United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE)

—This information applies to Legacy Curriculum students.—

Students who matriculated prior to 2014 and who anticipate practicing clinical medicine are required to take the USMLE Step 1 and 2 examinations. Beginning with the class matriculating in 2014, all students are required to take the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 prior to graduation.

The USMLE is designed to “assess a physician’s ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centered skills, that are important in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care.”* The USMLE represents a single uniform examination for medical licensure in the United States, and, as such, is a minimum requirement for obtaining a medical license.

The USMLE consists of three separate examinations:

“Step 1 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 mastery of not only the sciences that provide a foundation for the safe and competent practice of medicine in the present, but also the scientific principles required for maintenance of competence through lifelong learning.” Step 1 is taken after completing the second year at Washington University School of Medicine.

“Step 2 assesses whether you can apply medical knowledge, skills, and understanding of clinical science essential for the provision of patient care under supervision and includes emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention. Step 2 ensures that due attention is devoted to principles of clinical sciences and basic patient-centered skills that provide the foundation for the safe and competent practice of medicine.” Step 2 exams are taken after completing the third year but prior to graduation from Washington University School of Medicine.

“Step 3 assesses whether you can apply medical knowledge and understanding of biomedical and clinical science essential for the unsupervised practice of medicine, with emphasis on patient management in ambulatory settings. Step 3 provides a final assessment of physicians assuming independent responsibility for delivering general medical care.” Step 3 is taken following graduation and during internship/residency training.

Further information can be obtained from the USMLE Bulletin of Information (https://www.usmle.org/bulletin/) published by the National Board of Medical Examiners. This is available, along with application forms and additional information, on the USMLE website (http://www.usmle.org/).

* The quoted material throughout this section is from the USMLE website (https://www.usmle.org/).