

MEDICAL STUDENT POLICY

Title: USMLE Step Examination Policy	
Relevant LCME Element(s): 11.1 Academic Advising and Academic Counseling	Last approved: 3/5/2025

I. **PURPOSE**

Outlines guidelines for taking and passing USMLE Step 1 and 2 CK.

II. **PERSONS AFFECTED:**

Medical students

III. **POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT**

All students **MUST** pass USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK in order to graduate from Feinberg School of Medicine.

USMLE Step 1:

All students are required to sit for the USMLE Step 1 examination prior to advancement to Phase 2. Students must successfully complete and/or remediate ALL Phase 1 module exams prior to sitting for Step 1. All Phase 1b students will be enrolled in the *Step 1 Knowledge Consolidation Module*. As part of the course, students are expected to complete weekly study check-ins. Phase 1b (M2) students will usually take the Step 1 examination during the month of April (prior to the start of Introduction to Phase 2). The Academic Success Team may recommend students take their Step 1 exam at a later date based on academic performance during Phase 1 and/or CBSE performance. Students wanting to take Step 1 prior to April must meet with the Assistant Dean of Learning and Academic Support prior to scheduling an early exam date. Step 1 must be taken prior to any approved leave of absence, independent study/research or dual degree pursuit between Phase 1 and Phase 2, unless approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. MSTP students transitioning to their PhD phase must complete Step 1 prior to starting the PhD unless a delay is approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Any student sitting for Step 1 after IP2 will be placed in the *Advanced Knowledge Consolidation Module*. A student must schedule AND sit for the examination within 6 weeks after the end of Intro to Phase 2. If a student is unable to sit within this timeframe, they will be placed on an administrative leave of absence and must petition the SPC to extend their Step 1 knowledge consolidation period. The SPC will recommend further time limits on a student's Step 1 preparation. Students **CANNOT** schedule Step 1 during SAM week or Intro to Phase 2.

Students who fail their first attempt at Step 1 may complete their current clerkship. However, students may not begin another clerkship until they receive a passing score on the Step 1 retake examination. A student who has failed USMLE Step 1 on the first attempt must retake the examination no later than three months after receipt of the score report. If a student cannot meet this deadline, they must appear before the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) to request an extension.

Students who fail the Step 1 examination on their first attempt must meet with the Academic Success Team to finalize a plan to retake the exam. The Academic Success Team will provide feedback on a student's study plan and work with the student to create a Step 1 preparation plan. Once the study plan has been finalized, permission will be granted for the USMLE Step 1 retake date.

If the re-examination is unsuccessful, the student will be placed on an administrative leave of absence to create and engage with a study plan informed by the Academic Success Team. The student must appear before the SPC and request permission to retake the examination for a third time; permission to proceed with testing for the third attempt is not guaranteed. During the SPC request, the student must present a study plan and timeline to the SPC who will either approve or deny the request for a third attempt. The SPC will consider outcomes, including dismissal from FSM, based on academic performance. If a student is granted permission to take the exam a third time, the student must sit for the exam no later than three months after receipt of the second score report. Failure to do so will result in an additional SPC appearance at which time outcomes such as dismissal from FSM will again be considered. Any student failing the Step 1 examination a third time will appear before the SPC who will again consider outcomes, including dismissal from FSM, based on academic performance.

USMLE Step 2 CK

All students must pass USMLE Step 2 CK to fulfill graduation requirements. Step 2 CK cannot be taken prior to completion of **ALL** Phase 2 Core clerkships. Students are required to sit for the Step 2 CK by the end of August of the **academic year** in which they will graduate. Students with extenuating circumstances or who are not applying for residency after graduation may petition the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for an adjustment to this requirement if needed.

Step 2 CK must be taken prior to any approved leave of absence, independent study or dual degree pursuit between Phase 2 and Phase 3, unless approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If a student is granted this approval, they must take **AND** successfully pass USMLE Step 2 CK prior to beginning Phase 3 rotations.

Students who fail Step 2 CK must meet with the Assistant Dean of Learning and Academic Performance. If a student does not pass the Step 2 CK examination on the second attempt, they will be placed on an administrative leave of absence to focus on a study plan with assistance from the Academic Success Team. The student must appear before the SPC and request permission to retake the examination for a third time. The student will need to present a study plan and timeline to the SPC. The SPC may approve or deny the request for a third USMLE Step 2 CK retake.

IV. REVISIONS:

3/5/2025: Clarified that USMLE Step 1 must be passed on second attempt before beginning clerkships.

V. APPROVING BODY:

Curriculum Committee