesson at one of the fitness centres.

Set yourself realistic goals: Do not get overwhelmed by the size of each topic. Set yourself specific goals each day for what topics you wish to cover. With some practice, you will understand how much you can achieve each day and you can set yourself more realistic goals.

Remember to focus on your own achievements: You might feel that everyone else is studying more than you, getting better grades than you and in general are much smarter than you.. This is very normal! Usually this is only in your head and everyone else thinks the same way about you, but you are also now in an environment where everyone is at a very high academic level, and this is something you have to learn to cope with. Focus on yourself and compete against yourself rather than others.

Help each other: Share notes, available questions, and anything that might help your fellow students. We suggest starting a Google Drive for your grade where you upload documents to help keep everyone organized and informed. Make sure someone is in charge of the drive so it does not get messy.

Have patience with the university: The flow of information is not always optimal, but getting annoyed or mad will not help much. Remember to always speak to them in a formal and respectful manner and use your class representatives as the main contact source.

Have a good overview: Read through each syllabus for each subject thoroughly. Note down how many absences you have as having too many absences can result in you actually failing the subject. Check how many points you need on each mid-term, what the percentage is for passing and how many retakes they offer. The points and passing percentages we mention in this survival guide are just based on previous experience and may vary. You are responsible for finding out the exact points and passing percentages for your year.

In addition to the books we have suggested for each subject below, Study Aid provides you with booklets for certain topics throughout the year that will hopefully be helpful.

Section 2 - Histology

= the study of the microscopic structure of tissues

2.0 – Structure of the course

I. Lecture

- There is 1 lecture every week. The content of the lecture is what is covered in each lab.

II. Lab

- You will have a small quiz regarding the subject of that week at the beginning of each lab. If you want to do well on these quizzes you should revise the material of the lecture before each lab. If you get a high enough score on these quizzes in total you get a bonus score on your final grade. Even if you are not getting high enough scores, it is smart to revise for these quizzes anyway. It will often feel like you do not have time to do this, however, spending a little time on histology each week will save you a lot of time when studying for the midterm and final.

2.1 – Sources

- You do not necessarily need to buy any books for this subject. The faculty provides you with good lectures which they post on the school website. Everything you need to pass the midterm and final exam is on those slides.
- However, if you want to be extra prepared for lectures or labs, there are two possible books you can buy: **Color Atlas by Junquierias** or **Color Textbook of Histology by Gartner, Hiatt**.

2.2 – Exam

- There is only one midterm in this subject. You need approx. 60% to pass. If you do not pass they give a retake. You have to pass the midterm to be allowed to take the final.
- The final consists of a theoretical exam (100p) and a practical exam (15p). You need to pass both these separately to pass the subject. Passing grade is approx. 60%. There is a retake possible for both these, if you fail the retake you get an oral exam.

2.2 – In General

- The histology department is one of the better faculties when it comes to distributing information and keeping deadlines.
- Histology is a subject many students struggle to pass as there are a lot of details to memorize. It is also because a lot of students “put off” studying for histology to right before the exam. Spend some time each week to make the exam studying a more refreshment process and spend time on the details.

Section 3 - Anatomy

= the study of the structure of organisms and their parts

3.0 – Structure of the course

I. Labs

- The labs are 2-3 times a week. These will form the basis for your practical exam. It is very useful to prepare for each lab, otherwise the information can be quite overwhelming. If you manage to prepare for the labs and stay concentrated during them, you will save yourself a lot of work before the midterms. The teachers also go through a lot of theoretical information during the labs. It is worth asking if one student is allowed to film your teacher as (s)he shows you the anatomical structures on the cadavers. Then share the videos amongst your fellow classmates (as some teachers will not allow it). Do NOT share the videos publicly – this is strictly forbidden.

