



**QUILLEN**  
**COLLEGE of MEDICINE**  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Name: **USMLE Policy**

Policy Replaces a Previous Policy [Yes/No] (*this includes change in policy name*): **No**  
If so, list name of previous policy (*include policy number if different*):

Policy Number: **SPROMO-0519-003**

Originator Name and/or Committee (*if a committee, include name of chair*): **Student Promotions Committee**

Committees, Departments, or Individuals Responsible for Implementation: **Beth Anne Fox, MD, MPH / Vice Dean for Academic Affairs (effective January 2022)**

Original Approval Date and Who Approved by: **1/19/2011 / Kenneth Olive, MD / EAD**

Revision Date(s) (*include a brief description*) and Who Approved by:

**Revision applicable with the Class of 2023;**

**July 2022 – added headings and language to paragraphs for clarification**

**12/7/22 – language added requiring all students to take the Comprehensive Basic Science Exam prior to beginning the USMLE Study Skills course in the second year, language added to submit a passing Step 1 score to return from a leave of absence, and language added that students are expected to take Step 2 CK no later than eight months prior to their graduation date.**

**9/14/23 – added language regarding amending financial aid package for step prep course if mandated, added language requiring USMLE Step 1 exam taken at least once prior to the end of fourth six-week period / third eight-week period of the first clinical year in order to continue enrollment – Policy Advisory Committee**

**10/18/23 – approval of added language as noted above – Student Promotions Committee**

Effective Date(s): **1/19/2011; 4/15/2021; August 2022; 12/7/2022; 10/18/2023**

Revision(s) (*briefly describe*) by Administrative Staff and Date (*these revisions do not require voting/approval by a committee and/or individual*):

**4/15/2021 – language removed regarding completion of Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS)**

**11/8/2021 – administrative revision of changing EAD to Vice Dean for Academic Affairs**

**2/15/2023 – added Leave of Absence language under the Step 2 Exam heading**

Exemption(s) to Policy (*date, by what committee or individual, and brief description*):

LCME Required Policy [Yes/No]: **No**

LCME Element(s) Affiliated with Policy (*include Element number/name/statement*):

***All policies will be reviewed every three years unless an earlier review is identified.***

**(A.) Policy Statement:**

“The United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) is a three-step examination for medical licensure in the United States and is sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the

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National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME®).”

The USMLE step exams assesses a medical student'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.

- 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 2 CK 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 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 is usually taken during residency.

Definition: \* For the purpose of this policy the fall semester consists of periods 1-4 of the six-week clerkships and periods 1-3 of the eight-week clerkships as denoted on the M3 academic calendar.

Students are responsible for being aware of USMLE reporting periods to ensure a score is returned prior to defined dates.

Students are responsible for the timely application and payment of all fees and expenses related to the examinations. Information and application forms are available online at <http://www.usmle.org>.

### (B.) Purpose of Policy:

As a requirement for graduation, all Quillen College of Medicine students must pass Step 1 and USMLE Step 2, Clinical Knowledge (CK).

### (C.) Scope of Policy (*applies to*):

All Quillen College of Medicine students.

### (D.) Policy Activities:

All students are expected to take the USMLE Step 1 exam prior to the start of the required M3 Transition to Clerkship course during the first clinical year.

All students will be required to take the Comprehensive Basic Science Exam prior to beginning the USMLE Study Skills Course in the second year of the pre-clerkship phase as part of the preparation and study planning for the USMLE Step 1 exam.

#### Special Studies:

However, based on a detailed review of prior academic performance by the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, some students may be identified as eligible to delay taking the exam, preceded by one period of Special Studies for additional preparation time during Period 1. These students will be enrolled in Special Studies in lieu of their scheduled Period 1 clerkship. Eligible students must submit a written request for the delayed start of clerkships to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs for approval. Students approved for the delay and enrollment in Special Studies are expected to take the Step 1 exam by the end of Period 1 and proceed to their scheduled Period 2 clerkship. Those who do not take the exam by the end of Period 1 will proceed to their scheduled Period 2 clerkship or take a leave of absence.

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The Student Success Committee, in consultation with Academic Support Service, may mandate a student to take an external step preparation course if they receive a failure or cannot make progress toward taking the step examination. The Financial Aid Office can amend the student's financial aid package to accommodate the reasonable costs, to include travel and the cost of the course.

### Leave of Absence:

Students may request a leave of absence if they remain unprepared to take the Step 1 exam by the end of Special Studies Period 1. Students requesting a leave of absence are to: 1) provide the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs with a study plan outline and 2) present the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs with periodic reports of Comprehensive Basic Science Exam Self Assessments results indicating the student's progress toward preparedness to sit for the exam.

