

<b>Policy 3.1.10</b>
UAMS COM Undergraduate Medical Education
<b>Section</b>
Student Progression, Promotion, and Graduation
<b>Title</b>
<b>USMLE STEP 1 POLICY</b>
<b>LCME Element(s)</b>
N/A
<b>Approved By</b>
UAMS COM Curriculum Committee
<b>Version History</b>
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Medical students in the College of Medicine, including combined degree students, are required to take the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 examination for the first time before the first day of orientation for the M3 year (specifically the junior year orientation that occurs a few weeks following the end of the sophomore year). Only those students who must remediate a failed M2 course or those who otherwise qualify for clerkship postponement (see below) may take step 1 for the first time after junior orientation. A passing composite score, as set by the National Board of Medical Examiners, is required before final promotion into the junior year. All students, including MD/Ph.D. students and other students seeking combined degrees, must pass the USMLE Step 1 examination within three tries and by 12 months following the successful completion of their sophomore year. Students who fail the Step 1 examination on the first try must take the examination for the second time by November 30th of the same year. Students failing to take the USMLE Step 1 examination for the first time before the first day of M3 orientation without an approved extension (see clerkship postponement below), students failing the USMLE Step 1 examination three times, students who initially fail and do not take the exam for their 2nd time by November 30, and students not passing the USMLE Step 1 examination by 12 months following the completion of their sophomore year will be dismissed from the College of Medicine for failure to maintain academic standards. The passing composite score shall be the score set as the national passing composite score by the National Board of Medical Examiners.

In order to maximize the chances of passing step 1, students should aim to achieve a step 1 equivalent score on an NBME self-assessment examination or a CBSE examination of 65% or higher before they take step 1. Achievement of an NBME self-assessment or CBSE examination with a step 1 equivalent score of 65% or higher is also a requirement to pass the independent step 1 study course. If a student has not achieved a self-assessment score of 65% or higher 10 days prior to junior orientation, then they must communicate with the Executive Associate Dean or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and if approved by the Executive Associate Dean or Associate Dean for Student Affairs, may postpone their first clerkship and have additional time to study. Those students who postpone their clerkships are required to see the academic coach in the Student Success Center and develop an individualized learning plan. If they do not achieve a self-assessment score of 65% or higher after the first postponement, they may postpone

additional junior clerkship up to a maximum of 16 weeks if approved by the Executive Associate Dean or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If after 16 weeks of junior year postponement a student has still not achieved a self-assessment score of 65% or higher, they may be approved to take a leave of absence for the rest of that academic year to study and take step 1. This leave of absence does not replace the requirement that they must pass step 1 by 12 months after the completion of the M2 year. If a student takes a leave of absence during this clerkship postponement period, they still must take and pass step 1 within three tries and by one year following the end of the M2 year.

There are only two groups of students who may postpone the first take of step 1 and take it after junior orientation:

- those who fail an M2 year course and are required to remediate that course
- those who fail to achieve a self-assessment score of 65% or higher under the provisions listed above

Therefore, students who want to postpone their first M3 clerkship and take step 1 after the first day of junior orientation must do all of the following:

- Apply for the postponement in writing to the Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs who will make the final decision on postponement
- Sign a statement that they understand that that such a gap may result in extending their matriculation in the College for an additional year. Typically missing more than 12 weeks in the junior year results in the need for an additional year to complete the M.D. degree.
- Discuss the effect of postponement on financial aid with personnel of the Student Financial Services office
- Meet with the learning specialist in the Student Success Center to prepare a study plan for the extended dedicated study time that is approved by either the Executive Associate Dean or Associate Dean

#### Retaking Step 1 for those who initially fail

Students who fail the USMLE Step 1 examination on the initial attempt may finish the clerkship they have started if they wish to do so, but then may not take additional M3 clerkships until a passing step 1 score is received. Students on the NW campus will not finish the semester but will work with the NW campus Associate Dean to identify an appropriate time to drop out of M3 coursework. Students may remain enrolled in the M3 Practice of Medicine 3 course while preparing for the 2nd or 3rd step 1 exam, but may not take any other M3 clerkship/course, and may be placed on a leave of absence depending on the length and circumstances of the interruption. Time taken off during clerkships to study, or even an official Leave of Absence, does not stop the clock on the November 30 2nd attempt deadline or on the 12-month time limit to take and pass the Step 1 examination. Even if a student takes a Leave of Absence, they must still pass the USMLE Step 1 examination within three tries and by 12 months following the completion of their sophomore year. In general, if a student misses more than twelve weeks of

the junior year, he/she may not be able to graduate with his/her class. (Policy approved by the COM curriculum committee August 2019)