



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
"A Private University with a Public Mission"

United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) STEP 1 & STEP 2 POLICY

POLICY: 320.10

Supersedes: Policy 320.10 version 01/07/2025
(Class of 2028 and 2029)

Issuing Officer: Dean, College of Medicine

Responsible Office: Office of Medical Education

Effective EPCC Date: 09/16/2025

Effective University Date: 10/10/2025

Review Date: 09/16/28

I. PURPOSE:

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established standards regarding the requirement of medical schools to collect and uses a variety of outcome data, including national norms of accomplishment, to demonstrate the extent to which medical students are achieving medical education program objectives and to enhance medical education program quality. (LCME Element 8.4)

II. POLICY STATEMENT:

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU) College of Medicine (COM) Doctor of Medicine (MD) Program prepares students to take USMLE Step 1 before entering the core clerkship year. The Phase 1 curriculum covers and integrates the foundational, clinical, and health system science content needed for students to confidently advance to their core clerkships (Phase 2). Some designated study and preparatory time is allotted between the end of Phase 1 examinations and the beginning of the clerkship year so that students may consolidate their knowledge and take the Step 1 exam prior to the clerkship year.

The COM is committed to ensuring students are fully prepared to sit for the exam by the beginning of the clerkship year, and any students who have concerns regarding this are encouraged to reach out to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (SADME), Senior Director of Learning Skills, or Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions for COM to discuss any issues they may be facing in their preparation. In addition, all students will receive counseling and approval when to take the

USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK). Students are expected to take Step 1 before starting clerkships in their 2nd year (by May 1) and Step 2 CK before starting the fourth year (by July 1). Any exception to this requires prior approval from the SADME.

III. POLICY:

USMLE Step 1

- All students must take the USMLE Step 1 before starting clerkships in their 3rd year (by May 1), the date published annually on the CDU Academic Calendar.
- All students will receive counseling on when to take the USMLE Step 1. Those deemed prepared will be advised to take the exam before the start of the core clerkship year.
- Students with concerns about their readiness to take the exam by the published date or who have other reasons for requesting not to take Step 1 before clerkships must reach out to the SADME for individualized counsel and assistance. However, the Medical Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (MSEP) must approve any change to the clerkship start date for a student. Diagnostic testing is used to help determine readiness for the exam and/or starting clerkships.
- Because there is a delay between taking the Step 1 exam and scores being reported, some students will begin clerkships while awaiting the receipt of their score.
- The Senior Director of Learning Skills monitors student academic progress and will keep track of delays and performance on Step 1, in clerkships, and on Step 2.
- If while in a clerkship the student learns that they did not pass the exam, the student will be required to meet with SADME and Senior Director of Learning Skills for individualized counsel and assistance regarding their options:
 - Students may complete their current clerkship if on a four or six -week rotation and after will have to take time off from clerkships to take and pass the USMLE Step 1 exam.
 - They may continue in their current clerkship until there is a break in the rotation (site change or switching from ambulatory to inpatient or vice versa) and then take time off from clerkships to study, take and pass the USMLE Step 1 exam. The student will receive a grade of incomplete on and complete the clerkship later.
 - They may step out of the current clerkship immediately without completing it to study and pass USMLE Step 1. If the student has completed more than half of their clerkship, they will receive a grade of incomplete and complete the clerkship later. If the student has completed less than half the clerkship time, they will receive a grade of incomplete and be required to retake the entire clerkship later.
- A decision about completing the clerkship and/or returning to a clerkship after stepping out to take Step 1 will be at the discretion of the SADME and clerkship director (pending clerkship availability) in consultation with the Medical Student Evaluations and Promotions (MSEP) Committee Chair.
- If the student is not continuing with clerkships, they will be placed in an independent study program. The independent study program maintains their status as an enrolled student while providing the time to thoroughly prepare to retake the USMLE Step 1 exam. The independent study program objectives and time period will be reviewed and approved by the MSEP.
- Students will remain in longitudinal courses until reviewed by the MSEP at which time a decision will be made about continued enrollment.
- All students who receive a failing score on their second attempt of Step 1 again will meet with the SADME for counsel and assistance in consultation with the MSEP Chair. Students will be pulled from current and future clerkships until the student receives a passing score.
- It must be recognized that prolonged delay or failure of the USMLE Step 1 exam may delay graduation.
- Failure to take and pass USMLE Step 1 by the end of the Intro to the Fourth-Year course,

students may not take sub-internships. If students have outstanding clerkship subject exams, they must take the USMLE Step 1 prior to taking the subject exams.

- Failure to pass the USMLE Step 1 by the third attempt, or by December 1 of the graduation year (excluding leaves of absence) will result in eligibility for dismissal from the College of Medicine. In order to receive scores by December 1, it is recommended that a student take the exam no later than the first week of November of the graduation year. The student will be reviewed by the MSEP. Please refer to Academic Status: Deficiencies, Remediation, Academic Warning, Probation, Dismissal, and Appeal Policy.

USMLE Step 2 CK

- Students must take the USMLE Step 2 CK to assess their medical knowledge and understanding of clinical science necessary for providing patient care.
- Students must take the USMLE Step 2 CK exam before starting the fourth year (by July 1). Any exception to this policy requires prior approval of SADME.
- Students who fail to pass Step 2 CK may be subject to withdrawal from the National Resident Matching Program.
- All student failures will be reviewed by the MSEP and individual recommendations will be made about retaking the exam.
- All students who receive a failing score will meet with the SADME regarding next steps and counseled regarding consequences of the failure.
- Failure to pass Step 2 CK by the third attempt, or by December 1 of their graduation year, will result in eligibility for dismissal from the College of Medicine. In order to receive scores by December 1, it is recommended that a student take a subsequent attempt at the exam no later than the first week of November of the graduation year. The student will be reviewed by the MSEP.

IV. APPLICABILITY:

The faculty, students, and staff of the CDU COM are responsible for knowing this policy and its procedures.

V. DEFINITIONS:

- **Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC)** is the committee charged to represent the faculty to oversee the medical education program as a whole and has responsibility for the overall design, management, integration, evaluation, and enhancement of a coherent and coordinated medical curriculum.
- **Medical Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (MSEP)** is a Dean's Committee that is responsible for the following: 1) reviewing the academic and professional progress of all students as they progress through the curriculum, 2) promoting students for advancement to the next level of training, 3) deciding on appropriate action for students earning one or more academic deficiency, and 4) final review and certification that each student has met all required outcome measures and standards of achievement for graduation.

VI. RELATED POLICIES:

- CDU COM Policy 320.3b Academic Status: Deficiencies, Remediation, Academic Warning, Probation, Dismissal, and Appeal Policy

- CDU COM Policy 320.3C Medical Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee Policy

VII. RELATED LINKS:

- LCME Standards, Publications, & Notification [Forms](#)

VIII. POLICY HISTORY:

Review Dates:	Change Description:
12/17/2024	New Policy. Reviewed by the Pre-clerkship Phase Subcommittee on 11/25/24, the Clerkship Phase Subcommittee on 11/20/24, and the MSEP on 12/2/24 Approved by the COM Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee on 12/17//24
01/07/2025	Updated to include: Students are expected to take Step 1 before starting clerkships in their 2nd year (by May 1) and Step 2 before starting the 4th year (by July 1). Approved by EPCC on 1/7/25.
03/28/2025	Policy reviewed by CDU Policy Committee
09/16/2025	Revised and updated Step 1 expectations in relation to clerkships. Approved by EPCC on 09/16/2025.
10/10/2025	Policy reviewed by CDU Policy Committee with no conflict to university policies.