Article 14 Policy for Completion of USMLE Step 1, Step 2-Clinical Knowledge, and Step 2-Clinical Skills Examinations

Section 14.01 Policy Summary

(1) Information about the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), including eligibility requirements, applications and scheduling, testing, formats, and scoring, is available on-line in the USMLE Bulletin (http://www.usmle.org/bulletin/). Additional information is available on the USMLE website (http://www.usmle.org/) and by calling (215) 590-9700.

(2) In order to ensure a level of mastery of basic science which is adequate for clinical training and to ensure sufficient mastery of clinical science to support successful performance in internship, the following requirements apply to all medical students at the UNC School of Medicine (SOM):

(a) Students must take Step 1 prior to starting their third year/Application Phase unless the Associate Dean for Student Affairs has approved a later date due to an extraordinary circumstance.

(b) Students must have a passing score posted for Step 1 before November 1 of the Application Phase.

(c) Students participating in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) must have a passing score posted for Step 2-Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Step 2-Clinical Skills (CS) on or before November 1 of their fourth year/Individualization Phase or they will be subject to withdrawal from the NRMP.

(d) Students not participating in the NRMP must have a passing score posted for Step 2-CK and Step 2-CS on or before the two Wednesdays preceding graduation.

(e) Prior to setting exam dates, students are advised to check the USMLE Bulletin (www.usmle.org) and Score Reporting Schedule - Step 2-CS (http://www.usmle.org/step-2-cs#reporting) to ensure compliance with SOM deadlines. The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) posts Step 1 and Step 2-CK scores on average 4-6 weeks after one’s examination date and releases Step 2-CS scores in batches 6-7 times a year resulting in scores posted 5-13 weeks after one’s test date.

(f) All USMLE Step exam failures will be reviewed by the Student Promotions Committee (See Article 8).

(g) Students with a history of academic difficulty in the SOM who fail Step 1, Step 2-CK or Step 2-CS are subject to dismissal by the SPC.

(h) Students who fail Step 1, Step 2-CK or Step 2-CS three times will be dismissed by the SPC absent a finding of exigent circumstances.
14.01(1)(b) USMLE Step 1 Exam

When To Take the Exam:

Students must take Step 1 in February following the completion of the Foundation Phase and prior to starting their first rotation of the Application Phase. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs or his/her designee may allow students to delay Step 1 due to extraordinary circumstances. Students seeking a delay should plan to meet with their advisor, the Educational Resources Coordinator, the Clinical Academic Resources Director and/or the Associate Dean to develop a study plan that would include assessment through practice tests of their preparedness to take the exam and could include participating in a commercial review course.

Consequences of a Delay in Passing the Exam:

Students who do not have a passing Step 1 score posted on or before December 31 of their third year or on or before November 1 of the Application Phase will not be allowed to enroll in additional clinical courses or clerkships until a passing score for Step 1 has been posted. Their scheduled clerkships and clinical courses will be dropped from their schedules, which may delay graduation.

Assistance Available for Students Who Fail the Exam:

Students who fail Step 1 will continue with their current rotation, then delay their subsequent rotation to create time to study for and retake Step 1. Students who have no prior history of academic difficulty in the SOM will meet with the Educational Resources Coordinator and their advisor to design an individualized review plan. Students who fail Step 1 and have a history of academic difficulty will meet with the Educational Resources Coordinator, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or their advisor to design an individualized review plan. Students will be encouraged to access resources and to consider measures including but not limited to:

- A specially-designed basic science review elective
- Referral for evaluation of a possible mental, physical, or cognitive concern or condition, where appropriate
- A commercial review course
- An approved leave of absence for a maximum of two years

Consequences of Failures:

- Delayed graduation
- A leave of absence
- Additional clinical electives
- A specially designed clinical science review
- Referral for evaluation of a possible mental, physical, or cognitive concern or condition
- A commercial review course
• Dismissal from the SOM
• Other recommendations as deemed appropriate

Failure of Step 1 may delay graduation. Students with a history of academic difficulty in medical school who fail Step 1 twice are subject to dismissal by the SPC. Students who fail Step 1 three times will be dismissed by the SPC absent a finding of exigent circumstances.

