2014 M3 Book Survey Results
MSG
The Medical College of Virginia
### Neurology

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**Books That Received <5 Reviews:**

- Boards and Wards (Avg. response 3.50, from 2 reviews)
- Step-Up: Neurology Chapter (Avg. response 3.33, from 3 reviews)
- First Aid for USMLE Step 2 CK: Neurology Chapter (Avg. response 3.00, from 1 review)
- Lange: Clinical Neurology (Avg. response 2.00, from 1 review)

**Other Books To Consider** (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):

- Cecil’s Textbook of Medicine
- Practical Primer of Clinical Neurology
- Crash Course: Neurology
- Blueprints Clinical Cases in Neurology
- Neurology Recall
- Clinical Neurology by Greenberg
- Neurology for the Non-neurologist

**Comments:**

- Pretest+uworld was sufficient
- Act interested
- you will have lots of time to read and use it.
- Study hard. This rotation is short and the shelf is very difficult.
- Pre-test was great!
- Short rotation. Start studying early.
- pretest and blueprints
- pretest is great for your clerkship
- It's a short clerkship and time goes by quickly. Start studying early, even if it's only a couple questions a day. I regret not starting blueprints earlier.
- Do as many questions as possible. Info covered in the clerkship is broad.
- The shelf is a big part of your grade, so spend down-time at the hospital studying.
The lunch lectures on inpatient neurology were helpful.
I used blueprints as my main resource, qbank for questions, and first aid for Step 1 and did well on the shelf
Neuro residents love to teach so ask them about whatever topic you can think of!
pretest and qbank are all you need!
I would say for this shelf to use more than one non question source. Casefiles and pretest were good but still felt somewhat unprepared for the shelf.
Pretest and casefiles
I used blueprints and qbank for this rotation. Blueprints covers most, if not all, topics. However, it does lack some detail. Supplement with another resource if necessary
Between Q-bank and StepUp neuro sections you can cover the bulk of what’s on the shelf (remember shelf exams test what primary care docs need to know). Use a neuro specific book (such as blueprints) just to supplement info on relevant topics for clinics/wards. (shelf raw score 91)
Pretest is the way to go. If you’re running out of time, just read the answers
Learn during your hours in the clerkship and you will succeed!
headneckbrainspine.com - good resource for help with imaging and anatomy
Read one resource then do pretest as it's the best prep
nothing great. just push through
Pretest and Qbank were the most helpful. Blueprints lacks a great deal of information.
blue prints good length for length of clerkship
It's a short rotation so make sure you start studying EARLY! The shelf is very difficult, with especially long question stems. Use pretest, it's the most similar to the actual shelf!
blueprints, qbank questions, first half of pretest
blueprints is a good overview, lack detail though. Do qbank and pretest. Mo questions= mo betta
Doing questions really helped me. HYNA is good as a picture reference for localizing lesions and more detail than you need to know.
It's a short rotation, so start studying from the get-go.
### Internal Medicine

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**Books That Received <5 Reviews:**
- Boards and Wards (Avg. response 4.50, from 2 reviews)
- PreTest: Medicine (Avg. response 3.75, from 4 reviews)
- Case Files: Internal Medicine (Avg. response 3.67, from 3 reviews)
- Blueprints: Internal Medicine (Avg. response 3.00, from 1 review)
- Cecil Essentials of Medicine (Avg. response 2.00, from 1 review)

**Other Books To Consider** (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):
- Cecil Textbook of Medicine
- First Aid: Internal Medicine
- Harrison’s Principles of Internal Medicine
- NMS Internal Medicine
- CDIM-Internal Medicine Essentials for Clerkship Students

