

Who is behind the USMLE?

The USMLE is jointly sponsored and developed by two organizations.



FSMB
(Federation of State Medical Boards)

The FSMB represents the state medical and osteopathic regulatory boards — commonly referred to as state medical boards — within the United States, its territories and the District of Columbia.

FSMB.org



NBME
(National Board of Medical Examiners)

NBME specializes in creating high-quality assessments and educational services for students, professionals, educators and institutions dedicated to the evolving needs of medical education and health care.

NBME.org



Want more information on the USMLE?

The best place to get the most up-to-date and authoritative information is the USMLE website: **USMLE.org**.

The **“Bulletin of Information” (BOI)**, which is updated yearly, is a comprehensive resource containing information on all aspects of the USMLE, such as:

- Eligibility requirements
- Scheduling your testing
- Exam day
- Score reporting

Examinees must review and become familiar with the BOI before completing an application for USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 3.

To see current and past bulletins, visit:
USMLE.org/bulletin-information

Want free high-quality exam prep materials?

USMLE provides practice materials — including sample questions and an interactive testing experience — and other resources to help examinees prepare for all Step exams.

To access these resources, visit:
USMLE.org/resources



Questions about the USMLE®?

We've got answers.



Some of the most frequently asked questions about the USMLE.

What is the USMLE?

The acronym USMLE® stands for United States Medical Licensing Examination.®

First implemented in 1992 and accepted by all 50 state medical boards, the USMLE is part of a physician's pathway to licensure.

The USMLE has three examinations, called "Steps" — which are taken at different points in an allopathic physician's education and training. Examinees who pass each Step of the USMLE have demonstrated they understand and can apply medical knowledge, clinical concepts and fundamental patient-centered skills to obtain a license to practice medicine in the United States.

Step 1 (Up to 280 Questions)

Assesses the ability to understand and apply important concepts of the basic sciences (foundational sciences) to the practice of medicine — with an emphasis on principles and mechanisms underlying health, disease and modes of therapy.

Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) (Up to 318 Questions)

Assesses the ability to apply medical knowledge, skills and understanding of clinical science essential for providing patient care under supervision — with an emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention.

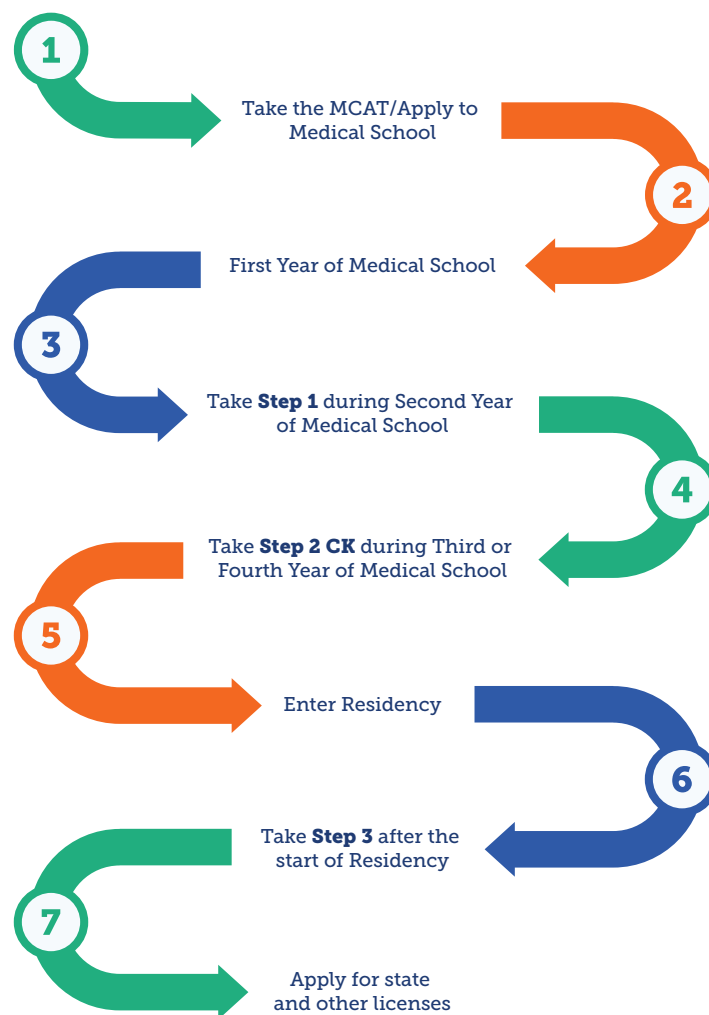
Step 3 (Up to 412 Multiple Choice + 13 Case Simulation Questions)

Assesses the ability to apply medical knowledge and understanding of biomedical and clinical science essential for the unsupervised practice of medicine — with an emphasis on patient management in ambulatory settings.

Why is the USMLE important?

First and foremost, the USMLE ensures that licensed physicians are held to a rigorous and reliable standard. Those who pass the Step exams have demonstrated that they understand and can apply the medical knowledge, skills and clinical reasoning to provide safe and effective patient care. In fact, NBME research shows that better USMLE performance correlates to improved patient outcomes.

The USMLE is an integral part of **The Pathway to Licensure**. Although the exact timing and sequence may vary depending on medical school curricula, the country where medical education occurs, where licensure is desired, and other factors, the pathway typically has the following sequence:



How is the USMLE developed?

The USMLE is developed using several resources.

The Step exam questions (also called "items") are developed by a nationwide faculty of more than 350 volunteers who broadly represent the academic, practice and licensing communities across the United States and Canada.

All exam questions are created following an integrated content outline focusing on important concepts and principles across and within organ systems. Items are continually reviewed to ensure their content is relevant to the practice of medicine. As practice guidelines evolve or are introduced, items are modified as needed.

The USMLE Step exams are carefully reviewed to help maintain their validity in the medical licensure process.

A team of NBME editors, analysts and psychometricians also reviews questions. During this process, they evaluate each item or case and revise or discard any that are inconsistent or based on outdated practices. Test items are also reviewed and updated to mitigate any content that may reflect biases or perpetuate stereotypes.

How are the USMLE scores reported?

The USMLE program provides a recommended pass or fail outcome on all Step exams. Step 1 is scored as pass/fail only. Step 2 CK and Step 3 are scored on a three-digit scale and pass/fail. Passing standards for all Steps are decided by the USMLE Management Committee.

To learn more, visit [USMLE.org](https://www.usmle.org)

