

USMLE

The United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) is a multi-part professional exam sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). Physicians with an M.D. degree are required to pass this examination before being permitted to practice medicine in the United States of America.

The USMLE assesses a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to determine fundamental patient-centered skills that are important in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care.[2] Examination committees composed of medical educators and clinicians from across the United States and its territories prepare the examination materials each year.

Students and graduates of U.S. or Canadian medical school programs accredited by either the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools, leading to the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree, or by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree, register for Step 1 and Step 2 of the USMLE with the NBME.

Students and graduates of medical schools outside the United States or Canada register for Step 1 and Step 2 with the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). Graduates of medical schools in and outside the United States and Canada register for Step 3 with the FSMB or with a medical licensing authority in the United States. Each of the three steps of the USMLE examination complements the other; no step stands alone in the assessment of readiness for medical licensure. The USMLE program recommends that for Step 3 eligibility, licensure authorities require the completion, or near completion, of at least one postgraduate training year in a program of graduate medical education accredited by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

All three steps of the USMLE exam must be passed before a physician with an M.D. degree is eligible to apply for an unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States.

Students who have graduated from medical schools outside the US and Canada must pass all three steps of the USMLE to be licensed to practice in the US, regardless of the title of their degree.

USMLE Parts

USMLE comprises of three major parts:

USMLE Step 1

USMLE Step 2

USMLE Step 2 – CK – Clinical Knowledge

USMLE Step 2 – CS – Clinical Skills

USMLE Step 3

USMLE Step 1 assesses whether medical school students or graduates understand and can apply important concepts of the basic sciences to the practice of medicine. As of 2007, it covers the following subjects, in both systemic (general and individual anatomical characteristics) and procedural (functional, therapeutic, environmental, and abnormality) themes:

- Pathology,
- Pharmacology,
- Physiology,
- Microbiology,
- Biochemistry,
- Anatomy,
- Behavioral sciences,
- Interdisciplinary topics, such as nutrition, genetics, and aging.

S and Caribbean / Central American medical students take Step 1 at the end of the Basic Sciences portion of the curriculum, usually after the second year of medical school. It is an eight-hour computer-based exam consisting of 322 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) divided into seven blocks each consisting of 46 questions. As of summer 2008, some questions include audio and video. Each block must be finished within an hour. The remaining hour is break time. An optional tutorial about how to use the computer program of the exam is offered at the beginning of the exam and takes 15 minutes. This time is deducted from the hour of allotted break time. A quality assurance survey is presented at the end, provided some of the original eight hours is left over.

Scores are reported as a three digit score and a two digit score, however as of July 1, 2011 only the 3-digit score is reported on USMLE transcripts. On January 1, 2010, the passing score was raised from 185 to 188. The average score in 2013 was 227 with a standard deviation of 22. If the student passes the exam, he or she may not repeat the exam to achieve a higher score.

The Step 1 score is frequently used in medical residency applications as a measure of a candidate's likelihood to succeed in that particular residency (and on that specialty's board exams), and it has been cited by residency program directors as their most important criterion in selecting graduating medical students for their residency program. Average USMLE Step 1 scores for various residencies are available in "Charting Outcomes in the Match".

The Step 1 exam is widely viewed as the hardest and most important examination a medical student will take during his/her career.

USMLE Step 2 is designed to assess whether medical school students or graduates can apply medical knowledge, skills and understanding of clinical science essential for provision of patient care under supervision. US medical students typically take Step 2 during the fourth year of medical school. Step 2 is further divided into two separate exams.

USMLE Step 2 CK is designed to assess clinical knowledge through a traditional, multiple-choice examination. It is a 9 hour exam consisting of 8 blocks of approximately 44 questions each. One hour is given for each block of questions. The subjects included in this exam are clinical sciences like Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Obstetrics & Gynecology.

USMLE Step 2 CS is designed to assess clinical skills through simulated patient interactions, in which the examinee interacts with standardized patients portrayed by actors. Each examinee faces 12 Standardized Patients (SPs) and has 15 minutes to complete history taking and clinical examination for each patient, and then 10 more minutes to write a patient note describing the findings, initial differential diagnosis list and a list of initial tests. Administration of the Step 2-CS began in 2004. The examination is only offered in five cities across the United States:

- Philadelphia
- Chicago
- Atlanta
- Houston
- Los Angeles

Before 2004, a similar exam, the Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA) was used to assess the clinical skills of foreign medical graduates.

USMLE Step 3 is the final exam in the USMLE series designed to assess whether a medical school graduate can apply medical knowledge and understanding of biomedical and clinical science essential for the unsupervised practice of medicine. Graduates of US medical schools typically take this exam at the end of the first year of residency. Foreign medical graduates can take Step 3 before starting residency in about ten U.S. states. Connecticut is frequently chosen for such purpose because it does

not require simultaneous application for licensure, unlike New York. Starting from 2014 USMLE Step 3 will be divided into two separate parts.

- Step 3 is 16 hour examination divided over two-days. Each day of testing must be completed within eight hours.
- The first day of testing includes 336 multiple-choice items divided into 7 blocks, each consisting of 48 items. Examinees must complete each block within sixty minutes.
- The second day of testing includes 144 multiple-choice items, divided into 4 blocks of 36 items. Examinees are required to complete each block within forty-five minutes. Approximately 3 hours are allowed for these multiple-choice item blocks. Also on the second day are twelve Clinical Case Simulations, where the examinees are required to 'manage' patients in real-time case simulations. Examinees enter orders for medications and/or investigations into the simulation software, and the condition of the patient changes. Cases are of 10 or 20 minutes.
- Approximately forty-five minutes to one hour is available for break time on each of the two days of testing.

Exam Format

The USMLE first started out as a paper examination, converting to a computer based multiple choice examination. The test can be taken at Prometric test centers worldwide. However, the Step 2 CS and the Step 3 can only be taken in the USA. The software used to administer the test, the NBME FRED tm, was upgraded in 2008 to a new version, FRED tm V2. The implementation of this changeover continues.

Disclaimer – This detail is kept on this website for information purpose only, for best and first hand information you are advised to visit official website of respective exam. This website or the respective company is not responsible for any change or update in information mentioned above. Visit official website before making any decision based on the information given above. **Best Wishes**