**Comments:**
- Uworld is great prep and has a huge bank of questions, the repetition is helpful so do them as much as you can. Step up to medicine is huge but has mostly high yield info, would try to get through if you can. You do a lot of learning on wards, that helps a lot for this particular rotation.
- Work real hard
- Great rotation, very difficult shelf, just read about all your patients and know the treatment and diagnosis plans as well as possible.
- This was one of the few rotations where uworld questions actually helped. MKSAP questions are good, but do uworld first
- Take full advantage of your outpatient month!
- Super broad. You won’t see a lot of things tested on while on wards. Huge qbank
- Its a crazy broad shelf. You can’t expect to see most of the material on wards. Hit qbank hard. Shelf is in many ways another board. Step up will touch on most topics. You won’t interpret EKGs on the shelf but you’ll need it for real life. Its resource overload here, and you will be tired and not want to study, so pick your resources early so you can get through them.
- QBank and Pocket Medicine are both must haves.
- qbank and mksap
- Step up is a great resource
- Do lots of Q-bank
- Honestly, the best resource for medicine are the question banks, both MKSAP and Qbank. Take notes when you do the questions so you can use them as review before the shelf. I'm usually a textbook type of person so it was hard for me to rely on questions but I did and it worked out well.
- Step up to medicine should be the primary source. Start qbank questions early and do then everyday. There's ~ 1200.
- Do as much Qbank/MKSAP as possible to cover breadth, step up to supplement topics you're weak on
- Step Up To Medicine is a thorough resource and often encouraged, but I found it to be overwhelming. I just QBank and CaseFiles, and just looked at Step Up for a few tricky topics.
- Read through step up, did all the Qbank questions, most of the pretest questions, and did well on the shelf
- Step up to medicine & uworld
- Symptoms to Diagnose is a great text. Step Up 2 Medicine is a MUST HAVE for all of 3rd year. This Shelf is a bear, but the rotation should prepare you pretty well.
- Step Up and Qbank all the way
- Qbank is most helpful - 1100 questions - try and get through as many as possible; Pocket Medicine is also a great resource to have
- Do ALL qbank questions and all mksap questions and you'll be well prepared. Read sx to diagnosis for tbl but that's the only time I read it. Read step up and focus on cardio pulm and GI x2.
- At least read all text in the margins of step-up to medicine if you do not plan to read the whole book
- Step up to medicine and Qbank were most helpful.
- little purple book (pocket medicine) = life saver
- Step up and pocket medicine best with q bank and pretest if you want more focused questions
- Questions questions questions
- all about bank!
- Do every Qbank medicine question and you will do fine on the shelf. StepUp is pretty good, but is long and takes awhile to get through. Symptoms to dx is only good for the TBL's (questions come word-for-word from the book). MKSAP is good right before the shelf as the questions are very fact oriented (they don't make you think the way Qbank questions do). (shelf raw score 89, percentile ~96th)
- Read Symptom to diagnosis for the TBLs. Read Step Up for the shelf. And do as many qbank questions as possible.
- Qs
- Make sure you study and do lots of questions. Sx to Dx is required anyway
- I thought Symptom to Diagnosis (for the TBLs) was an EXCELLENT textbook (great explanations). I did not jump on the bandwagon for Step Up to Medicine and did fine without it. There are an insane amount of QBank ?s, so start early if you want to finish in time!
**Pediatrics**

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**Books That Received <5 Reviews:**
- Boards and Wards (Avg. response 5.00, from 1 review)
- Deja Review (Avg. response 5.00, from 1 review)
- Lange Pediatrics (Avg. response 5.00, from 1 review)
- NMS Pediatrics (Avg. response 5.00, from 1 review)
- First Aid: Pediatrics (Avg. response 3.67, from 3 reviews)
- First Aid Step 1: Relevant Sections (Avg. response 3.50, from 2 reviews)

**Other Books To Consider** (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):
- Pediatrics: Pre-test, Self Assessment, & Review

