

<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
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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 the M3 Transition to Clerkships course. 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 during or after the Transition to Clerkships course. All students, including MD/PhD 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 the Transition to Clerkships course without an approved extension (see below), students failing the USMLE Step 1 examination three times, students who initially fail and do not take the exam for the second 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.

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. If a student has not achieved a self-assessment score of 65% or higher 10 days prior to the Transition to Clerkships course, then they must communicate with the Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If approved by either of these deans, the student may postpone their first clerkship and have additional time to study. Those students who postpone their clerkships are required to see a learning specialist 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 clerkships up to a maximum of 16 weeks if approved by the Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs 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 during or after the Transition to Clerkships course:

- 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 or take Step 1 during the Transition to Clerkships course 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 MD degree.
- Discuss the effect of postponement on financial aid with personnel of the Student Financial Services office.
- Meet with a 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 for Academic Affairs or Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
- Complete the scheduled Transition to Clerkships Course.

#### 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 they have re-taken the Step 1 exam. Students may remain enrolled in the M3 Practice of Medicine 3 course and must take the Transition to Clerkships course while preparing for the 2nd or 3rd Step 1 exam. Time taken off during clerkships to study, or even an official Leave of Absence, does not stop the clock on the November 30th second 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 require a fifth year.