

**POLICY NUMBER: DCOM 550.1**

**POLICY TITLE: USMLE Step Testing Policy**

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**I. PURPOSE**

To establish a policy describing the Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine (LMU- DCOM) requirements and recommendations regarding students taking United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step examinations.

**II. POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of LMU-DCOM to establish requirements and recommendations for students who desire to take USMLE Step examinations. LMU-DCOM does not require any student to take or pass any of the USMLE Step examinations. In accordance with the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) Standard 11.4a, LMU-DCOM students must pass COMLEX-USA Level 1, COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE and clinical skills workshop (CSW; alternative to COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE) prior to graduation from LMU-DCOM.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**USMLE** - United States Medical Licensing Examination.

**USMLE Step 1** - An examination designed to, “assess the examinee’s understanding of and ability to apply important concepts of the basic sciences to the practice of medicine, with special emphasis on principles and mechanisms underlying health, disease and modes of therapy” (<https://www.usmle.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/2024bulletin.pdf.pdf>).

**USMLE Step 2 CK** - An examination designed to, “assess the examinee’s ability to apply medical knowledge, skills and understanding of clinical science essential for the provision of patient care under supervision, with an emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention” (<https://www.usmle.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/2024bulletin.pdf.pdf>).

**COMLEX-USA**– Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensure Examination – United States of America.

**COMLEX-USA Level 1** - “a problem- and symptom-based assessment, administered in a time-measured environment that integrates the foundational biomedical sciences with other areas of medical knowledge relevant to solving clinical problems and promoting and maintaining health during the provision of osteopathic medical care to patients” (<https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/comlex-usa-level-1/>).

**COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE** – “administered in a time-measured environment that integrates the foundational biomedical sciences with other areas of medical knowledge relevant to solving clinical problems and promoting and maintaining health during the

provision of osteopathic medical care to patients”

(<https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/comlex-usa-level-2-ce/>).

**COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE:** “The COMLEX-USA Level 2-Performance Evaluation (Level 2-PE) is a patient-presentation-based assessment of fundamental clinical skills evaluated through 12 encounters with standardized patients. Candidates assess problem-centered patient presentations. Each candidate must personally perform the clinical skills with standardized patients as appropriate in a timely, efficient, safe, and effective manner. The examination augments the Level 2-Cognitive Evaluation (CE) through an assessment of six fundamental clinical skills for osteopathic medical practice within two scored examination domains: the Humanistic Domain and the Biomedical/Biomechanical Domain”.

**The COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE has been postponed indefinitely.**

(<https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/comlex-usa-level-2-pe/>).

**Clinical Skills Workshop (CSW)** – In lieu of the COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE, a multi-day activity consisting of a variety of didactic and standardized patient encounters providing ongoing feedback to improve clinical reasoning and the student doctor/patient interaction. All OMS-IIIs are required to successfully complete a CSW to be cleared for graduation.

**Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)** - The Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment is a practice test designed by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) for students planning to take the USMLE Step 1. It features multiple-choice questions on content typically covered during basic science medical education courses.

**Comprehensive Clinical Science Self-Assessment (CBSSA)** - The Comprehensive Clinical Science Self-Assessment is a practice test designed by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) for students planning to take the USMLE Step 2 CK. It features multiple-choice questions on content typically covered during the core clinical clerkships.

#### **IV. AUDIENCE**

This policy applies to all stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, administration, and community members) interested in learning about LMU-DCOM requirements and recommendations for students interested in taking USMLE Step examinations.

#### **V. COMPLIANCE**

##### **COCA Standard 11.4a:**

“Prior to graduation, all students must demonstrate osteopathic medical knowledge and osteopathic clinical skills by passing the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination of the United States (COMLEX-USA) undergraduate examinations (Level 1 and Level 2) and meeting a national standard for osteopathic clinical skills competency.”

## VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**LMU-DCOM Office of the Dean:** To monitor student pass rates on those students who take a USMLE Step examination.