**Comments:**
- Know your murmurs!
- Be nice
- This shelf is surprisingly difficult. I didn't find any of the resources to be particular great.
- NMS + Uworld = honors (my only one)
- Its a very broad subject, so start reviewing things early. It would be easy to get behind. Pick one reading resource only or you will stretch yourself thin. BRS was the "smallest" complete work in my opinion. Don't forget PEDs has lots of zebra conditions that require memorizing.
- QBank and pretest are both pretty good resources for peds. Blueprints is not as thorough.
- wards cases and lectures are perhaps the most helpful
- The only resources I used were Qbank and BRS peds. BRS is pretty dense but if you can get through it, it's almost all you need to know for the shelf.
- a lot of material. Good to understand pediatric vitals. Only skim BRS peds since it's a lot of material and be sure to fill in details not provided
- I really liked BRS. It's thick but a pretty easy read. Using that and qbank/pretest, I did very well on the shelf. Don't spend a ton of time studying for the practical. Lots of students got 100% in my group
- Exam is 95% Pretest. Use BRS as reference, not for exam prep.
- pretest & BRS
- Definitely do pretest! Readings for the clerkship lectures were also very helpful. The Pediatrics in Review journal was a GREAT resource for specific diseases and guidelines.
- Pediatric Shelf covers a lot! Use one of the review books to maximize efficiency. Harriet Lane only if you plan to go into peds (not necessary otherwise).
- I chose first aid for peds and it was very comprehensive but easy to read. Between qbank and first aid, I aced the shelf
- Qbank was very useful for this rotation - about 300 peds questions! Study during your outpatient time - inpatient time will get busy!!!
- Felt like pretest the 2 weeks before the shelf really helped my grade and was spot on material wise.
- blueprints didn't cover in the right depth
- I'm question oriented, and combined Q bank (which I thought was very helpful for peds) and PreTest.
- A lot of people say BRS Peds is boring/hard-to-get-through but honestly, it's a really good review. Definitely do it along with the PreTest/Case Files for Q's
- The best thing you can do on this rotation is get to know your patients and families! For the shelf, know all the weird congenital heart stuff, rashes, and heme/onc stuff.
- Q bank and BRS peds. If you plan accordingly, you can finish BRS and have at least a few days to review problem chapters.
- Another good resource is Access Pediatrics which is available through the library portal.
- questions, questions, questions. And 1 book to explain the weird inborn errors and genetic syndromes.
- Qbank is really good. BRS Peds is a good read, but
- Very broad and difficult shelf exam. Do lots of questions.
## Surgery

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**Books That Received <5 Reviews:**
- Boards and Wards (Avg. response 5.00, from 1 review)
- Blueprints Surgery (Avg. response 4.00, from 1 review)
- Essentials of General Surgery (Avg. response 4.00, from 1 review)
- Lange: Q&A Surgery (Avg. response 4.00, from 1 review)
- Appleton and Lange: Review of Surgery (Avg. response 3.00, from 2 reviews)
- NMS Surgery Casebook (Avg. response 3.00, from 1 review)
- Surgical Attending Rounds (Avg. response 3.00 from 1 review)

**Other Books To Consider** (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):
- Unbound Surgery (internet resource)
- Essentials of Surgical Specialties

**Comments:**
- First aid. Dr. Anand is obsessed with NMS, but this shelf is a medicine shelf not a surgery shelf!
- Memorize Persians as much as you can and do the world questions. Listen to what anand says, that stuff shows up on the shelf. Don't need to know anything about how a procedure is done or anything about anatomy. That stuff is only useful for pimping.
- Material for the wards and the shelf are basically two separate things. For wards, do surgical recall and uptodate before surgeries. The shelf is more medicine, pestanas and first aid are easy to get through and prepares you.
- Don't sleep
- Know your Internal Medicine
- Long rotation so pick a source and stick with it. Questions especially if you haven't had medicine first is key!
NMS casebook was really the only good source for the shelf, though obviously insufficient for the field of surgery.

Very medicine-heavy.

Again, very broad. I liked NMs

pestana x3

pestana is great

I had surgery as my very first clerkship and thus very first shelf. It was a lot of medicine (the surgeons are going to say it's not, but it is). If it's your first clerkship I recommend going over certain HY parts of First Aid for Step 1. Pestana notes are just ok. Surgery Qbank questions were not very representative from what I can remember and NMS was not really great to use for shelf study either. I wasn't able to get to it but I've heard case files + pre-test are better resources.

NMS casebook is a good reading. Take advantage of all question banks. Enjoy every moment and be proactive in asking to do stuff to make the most of your experience!

