Background (this information goes in handbook but is not part of policy)

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

The USMLE assesses 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.”

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 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.

Policy (this will be the formal policy)

All students are required to take USMLE Step 1 before the beginning of the third year curriculum. As a requirement for graduation, students must pass Step 1 and both components of USMLE Step 2, Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Clinical Skills (CS).

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

Students are required to prepare for and complete the Step 1 exam prior to the beginning of the required Transitions to Clerkship course at the beginning of the junior year.

However, based on a detailed review of prior academic performance by the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs (EAD), some students may be identified as eligible to delay taking the exam, preceded by a period of special studies preparation time. Eligible students must submit a written request for the delay, accompanied by a study plan outline to the EAD for review and approval. Students approved for the delay will be required to submit periodic progress reports to the EAD. These students are expected to take Step 1 by the end of Period 1 of their junior year.

In the event any student fails USMLE Step 1 on their first attempt, the following principles will guide modifying the student’s schedule to prepare for a successful retake of the exam and to complete at least two clerkship periods by the end of the fall semester.

a. Students already in a clerkship when they receive a failing score will generally be expected to complete the current clerkship before taking the next clerkship period off as special studies preparation time to prepare to retake the exam by the end of that clerkship period. No more
than two clerkship periods in the fall semester may be permitted for special studies. These periods of special studies cannot to be taken consecutively.

b. For periods of special study students must submit a written study plan to the EAD for review and approval. Students will submit periodic progress reports.

c. Students without a passing score by the beginning of Period 5 may elect to continue with up to two additional periods of special studies or begin a Leave of Absence until a passing score is achieved. Once a passing score is achieved students may resume their third year curriculum with the next clerkship period.

d. In accordance with USMLE policy, students may repeat USMLE Step 1 no more than four times in a 12-month period.

e. All required third year clerkships must be completed before beginning clinical requirements of the fourth year.

Students are strongly encouraged to take both components of Step 2 prior to beginning of or very early in their fourth year. Should a student not achieve a passing score on Step 2 CK, USMLE policy states it may be taken no more than four times within a 12-month period. If a failing score is received on Step 2 CS, USMLE policy states it may be taken no more than three times within a 12-month period. Both components of Step 2 must be passed before a student can graduate.