USMLE Examinations Policy

USMLE Examinations Policy: Approved by the COM Curriculum Committee 4.1.2014

USMLE STEP EXAMINATIONS
Students are required to pass Step 1 and both components of Step 2, Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Clinical Skills (CS), of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) prior to graduation. Performance on these examinations provides one method of comparing our students to those at other medical schools and thereby assessing performance relative to a national peer group. The successful completion of all three steps of the USMLE is necessary for obtaining a license to practice medicine.

IMPORTANT DATES

USMLE Step 1
All students must sit for the USMLE Step 1 before beginning clinical training and within 12 months of completing Phase A, Year 2 coursework. Failure to do so will result in an automatic recommendation for dismissal.

Students will be allowed to start their clinical training if the USMLE Step 1 score is pending and if it is their first attempt of the examination.

Students with an initial failure of the USMLE Step 1 must retake the examination before the end of October of the fall semester of their Phase B year.

Students who are unable to present a passing USMLE Step 1 exam score by December 31 of the fall semester of their Phase B year will be recommended for review by the Student Promotions Committee.

USMLE Step 2 CK and CS
Students must complete all required third year clerkships prior to taking the USMLE Step 2 CK and CS examinations. Students are required to register for the Step 2 CK and CS examinations no later than July 30, of their Phase C year. A failure to comply will be reported to the Student Promotions Committee.

Students are required to take Step 2 CK and CS before December 1st of their Phase C year, if graduation in May is anticipated. No student may defer the Step 2 CK and CS examinations beyond December 1st without appropriate approval from the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

Students have, with the approval of the Student Promotions Committee, a maximum of 12 months after completion of their clinical course work to record a passing score on the USMLE Step 2 CK and CS examinations. Delay in presenting passing scores for Step 2 examinations may warrant delay in graduation and therefore affect start of residency.

IMPLICATIONS IF EXAMINATION IS FAILED
Students who do not pass the USMLE examinations are reviewed by the Student Promotions Committee. Students are expected to develop a study plan for retaking Step 1, and should retake it as soon as possible before continuing in the clinical curriculum. Generally, if a student is not having academic difficulty in the curriculum, she or he is permitted to attempt the examination again. If a student has had difficulty in the basic science curriculum, the Student Promotions Committee may recommend dismissal if Step 1 is failed twice.

If a student fails Step 1, s/he should contact the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Admissions and Outreach to discuss the timing of retaking the examination in relation to his/her clinical schedule. With the Step 1 examination
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being given essentially year-round, the student is usually permitted to complete the clerkship in which s/he is currently enrolled.

For students who are having difficulty both in the curriculum and with the USMLE examinations, the Student Promotions Committee will take a more active role in the determination of the student's academic program and may require the student to develop an independent study program of three to six months in duration.

If either component of Step 2 is failed in the summer of the senior year, the student’s clinical schedule needs to be modified to allow time for studying and retaking the exam within a timeframe that allows a passing score to be reported prior to the student entering his/her residency rank order list. The status of completion of either component of Step 2 is included in the Dean's MSPE. If Step 2 is failed a second time and if the student has had difficulty in the curriculum, the Student Promotions Committee may recommend dismissal.

If either Step 1 or either component of Step 2 is failed three times, the Student Promotions Committee will consider a dismissal recommendation. The USMLE program recommends to medical licensing boards that they require that the dates of passing the Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 examinations occur within a seven-year period. For purposes of medical licensure in the United States, any time limit to complete the USMLE is established by the state medical boards. Many require completion of the full USMLE sequence within seven years from the date the first Step or Step Component is passed or, in some cases, from the date of the first attempt at any Step or Step Component. Students should understand the implications of time limits for licensure.