

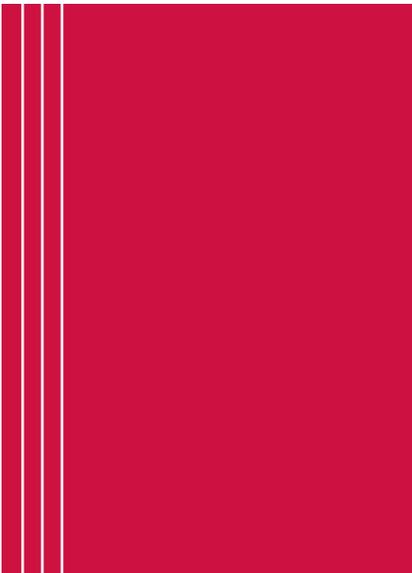


# **USMLE Step 2**

## **Clinical Knowledge (CK)**

### *Content Description and General Information*

A Joint Program of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc.,  
and the National Board of Medical Examiners®



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## Introduction

This booklet is intended to help you prepare for the Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (Step 2 CK) component of the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®).

The information in this booklet, sample test materials and tutorials, and other informational materials are available on the USMLE Web site (<http://www.usmle.org>).

In addition to the information in this booklet, you should review relevant sections that appear in the USMLE *Bulletin of Information*.

Sample test materials are available on the USMLE Web site, in downloadable computer format, with tutorials, and as sample items in a booklet. You **must** run the tutorial and sample test items to become familiar with the test software prior to your test date. The tutorial provided at the beginning of the Step 2 CK examination has fewer screens and less detailed information than the tutorial available in the Step 2 practice materials on the USMLE Web site.

In addition, the practice materials on the USMLE Web site include an additional block of items with associated audio or video findings, a sequential item set, a pharmaceutical advertisement item set, and an abstract item set (a summary of an experiment or clinical investigation, accompanied by two or more questions). You should become familiar with all item formats that may be used in the actual examination before your test date.

Please monitor the USMLE Web site (<http://www.usmle.org>) announcements section to check for changes in the test delivery software and to access updated practice materials. You must obtain the most recent information before taking any USMLE examination.

## Examination Content

Step 2 CK consists of multiple-choice questions prepared by test material development committees composed of faculty members, teachers, investigators, and clinicians with recognized prominence in their respective fields. Committee members are selected to provide broad representation from the academic, practice, and licensing communities across the United States and Canada.

Test questions focus on the principles of clinical science that are deemed important for the practice of medicine under supervision in postgraduate training.

## Content Outline

All USMLE examinations are constructed from an integrated content outline, available on the USMLE Web site (<http://www.usmle.org/pdfs/usmlecontentoutline.pdf>), which lists content organized according to general principles and individual organ systems. Test questions are classified into one of 18 major categories, depending on whether they focus on concepts and principles that are applicable across organ systems or within individual organ systems.

Sections focusing on individual organ systems are subdivided according to normal and abnormal processes, including principles of therapy.

While not all topics listed in the content outline are included in every USMLE examination, overall content coverage is comparable in the various examination forms that will be administered to different examinees for each Step.

Most organ systems are subdivided into normal and abnormal processes, and include subcategories of specific disease processes. In most instances, knowledge of normal processes is evaluated in the context of a disease process or specific pathology. See Tables 1 and 2 (pages 5 and 6).

The content outline is not intended as a curriculum development or study guide. It provides a flexible structure for test construction that can readily accommodate new topics, emerging content domains, and shifts in emphasis. The categorizations and content coverage are subject to change. Broadly based learning that establishes a strong general understanding of concepts and principles in the clinical sciences is the best preparation for the examination.

### **Testing Time**

Step 2 CK is a one-day examination. It is divided into eight 60-minute blocks and administered in one 9-hour testing session. The number of questions per block on a given examination form will vary, but will not exceed 44. The total number of items on the overall examination form will not exceed 350.

There is also a minimum allotment of 45 minutes of break time and a 15-minute optional tutorial. The amount of time available for breaks may be increased by finishing a block of test items or the optional tutorial before the allotted time expires.

## Test Specifications

<b>Table 1: Step 2 CK Test Content Specifications*</b>	
<b>System</b>	<b>Range</b>
General Principles of Foundational Science**	1% – 3%
Immune System Blood & Lymphoreticular Systems Behavioral Health Nervous System & Special Senses Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue Musculoskeletal System Cardiovascular System Respiratory System Gastrointestinal System Renal & Urinary Systems Pregnancy, Childbirth, & the Puerperium Female Reproductive System & Breast Male Reproductive System Endocrine System Multisystem Processes & Disorders	85% – 95%
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health Interpretation of the Medical Literature	1% – 5%

\* Percentages are subject to change at any time. See the USMLE Web site (<http://www.usmle.org>) for the most up-to-date information.

\*\* The general principles category for the Step 2 CK examination includes test items concerning normal processes not limited to specific organ systems. These test items are typically related to normal development. Categories for individual organ systems include test items concerning those normal and abnormal processes that are system-specific.

## Physician Tasks/Competencies

An additional organizing construct for Step 2 CK design is physician tasks and competencies, as shown in Table 2. More information about the physician tasks and competencies outline is available on the USMLE Web site (<http://www.usmle.org/pdfs/tcom.pdf>). Items are constructed to focus on assessing one of the following competencies:

- Medical knowledge/scientific concepts: Applying foundational science concepts
- Patient care: Diagnosis
- Patient care: Management
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Professionalism, including legal and ethical issues
- Systems-based practice, including patient safety
- Practice-based learning, including biostatistics and epidemiology

<b>Table 2: Step 2 CK Physician Task/Competency Specifications</b>	
<b>Competency</b>	<b>Range</b>
Medical Knowledge/Scientific Concepts	10% – 15%
Patient Care: Diagnosis History/Physical Examination Laboratory/Diagnostic Studies Diagnosis Prognosis/Outcome	40% – 50%
Patient Care: Management Health Maintenance/Disease Prevention Pharmacotherapy Clinical Interventions Mixed Management Surveillance for Disease Recurrence	30% – 35%
Communication Professionalism Systems-based Practice/Patient Safety Practice-based Learning	3% – 7%