Recall is good for wards. Pestana best for wards and shelf.

PreTest has VERY difficult questions, if you can do them you will be fine.

NMS is money. If you know that book inside and out, you will be fine on the shelf

Study a little bit every day—what you learn in the hospital is not what you’ll be tested on so don’t neglect the books.

find a way to do more practice Qs than just uworld

Acess Surgery website through VCU libraries is VERY useful for reading up on conditions and videos about pathologies and procedures. I highly recommend it!

I used a general surgical textbook instead of the NMS book. Did not like the NMS book that much. QBank is helpful, but nothing can really prepare you specifically for this shelf. Looks and feels like a medicine Shelf, with surgical patients.

Surgical recall is great for pimping questions. Pestanas is perfect for day before shelf review

-Surgery is all about making decisions and NMS is the best at helping you learn the decision making process. Usefull for in the clerkship and on the shelf.

Felt like GI, pulm, and cardio sections of step up are must reads. Wished I has used a different question bank because qbank wasn’t good for this.

Recall is great before the OR, but not for the test

study study

+ pestanas

Surgical recall only helpful for OR pimping, not shelf studying.

This shelf was pretty tough, mostly because you don’t have a ton of time to study during the clerkship so it's important to use your time wisely and start studying often. Pestana was a great, quick read. NMS casebook was useful for the lectures but the text version was way too dense. I would mix the surgery and internal medicine questions when doing Qbank.

You’ll hear it over and over again that the shelf is NOT a surgery shelf, it’s a medicine shelf. If you haven’t had medicine yet, make sure you spend time reviewing your basics like acid/base, heme, fluids, etc. the qbank questions are too easy and will give you a false sense of security...do the pretest questions and you will be at the level of the shelf. Make sure you pace yourself as the exam has very long question stems.

Read the NMS Case Book Dr. Anand recommends; it is very good. Read Pestana. Do Qbank and the questions in Pestana. Frankly, that’s all you will have time to do on this rotation.
I liked NMS casebook, but some didn't—it's required anyway. Pestana is a must. Boards and WArds and Qbank are always helpful.

As everyone will tell you, this is a medicine-heavy shelf exam. If you have not have medicine, I would actually advise studying an internal medicine prep book.

Pestana and Qbank are key for this test. It is really a medicine test (remember shelves are aimed at what future primary care doc should know about the subject). NMS casebook and surgical recall are great for studying for pimping in the OR, but don't prepare you too well for the shelf. Reviewing the cardiology/pulmonary/GI sections of StepUp are very high yield. (shelf raw score 91, percentile ~97%)
Psychiatry

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Books That Received <5 Reviews:
- Boards and Wards (Avg. response 4.00, from 2 reviews)
- Blueprints Psychiatry (Avg. response 4.00, from 4 reviews)
- High Yield Psychiatry (Avg. response 4.00, from 1 review)
- NMS Psychiatry (Avg. response 4.00, from 1 review)
- Psychiatry Clerkship Guide (Avg. response 3.00, from 1 review)

Other Books To Consider (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):
- Mosby's Psychiatry Clerkship Guide
- Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry
- Lippincott's Psychiatry

Comments:
- First aid psych is easy to get through and high yield. Go through it several times during the rotation.
- Work hard
- Just read the psychopharm part of first aid, and do qbank/lange questions for the rest of it. Also study genetic and metabolic causes of mental retardation
- Know the drugs inside and out.
- First Aid Psych is great for this test (absolutely everything that will be on the shelf is in it). Qbank is also great and Lange Q&A is pretty good (hits on random facts). Also, study the drugs early bc tons of shelf questions are pharm questions (Dr. Meguid gives a good TBL on them- so put a lot of work into studying for that TBL). (shelf raw score 99, percentile ~95th)
- I read first aid twice and did Lange twice; highest shelf score and way over the average.
- Hit the pharmacology hard and early, generic and trade names. I also reviewed the old behavioral science BRS book and found some useful tidbits.
- Case Files and Q Bank is not enough
- first aid and Lange q and a
- I used first aid and Q bank and not much else, no real need to.
- Questions everyday. Nail down the medications early on.
- Blueprints is a nice one to start early. It helps with the OSCE, wards, and shelf.
- Good luck...
First Aid is good just starting out on the service, but ultimately too basic. Do Qbank later for exam prep.

