

**GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE POLICY No. 07**

**A. SUBJECT:** United States Medical Licensing Examination

**B. EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 20, 2024 (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 the contract start date in order to enroll in a GME program at the University of Virginia Medical Center. Extensions to pass the USMLE Steps 1 and 2 after the contract start date must be approved by the Designated Institutional Official (DIO).

Fellows entering a GME training program must successfully pass USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 (or its equivalent) prior to entering their fellowship program. Extensions and exceptions for International Medical Graduates (see section 4 for qualifying reasons) must be approved by the DIO in advance.

**2. Following Entry into a GME program**

All Trainees who are currently enrolled in a GME training program must take Step 3 of the USMLE or COMLEX by March 1st of their PGY2 year. If a Trainee fails at their first attempt, they must retake Step 3 before December 31 of their PGY3 year.

Trainees who fail USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 (or its equivalent) after two attempts must be presented to the DIO by the Program Director 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 work hours.

Programs will be responsible for monitoring satisfactory completion of the USMLE or COMLEX Step 3 requirements for each of their Trainees.

### 3. Transfer Trainees

Trainees transferring into a PGY2 position from a program in another institution will not be accepted unless they have passed USMLE or COMLEX Step 2.

Trainees transferring into a PGY3 or higher position from a program in another institution will not be accepted unless they have passed USMLE or COMLEX Step 3.

### 4. Provisions for Exception

Trainees who take an extended leave of absence may be granted an extension at the discretion of the trainee's Program Director and the DIO. Once the trainee returns to full duty, a plan for completion of the USMLE must be instituted and communicated to the GME Office.

The Program Director or trainee must report back to the GME Office the successful completion of (or failure to complete) this requirement.

### 5. 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 are exempted from the USMLE requirements outlined in this policy.

GMEC will consider Step 3 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 they are pursuing; and,
- Trainee has been an independent practitioner for at least one year in the specialty area that they are pursuing.

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

GMEC Policy Subcommittee Reviewed/Revised: February 13, 2024

GMEC Reviewed/Tabled: February 21, 2024

GMEC Policy Subcommittee Reviewed/Revised: March 12, 2024

GMEC: Reviewed/Approved: March 20, 2024