II. Lectures

- The lectures are once a week, often held by Prof. Walocha (leader of Anatomy Faculty). It is useful to know is that he is known to take two random lectures and reward attendance with points that count towards your final exam. Those points are very important for some and may come at any time (often at the end of the semester when attendance is low). If you want extra points it might be clever to attend the lectures, otherwise, you can study the material presented very well on your own.

3.1 – Sources

In anatomy you have two types of books: An atlas (it is not a map of the world!) and a theoretical book.

I. Atlases

There are different atlases to choose from, some very detailed, some less. A lot of the atlases will also be available on PDF and computer programs, but we suggest buying a hard copy from one publisher so you can bring it to labs if you want to. Some atlas publishers to choose from are:

- **Thieme**
There are 3 different atlases for various parts of the human body
- **Netter**
Also available as a computer program
More information on how to download this will follow
- **Sobotta**
Like Thieme, it has various books divided into different sections of the human body
- **Wolters-Kluwer: A Photographic Atlas of Anatomy**
Differs from the others because it has real pictures of cadavers, which can be very useful

II. Theoretical Books

- **BRS Gross Anatomy**

Essential. Most of the midterms will be based on this book. Questions on the midterms are often related to the questions in the BRS.

- **Moore Clinical Anatomy**

A more thorough book, but often not enough time to review everything. Questions may be useful practice.

III. Videos

- **Use Youtube:** Live Dissections, Simulations

- **Dr. Najeeb Lectures** (Optional to subscribe)

IV. Netter Computer Program

- **Subscribe + Pay** (Subscription can be shared between 4 students)

3.3 – Exams

I. Midterms

- 5 midterms in total consisting of a practical and theoretical test as well as one embryology exam (no practical embryology). The practical exam counts 15points each time and theoretical exam 35p each time making every midterm a total of 50p. You need to collect approx. 300p (the total sum varies from year to year) in total from each test at the end of the year to be allowed to take the final. Every 10p you collect over a 100 will be added to your final test score (110 p equals 1 extra point on final, 138p equals 3 extra points on the final etc.). If you score over 85/90% on every practical part during your midterm, you are excluded from taking the final practical and automatically receive maximum points possible from the practical final.

II. Final

- Consists of a practical and theoretical exam with both counting towards your final grade. You need 50% to pass. This subjects has retakes in September if you fail.

3.4 – In general

The anatomy department is good at giving information; they give you reading lists before tests and are quick at correcting your tests.

The students in Prof. Walocha's class often get extra information about what will be on the mid-terms. It is extremely important that students in his class share this information with the rest of the class.

Also remember that the majority of your points come from your theoretical exams, not the practical.

Section 4 - Biochemistry

= the study of chemical processes within and relating to living organisms. Biochemical processes give rise to the complexity of life

4.0 – Structure of the course

The subject is a combination of general chemistry and biochemistry. You will have this subject over the course of 3 semesters (1 and a half years). The first part of the course is purely a general and organic chemistry part, however the main part of the course is biochemistry.

You will have labs, seminars, and lectures throughout the week. The labs, seminars and lectures are not always well correlated in terms of the topic unfortunately. Therefore, you might find yourself studying various topics the same week.

I. Lectures

- Usually two times a week.

II. Labs

- You will collect points from writing a lab report every lab. You should manage to collect some points every lab just by paying attention. Use this to your advantage.

III. Seminars

- There is a small quiz at the end of every seminar from which you can collect points.

All the points you collect throughout the course in labs and seminars will count towards your final exam. Therefore, if you consistently collect points throughout the course, you will not need to get as many points on the final exam. The better you are at working on this subject continuously, the better.

4.1 – Sources

I. General Chemistry (First exam)

- If you have studied chemistry before, it should suffice to use the same textbook/notes you have previously used. Otherwise, there are normally two books on the recommended list that you can use: **Zumdahl** or **Brady**; you will only need one of them as they cover the same topics. You will only use these books in the beginning of the course, and most likely never again, so we do not recommend spending too much money on these (purchase from an older student, or find a used copy online).