14.01(1)(c) USMLE Step 2 - Clinical Knowledge Exam

When to Take the Exam:

Students are encouraged to take Step 2-CK following the completion of the third year/Application Phase, usually in April or possibly May. Students participating in the NRMP must have a passing Step 2-CK score posted on or before November 1 of their fourth year/Individualization Phase. Students not participating in the NRMP must have a passing Step 2-CK score posted by two Wednesdays preceding graduation. Students who take a leave of absence after completing all or most of their third year/Application Phase are encouraged to take Step 2-CK within two months after leaving the clinical curriculum. Students who fail Step 2-CK will be encouraged to work with the Educational Resources Coordinator, their advisor, and/or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to design a review program for Step 2-CK preparation. This plan would include assessment through practice tests of their preparedness to take the exam and could include participating in a commercial review course.

Consequences of a Delay in Passing the Exam:

Students participating in the NRMP who have not passed Step 2-CK on or before November 1 of their fourth year/Individualization Phase will be subject to withdrawal from the NRMP, and it may be necessary to delay graduation. Students not participating in the NRMP who do not have a passing Step 2-CK score posted by two Wednesdays preceding graduation are ineligible for graduation.

Assistance Available for Students Who Fail the Exam:

Students who fail Step 2-CK must meet with the Educational Resources Coordinator, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or their advisor to design an individualized review plan. Students will be encouraged to access resources or to consider measures including but not limited to:

• A specially designed clinical knowledge review plan
- Referral for evaluation of a possible mental, physical, or cognitive concern or condition, where appropriate
- A commercial review course
- An approved leave of absence for a maximum of two years

**Consequences of Failures:**

Failure may result in one or more of the following recommendations:

- Delayed graduation
- A leave of absence
- Additional clinical electives
- A specially designed clinical science review
- Referral for evaluation of a possible mental, physical, or cognitive concern or condition
- A commercial review course
- Dismissal from the SOM
- Other recommendations as deemed appropriate

Students with a history of academic difficulty in medical school who fail Step 2-CK a second time are subject to dismissal by the SPC. Students who fail Step 2-CK three times will be dismissed absent a finding of exigent circumstances.

**14.01(1)(c) Step 2 Clinical Skills Exam**

**When To Take the Exam**

The NBME releases Step 2-CS scores during 6-7 reporting periods throughout the year resulting in scores being posted 5-13 weeks after one’s test date. Students participating in the NRMP should take Step 2-CS early enough to have passed Step 2-CS on or before November 1st of the fourth year/Individualization Phase or they will be subject to withdrawal from the NRMP. Students not participating in the NRMP must have a passing Step 2-CS score posted two Wednesdays preceding graduation.

**Consequences of a Delay in Passing the Exam**

Students who do not have a passing Step 2-CS score posted by the last day to certify Rank Order Lists for the NRMP will be subject to withdrawal from the NRMP. Students not participating in the NRMP who do not have a passing Step 2-CS score posted by two Wednesdays preceding graduation are ineligible for graduation.
**Assistance Available for Students Who Fail the Exam:**

Students who fail Step 2-CS will meet with the Clinical Academic Resources Director, advisor, and/or Associate Dean for Student Affairs to design an individualized review plan. Students will be encouraged to access resources and to consider measures including but not limited to:

- A specially designed clinical skills review plan
- Referral for evaluation of a possible mental, physical, or cognitive concern or condition, where appropriate
- A commercial review course
- An approved leave of absence for a maximum of two years

**Consequences of Failures**

Failure may result in one or more of the following recommendations:

- Delayed graduation
- A leave of absence
- Additional clinical electives
- A specially designed clinical science review
- Referral for evaluation of a possible mental, physical, or cognitive concern or condition
- A commercial review course
- Dismissal from the SOM
- Other recommendations as deemed appropriate

Students with a history of academic difficulty in medical school who fail Step 2-CS a second time are subject to dismissal by the SPC. Students who fail Step 2-CS three times will be dismissed absent a finding of exigent circumstances.

**History of this policy:**
September 26, 1996 – Curriculum Policy Committee approved the institution
September 11, 1997 – Reviewed by the Curriculum Management Committee
October 6, 1997 – Reviewed by the Third- and Fourth-Year Course Directors
October 10, 1997 – Reviewed by the Curriculum Policy Committee
November 6, 1997- Reviewed by the First- and Second-Year Course Directors
February 11, 1998 – Reviewed by the Student Advisory Committee
April 9, 1998 – Policy approved by the Curriculum Policy Committee
April 2000 - Policy revised by the Curriculum Management Committee
December 17, 2012 – Policy revised by the Education Committee
June 9, 2014 – Policy revised by the Education Committee
June 15, 2015 – Policy revised by the Education Committee
July 20, 2015 – Policy approved by Education Committee