Used BRS Behavioral Science fairly often. Blueprints was a nice, quick, short reference that covered most of the major points of the clerkship. Pretty straightforward Shelf exam. Know your criteria for diagnosis.

Qbank is too easy. Use first aid for psych and know the drugs like the back of your hand.

Case files is a good resource if you are unable to see a patient with a certain condition/diagnosis; Lange Q&A were very similar to the questions seen on the shelf - that book does have a few errors though!

Definitely go through the Psychiatry section of FA for Step 1. Quick and High Yield

Just do the Qs

Case files seemed to be exceptionally helpful for psychiatry.

none of them are great

Lange Q & A was extremely helpful for this shelf.

Spend some solid time learning your drugs and reactions for this shelf! Make sure you do the Lange questions all the way through at least once.

First Aid and Lange Q&A

Make sure you spend a good amount of time on the pharmacology. There is a lot of it and it is very important for psychiatric treatment.

1st aid and Lange is all you need

don't overthink. know your timing criteria for each dx.

Lange Q&A and Qbank will suffice.

Use questions to practice. Blueprints gave a good overview.

Know peds development and peds genetic conditions. Know how to recognize drug abuse/withdrawal.
OB/Gyn

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Books That Received <5 Reviews:
- First Aid for the USMLE Step 1: Women’s Health Section (Avg. response 3.67, from 3 reviews)
- First Aid for the Obstetrics and Gynecology Clerkship (Avg. response 2.50, from 2 reviews)
- Lange: Obstetrics and Gynecology (Avg. response 2.33, from 3 reviews)

Other Books To Consider (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):
- Boards and Wards
- Comprehensive Gynecology
- Obstetrics: Normal and Problem Pregnancies
- Blueprints: Clinical Cases in Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Deja Review

Comments:
- Case files provides quick high yield info, blueprints is more in depth with detail, good complements of one another. Also, do the uWISE questions multiple times, more so representative of the shelf questions than Uworld.
- Work hard
- The shelf does not correspond well to the readings. I read 4 different books including the recommended one and it was my worst shelf, so relax.
- I did really well reading blueprints, case files, and at a glance. Very important to do uwise at least twice. I performed over the average with those tools. Beckmann is entirely too long.
- Without having done medicine this one will be tricky. Do lots of questions.
- OB At a Glance is great to have on wards
uwise x2, case files, and uworld

this was a hard shelf

I think I am one of the few who read Beckmann and Ling all the way through. Not the most concise way to do it, but it has all the stuff you need to know for the shelf.

Don't forget to study breast and urinary incontinence

Uwise questions are best

uWise questions are great and the weekly lectures are an excellent review.

I liked Blueprints. Went into enough detail, sometimes a little too much. Qbank is good as always, and the Uwise questions are pretty good as well

Combined text book with review material

pretest & uwise & casefiles

The Beckmann book does not have the clinical application detail necessary for clinical rotations. The administration strongly recommends this text, but I found it quite lacking for the clinical rotation. Pretty good for the women's health course.

I started with blueprints and found it to dense and frankly boring. Case files was much better

Do the questions online that Dr. Rigby explains how to get access to!! These were the most similar to the shelf questions!

Like read the whole Beckman textbook and found it helpful but think case files right before the shelf was the most high yield. Do all uwise and qbank questions.

Know qbank

I found at a glance to be a good "big picture" review for Ob, as suggested by Dr. Cohen.

blueprints

This is a hard shelf - spend the time on OB stuff and do questions!

Try to do as many questions as possible. I found that the M2 women's health class really prepared me for this clerkship.

The textbook seems long but it is actually a really good resource if you can make yourself get through it. Do all of the uwise questions at least twice...it felt like some of the shelf questions came word for word from those uwise questions.

