

ABOUT THE USMLE

The United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) consists of three steps designed to assess a physician's ability to apply a broad spectrum of knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to evaluate the physician's basic patient-centered skills.

The three steps are:

Step 1 (multiple-choice exam) – This exam is designed to test how well the examinee applies basic, integral science concepts to clinical scenarios.

Step 2 (two separate exams) – The Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) is a multiple-choice exam designed to determine whether the examinee possesses the medical knowledge and understanding of clinical science considered essential for the provision of patient care under supervision. The Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) is a separate “hands-on” exam that tests the examinee's clinical and communication skills through his/her ability to gather information from standardized patients, perform a physical examination, communicate the findings to the patient, and write a patient note.

Step 3 (multiple-choice exam) – This exam assesses the examinee's ability to apply medical knowledge and the understanding of biomedical and clinical science essential for the unsupervised practice of medicine, with emphasis on patient management in ambulatory settings. Passing step 3 qualifies the examinee to practice private Medicine in USA. This step is not necessary for salaried (paid) residency in an accredited USA hospital.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STEP 1 EXAM

Test Type: Computer-based.

Examination Length: Seven 60-minute “blocks” administered in one eight-hour testing session; each block has 50 questions; computer tutorial: 15 minutes; breaks: 45 minutes, self-scheduled.

Number of Questions: Approximately 350.

Question Type: Single best answer multiple-choice test items.

Average Time per Question: Approximately 72 seconds.

Step 1 is an eight-hour, computerized examination that assesses whether you understand and can apply important concepts of the sciences basic to the practice of medicine, with special emphasis on principles and mechanisms underlying health, disease, and modes of therapy. Step 1 ensures you know the science within clinical contexts to safely and competently practice medicine under supervision.

Step 1 consists of multiple-choice questions designed to measure basic science knowledge, including questions in anatomy, behavioral sciences, biochemistry, microbiology, pathology, pharmacology, physiology, and interdisciplinary topics, such as nutrition, genetics, and aging.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STEP 2 CK EXAM

Examination Length: Eight 60-minute “blocks” administered in one 9-hour testing session; computer tutorial: 15 minutes; break: 45 minutes, self-schedule3d.

Number of Questions: Approximately 370; 46-47 questions per 1-hour block.

Question Types: Two types of multiple-choice question: single best answer and matching set.

Step 2 CK is a nine-hour, computerized examination that serves as the clinical science exam of the licensing pathway. Its purpose is to determine whether an examinee possesses the medical knowledge and understanding of clinical science considered essential for the provision of patient care under supervision. As the complement to the Clinical Skills Step 2 CS exam, Step 2 CK consists of multiple-choice questions that will test you on the principles of clinical science that are important to the practice of medicine in postgraduate training.

Step 2 CK tests primary care medicine. Subjects covered on the USMLE Step 2 CK include but are not limited to:

- Internal medicine
- Obstetrics and gynecology
- Pediatrics
- Preventive medicine and public health
- Psychiatry
- Emergency medicine
- Dermatology

- Neurology
- Geriatrics
- Surgery

DESCRIPTION OF THE STEP 2 CS EXAM

Each Step 2 Clinical Skills Evaluation Center simulates a large medical clinic. There are 24 fully equipped examination rooms. On each examination room door, you will find an instruction sheet containing basic information about the case, including the patient's age, chief, complaint, and vital signs. The instruction sheet will also list the tasks that you are expected to perform.

After reading the instruction sheet and taking notes, you should knock on the door and begin your encounter with the standardized patient (SP), just as you would with a real patient. In the course of the examination, you will go through 11 or 12 different exam rooms and will encounter a different case in each room. Eleven of these encounters will be scored. The unscored patient encounter is included for piloting new cases and other research purposes. However, you should treat every single encounter on test day as a scored encounter.

You will have 15 minutes for each patient encounter and will meet 11 or 12 SPs. During each encounter, you must:

- Establish rapport with the standardized patient.
- Obtain a pertinent patient history.
- Perform a focused physical examination.
- Demonstrate a satisfactory level of communication and interpersonal skills, as well as spoken English language skills.
- Document findings and diagnostic impressions.