All students, including those on leave of absence for purposes other than a medical leave of absence, must take the USMLE Step 1 exam at least once prior to the end of fourth 6-week period / third 8-week period of the first clinical year (as denoted on the M3 academic calendar), depending on their clerkship schedule, in order to continue enrollment. Those students not meeting this requirement will be dismissed or permitted to withdraw from the Quillen College of Medicine.

Students granted a leave of absence are required to: 1) submit a passing Step 1 score to return from the leave of absence and 2) complete the MD degree by the sixth graduation date following their date of matriculation.

### Repeating Step 1:

Students who take the exam prior to Period 1 and do not receive a passing score may be scheduled for one period of Special Studies to prepare for retaking the exam. Students are limited to one period of Special Studies before the end of fourth 6-week period / third 8-week period (as denoted on the M3 academic calendar), depending on their clerkship schedule. One additional period of enrollment in Special Studies during the remainder of the academic year is permitted; however, these two periods of Special Studies may not be taken consecutively. Students receiving Veterans Administration or Military Educational Benefits may require alternate scheduling based on the stipulations of their financial aid agreements.

Any student not receiving a passing score by the end of the last regularly scheduled clinical clerkship period as denoted on the M3 academic calendar of the spring semester of their first clinical year (the academic year in which the student was enrolled in at least one clinical clerkship) will be dismissed or permitted to withdraw from the Quillen College of Medicine. A maximum of three attempts to pass the Step 1 exam are permitted. Any student not receiving a passing score after their third attempt will be dismissed or permitted to withdraw from the Quillen College of Medicine.

### Potential Consequences of Delaying Step Exams:

- Being placed on a leave of absence;
- Being ineligible to receive financial aid;
- Delayed beginning of final year. All required third-year clerkships must be completed before beginning clinical requirements of the fourth year;
- Delayed Graduation date;
- Dismissal for not being able to complete the MD degree by the sixth graduation date following their date of matriculation, including any leaves of absence.

### Step 2 Exam:

Students are strongly encouraged to take Step 2 CK prior to beginning of or very early in their final clinical year. Students are expected to take Step 2 CK no later than eight months prior to their graduation date. Students participating in the NRMP who have not received a passing score on Step 2 CK before the NRMP rank order deadline of their final clinical year will be subject to withdrawal from the NRMP. A maximum of three attempts to pass the Step 2 CK exam are permitted. Any student not receiving a passing score after their third attempt for the exam will be dismissed or permitted to withdraw from the Quillen College of Medicine.

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The Student Success Committee and/or the Student Promotions Committee, in consultation with Academic Support Service, may mandate a student to take an external step preparation course if they receive a failure or cannot make progress toward taking the step examination. The Financial Aid Office can amend the student’s financial aid package to accommodate the reasonable costs, to include travel and the cost of the course.

Leave of Absence:

Students requesting a leave of absence after the M3 Clerkship year are to: 1) provide the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs with a study plan outline and 2) present the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs with periodic reports of Comprehensive Basic Science Exam Self Assessments results indicating the student's progress toward preparedness to sit for the exam.

Students granted a leave of absence are required to: 1) submit a passing Step 2 score to return from the leave of absence and 2) complete the MD degree by the sixth graduation date following their date of matriculation.

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) determines the passing score for Step 2 CK and sets rules for eligibility for the exam. This body also sets all policy regarding repeats of any step of the exam and the frequency of any repeats. Both passing scores and rules regarding repeats change occasionally and all students should be familiar with the current policy. This information is available through the USMLE website at [www.usmle.org](http://www.usmle.org)

Policy Review and/or Revision Completed By <i>(if applicable)</i>	Date Policy Reviewed and Approved <i>(if applies to that department, committee, or group)</i>
University Compliance	
Policy Advisory Committee	8/11/2022; 9/14/2023
Associate Dean for Accreditation Compliance	7/15/2022
Vice Dean for Academic Affairs	12/7/22; 9/14/2023
Office of the Dean	
Academic Affairs <i>(this includes the three-year reviews by administrative staff)</i>	6/11/2019; Feb 2020; 4/15/2021; 11/8/2021; 12/7/2022; 2/15/2023; 10/4/2023; 10/24/2023
Student Affairs	
Medical Student Education Committee	
Student Promotions Committee	1/19/2011; Jan 2020; Jan 2021, August 2022, December 2022; 10/18/2023
Faculty Advisory Council	
Administrative Council	
M1/M2 Course Directors	
M3/M4 Clerkship/Course Directors	2/18/2020

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	Student Groups/Organizations ( <i>describe</i> ):	
	Other ( <i>describe</i> ):	

<b>Notifications of New or Revised Policy (<i>if applicable</i>)</b>		<b>Date of Email Notifications</b>
	Posted to Website Under Educational Policies	10/24/2023
	Medical Students	August 2022; 12/14/2022
	Admissions Office for Catalog	Feb 2020; 10/24/2023