Do the Uwise questions!

Shelf was ridiculous. None of the practice questions prepare you for the shelf. Good luck.

Qbank and Uwise questions are all you really need for the shelf. Beckman and Ling is great to read if you have time, but is more than you need to know for the shelf (it is really good for clinic/wards though). A good substitute for reading beckman and ling is "At a glance." Is a good quick read for the 2 weeks before the shelf. (shelf raw score 94)

Dr. Rigby forces everyone to turn in CBC answers and uWise questions since so many people failed the shelf our year. Supplement with QBank and Beckmann & Ling text and you should be good to go.
Family Medicine

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Books That Received <5 Reviews:
- Boards and Wards (Avg. response 5.00, from 1 review)
- Swanson's Family Practice Review: A Problem-Oriented Approach (Avg. response 4.00, from 1 review)
- USMLE Step 2 Secrets (Avg. response 3.67, from 3 reviews)
- Case Files Family Medicine (Avg. response 3.00, from 1 review)
- Blueprints Family Medicine (Avg. response 2.50, from 2 reviews)
- NMS Family Medicine (Avg. response 1.50, from 2 reviews)

Other Books To Consider (these books were included in the survey but received 0 reviews):
- Lange Current Diagnosis & Treatment in Family Medicine

Comments:
- I skimmed through the book they give you at orientation the night before the test. I’m so happy I did because it easily added ten points to my score.
- Review more than just Case Files because the shelf is very broad.
- Work hard
- Pre-test once, AAFP questions, Case Files once, supplement with Step up=honors
- Very difficult shelf, hard to prepare for, just read as much as possible and enjoy the weekends.
- This rotation is short and the sources were suboptimal. I recommend studying throughout and really doing a lot of questions.
- Short rotation. Study early.
- Review outpatient section of Step Up to Medicine & outpatient sections of Pediatric Case Files
- pretest and selected chapter of essentials
- start with step-up for basics
- The shelf is really random. Thus the best way to prep for it is simply to do tons of questions as no book will cover all the random topics/questions that will be on the
test. If you've had medicine prior to this shelf you won't have to work very hard to do pretty well on it. (shelf raw score 96, percentile ~99th)

- Do the outpatient internal medicine questions from Q-bank
- Use online questions as much as possible
- read up on new cases you see during the day, it doesn't take too long and cements the topics in your memory.
- I spent way too much time with the online AAFP questions. They are geared more towards residents and less towards the M3 shelf. Case Files was okay, but not great.
- Pretest is much too basic. Case files is good to read throughout rotation, but you might do better also playing around with the AAFP questions in addition to daily reading. Unfortunately no great question banks for this.
- Do as many practice Qs since uworld does not have FM questions
- I used the textbook provided by the family medicine administration. Pretty good text for learning. Lots to cover in family medicine, so study from the beginning as it is a one month rotation.
- Textbook is very dense, probably not able to get through the whole thing - only read for areas you are weak in. Pretest may have some outdated info on screenings/immunizations
- Case files did not prepare me for the shelf. Need to find better books or might be better off reading step up to medicine. Wished I has used more of the aafp questions.
- Random. Do as many questions as possible- from wherever
- Combination of PreTest and QBank was sufficient for those who are question oriented.
- Main point is to do plenty of Qs especially if you haven't taken IM/Surgery shelves at this point. FM is super broad and AAFP Qs aren't bad.
- Use the aafp questions!!
- The gold sheets were super helpful for the OSCE. Take notes on these and refer back to them. Use Qbank by combining family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics questions. It may even be beneficial to use all categories since this is a very broad shelf. Start studying earlier because a month finished quickly.
- AAFP questions all the way!
- Qbank and case files
- Case files, Pretest, step up ambulatory chapter
- Case files is helpful. Really hard to study for this exam if you take it early in the year.
- Online AAFP questions were too detailed I thought. Just make sure you start studying for this shelf immediately because you don't have much time.
- You must do questions. Know peds, ethics, and OB/GYN topics as well, especially if you haven't had those clerkships.