II. Biochemistry (Rest of the course)

We suggest you buy either **Mark's** or **Lippincott's** and combine it with the lectures.

- **Mark's** is more detailed and includes more topics, but it is harder to read and takes more time. However, PowerPoints presented during lectures and seminars are often based on this book.
- **Lippincott's** is less detailed, but easier to read. Most students prefer and use this book.
- **BRS**: There is also a BRS for biochemistry that you might find presents topics in a simpler way and gives short summaries.
- **Youtube: NinjaNerd**
- **Kaplan Videos**

- The lecture slides are made available, and contain most of the info you will need for the tests.

4.2 – Exam

I. Midterms

- There are four midterms in this subject and they all count towards your final grade. Every test has a max. of 40p.

II. Final

- The final spans over the entire course curriculum and is out of 100p.
- You pass this subject by getting at least 60% of the *total* points during the year (Labs + seminars, midterms, and the final exam). It is possible to already have 60% of total points before even taking the final, but even if you do not, the more points you have the better. There is a retake held in September if you do not get 60% after the final exam.

4.3 – In general

The chemistry part of the course will be quite tough and purely theoretical. Hopefully you will still remember chemistry from your entrance exam, which will help you. We just recommend you do your best and get through this exam; the following exams will be biochemistry exams, where StudyAid will provide seminars and should allow you to “catch up” any points you didn’t manage to get on the first Chemistry exam.

The professors in this subject differ quite a bit in terms of the level of presentation. You might notice that you will have different topics presented in the lectures each week and the topics you have in your seminars. Unfortunately, this is how the course is created.

The department usually corrects the tests quickly. Working continuously is a highly recommended for both the seminars and labs.

Section 5 - Physiology

= the study of the functions and mechanisms which work within a living system

5.0 – Structure of the course

I. Lectures

- 2 times a week
- The lectures are unfortunately not made available for students. There has been a lot of back and forth about this, but the professor had a final say in the matter.

II. Labs

- 1 lab every other week.
- The labs are clinically related.

5.1 – Sources

I. Books

There are generally four books in physiology:

- **Guyton's**
A very detailed and 'heavy' book (also literally) – around 1100 pages. It includes everything you need to know, but is in general much too long to read in the small amount of time you have. It is available on PDF, so you can print sections if you want more detailed reading.
- **Ganong**
Shorter and less detailed than Guyton, but easier to read. Correlates well with the content of the power points presented during lectures. It is also available on PDF.
- **Costanzo**
Even shorter than Ganong. Most students prefer this book as it has good explanations of concepts. Very useful for some exams where you have less time for studying.
- **BRS**
Quite similar to Costanzo. Good summaries of concepts. Exists as PDF

You should decide what book(s) you want for yourself depending on how you like to study. Perhaps Ganong supplemented with Costanzo or BRS would be the best option.

Professor Brzozowski might also take questions from books that contain sample questions for the USMLE test (Ryan's Pretest). These books are available on PDF or can be printed at the anatomy printing shop.

II. Videos

- **Kaplan Videos**
- **Youtube: Ninja Nerd**
- **Youtube: Osmosis**

5.2 – Exams

I. Midterms

- There are 4 midterms. To pass the subject you need to pass three out of four midterms. It is approx. 60% to pass.

II. Final

- The final exam consists mainly only on the last part of the curriculum (endocrinology and GI) and only a few questions from the entire year. You have to have above 60 % to pass. There is also a retake in September.

5.3 – In general

The coordinator of the course, Prof. Brzozowski, will come across as a very fascinating man. There is very little structure to the course unfortunately, and the tests can come across as very bizarre. The questions on the tests are often worded strangely and he is a difficult man to deal with at times in terms of logistics. However, do not let this get to you. Do not be afraid to ask him questions during the tests if there is something you do not understand.

Physiology is a difficult subject with a lot of course material, so work continuously with this subject. Using video material can be very helpful to understand some of the concepts.