**Responsible Office:** DCOM Office of the Dean; Assessment Department

**Responsible University Officer:** Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Assistant/ Associate Dean(s) of Preclinical Academic Affairs/Basic Medical Science, Assistant/ Associate Dean(s) of Curricular Innovation, Assistant/ Associate Dean(s) of Clinical Affairs; Assistant/ Associate Dean(s) of Clinical Medicine

**Policy Oversight Committee:** LMU-DCOM Policy Process Committee

## VII. STANDARDS

N/A

## VIII. PROCEDURE

LMU-DCOM does not require any student to take or pass any of the USMLE Step examinations. As per LMU-DCOM Policy 6.12 COMLEX-USA, all LMU-DCOM medical students are required to take and pass COMLEX-USA Level 1, COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE and clinical skills workshop (CSW; alternative to COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE) prior to graduation from LMU-DCOM.

### **Students considering taking a USMLE Step examination:**

- Students must consult with the applicable Assistant/ Associate Dean **prior to** registering for a USMLE Step examination:
  - **USMLE Step 1:** Assistant/ Associate Dean of Basic Medical Sciences (or designee) at the student's respective campus location.
  - **USMLE Step 2 CK:** Assistant/ Associate Dean of Clinical Medicine (or designee) of the student's respective campus location.
- Students should weigh the impact of a potential USMLE Step exam failure on their residency applications and seek guidance from LMU-DCOM Career Services.
- Students must review the most current information on the USMLE.org website and be aware of their personal financial obligations related to applying to take a USMLE Step examination.
- The applicable Assistant/ Associate Dean will present students contemplating taking a USMLE Step exam to the Board Review Committee.
- Students **must obtain approval** from the Board Review Committee or COMLEX Success Task Force **prior to** USMLE Step testing.
  - Students must first be approved to sit for the requisite COMLEX exam.
- The Board Review Committee or COMLEX Success Task Force will utilize data about a given student to determine approval for USMLE Step testing.
  - Such data includes but is not limited to the student's GPA, Basic Medical Science weighted average grade Quartile, and student performance on practice assessments (e.g., NBME CBSSA, NBME CCSSA).
  - Students must share the results of all their practice assessments (e.g., NBME CBSSA, NBME CCSSA), with the Board Review Committee or COMLEX

Success Task Force to be used as part of the process to determine approval of USMLE Step testing.

- The Board Review Committee or COMLEX Success Task Force will utilize the following thresholds for student performance on two or more NBME practice assessments (i.e., NBME CBSSA, NBME CCSSA) as follows:
  - **For USMLE Step 1:** Approval for testing will be assessed based upon factors including the NBME Self-Assessment “Examinee Performance Report” for the respective self-assessment exam:
    - **Not approved for testing:** student’s “likely score range” is within the low-pass range.
    - **May be considered for testing following a holistic review of the student’s situation:** student’s “likely score range” is partly within and partly above the low-pass range on two or more self-assessment exams.
    - **Approved for testing:** the student’s “likely score range” is completely above the low-pass range.
  - **For USMLE Step 2 CK:** The 3-digit score threshold needed to achieve on the NBME practice assessment will be set annually by the Board Review Committee or COMLEX Success Task Force
- Students not following the procedure described in this policy to obtain approval by the Board Review Committee or COMLEX Success Task Force prior to taking a USMLE Step exam will be considered to have a professionalism infraction and will be referred to the Community Standards Committee for review.

## IX. CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information regarding this policy, please contact the Assistant/Associate Dean(s) of Basic Medical Sciences at LMU-DCOM, 423-338-5721.

## X. DOCUMENT HISTORY

### Version S24.1

Approved by LMU-DCOM Policy Process Committee:	05/30/24
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### Version S24.2

(LMU-DCOM Dean’s Council Revision)

Approved by LMU-DCOM Dean’s Council:	06/05/24
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Approved by LMU Office of General Counsel:	06/21/24
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## XI. FORMS

LMU-DCOM Student Handbook

<https://www.lmunet.edu/debusk-college-of-osteopathic-medicine/documents/DCOMStudentHandbook.pdf>

LMU-DCOM Student Outcomes webpage

<https://www.lmunet.edu/debusk-college-of-osteopathic-medicine/do/student-outcomes>