



GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE POLICY No. 07

A. SUBJECT: United States Medical Licensing Examination

B. EFFECTIVE DATE: February 17, 2021 (R)

C. POLICY:

This policy outlines minimum standards regarding licensing examinations to ensure Graduate Medical Education (GME) trainees' qualification for matriculation into a GME training program, promotion to advanced levels of training, and achieving board eligibility. This policy applies to all physician residents and fellows (Trainees) in the GME programs sponsored by the University of Virginia Medical Center.

1. Prior to matriculation into a GME program

Trainees must successfully pass Step 1 and Step 2 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) or the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) by contract start date in order to enroll in a GME program at the University of Virginia Medical Center. Exceptions must be approved by the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) in advance.

Fellows entering a GME training program must successfully pass USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 (or its equivalent) prior to entering their fellowship program. Exceptions must be approved by the GMEC in advance.

2. Following entry into a GME program

All Trainees who are currently enrolled in a GME training program must take and pass Step 3 of the USMLE or COMLEX by March 1st of their PGY-2 year. Failure to pass USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 by March of the PGY-2 year may result in non-renewal of their appointment.

Trainees should register for the USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 examination (or its equivalent) no later than November 1st of their PGY-2 year to allow for scheduling, grading, and notification of results by March 1.

In extreme emergent situations that affect GME Trainee education or the clinical learning environment in the sponsoring institution or region for an extended period of time, GMEC may extend the aforementioned deadline for USMLE Step 3 score reporting.

Trainees who fail USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 (or its equivalent) after two attempts must be presented to the GMEC by the Program Director or Chair of the Department for discussion.

Trainees will not be expected to use vacation time to take the exam since it is a GME requirement; time spent taking the exam will be logged as duty hours.

Programs will be responsible for monitoring satisfactory completion of the USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 requirements for each of their Trainees. In compliance with the ACGME Institutional Requirements (IV.C. 1. a), programs must provide a Trainee who fails to meet the policy defined deadline with written notice of intent when that trainee's agreement will not be renewed, when that Trainee will not be promoted to the next level of training, or when that Trainee will be dismissed.

3. Provisions for exception

Trainees who take extended sick leave or leave of absence for personal reasons may be granted an extension at the discretion of the trainee's Program Director. The Program Director need not present this extension to the full GMEC but must inform the GME Office in advance. Once the trainee returns to full duty, a plan for completion of the USMLE must be instituted and communicated to the GME Office.

The trainee will be given six months to pass the examination from the date of GMEC approval of his/her exception. The Program Director or trainee must report back to the GME Office successful completion (or failure to complete) of this requirement.

Trainees who fail to schedule the USMLE Step III must be brought before the GMEC where a plan will be established.

4. International Medical Graduates

International medical graduate is defined as a physician who received their medical degree or qualification from a medical school located outside the United States. Citizens of the United States who have completed their medical education in schools outside the United States are considered international medical graduates; non-U.S. citizens who have graduated from medical schools in the United States are not considered international medical graduates.

The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), through its certification program, assesses whether international medical graduates have met minimum standards of eligibility to enter residency or fellowship programs in the United States accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). ECFMG Certification is a requirement for international medical graduates who wish to enter GME training programs. To be eligible for ECFMG Certification, a physician must pass the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2.

International medical graduates who received their medical training from a medical school accredited by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and successfully passed the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (MCCQE) Part I and II are

exempted from the USMLE requirements outlined in this policy. Specifically, MCCQE Part II is equivalent to the USMLE Step 3 in that it requires postgraduate training and measures equivalent areas of medical knowledge and skills assessed in the USMLE Step 3.

GMEC will consider exception requests for International medical graduates entering fellowship programs when the host Program Director has sufficient evidence to prove the trainee's competency including, but not limited to, the following conditions;

- Trainee has obtained board certification in a country other than the United States in the specialty area that he/she is pursuing;
- Trainee has been an independent practitioner at least for one year in the specialty area that he/she is pursuing; and
- Trainee does not have intention to pursue specialty board certification in the United States.

These exceptions will be reviewed by the GME Education Subcommittee and presented in the full GMEC for approval.

GMEC Approval: November 19, 2008; applies to all residents and fellows matriculating July 1, 2009 and thereafter.

GMEC Policy Subcommittee Review – May 11, 2010 / GMEC Review/Approval: May 19, 2010

GMEC Reviewed: July 21, 2010 GMEC Reviewed/Approved: August 18, 2010

GMEC Policy Subcommittee Reviewed/Approved: February 14, 2012

GMEC Reviewed/Approved: February 15, 2012

GMEC Approved the amendment on the score reporting deadline: May 18, 2014

GMEC Policy Subcommittee Revised: February 10, 2015

GMEC Approved: February 18, 2015

GMEC Subcommittee Reviewed/Revised: December 12, 2017

GMEC Approved: December 20, 2017

GMEC Subcommittee Reviewed/Revised: May 14, 2020

GMEC Reviewed/Approved: May 20, 2020

GMEC Policy Subcommittee Revised: February 9, 2021

GMEC Reviewed/Approved: February 17, 2021