



POLICY FOR STUDENTS TAKING THE USMLE STEP 1, STEP 2

Policy Number:	2010-01
Title:	Policy for Students Taking the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2
Effective:	January 2016
Reviewed:	July 2025
Policy Sponsor:	Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC)
Responsible Office:	Academic Advisor

Policy Statement

All students enrolled in the MD program at San Juan Bautista School of Medicine (SJBSM) must take and pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) to be promoted and to graduate.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the MD program at SJBSM.

Authority & Governance

The Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC) is the decision-making body for advancement and promotion determinations related to USMLE Step 1 outcomes. The Office of Student Affairs, including the Dean of Students, provides student support, advising, and wellness services only and does not conduct investigations, render corrective actions, or make advancement decisions.

Appeals of adverse actions are heard by an independent Appeals Committee that is not composed of the original decision-makers. Conflict-of-interest (COI) disclosures are required annually and at each meeting; members with a COI must recuse, and alternates will be seated as needed to maintain quorum and MD representation.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Associate Dean of Clinical Sciences: Establishes institutional Step 1 target date and oversees third-year scheduling.
- Prep Course Director: Provides guidance during review process, recommendations for adjustment to review plan and timing diagnostic tests, monitors progress and grants

authorization to sit for Step 1 when CBSE benchmark is achieved and readiness is demonstrated.

- Dean of Students: Provides support, advising, and wellness services; does not make corrective or advancement decisions.
- Registrar: Verifies compliance with promotion requirements and the six-year maximum program length.
- SEPC: Approves extended time, imposes remediation, monitors progress, and makes advancement decisions.

Definitions

- Conditioned Academic Progress: A temporary status for students who have completed pre-clinical coursework and are preparing for USMLE Step 1 but have not yet taken and passed the exam.
- Academic Probation: A status applied when a student misses Step 1-related deadlines or fails their Step 1 in the first attempt; requires a formal remediation plan and SEPC oversight. Students in probation are not eligible to sit for the exam without authorization.
- Extended Time: Additional time granted by SEPC to meet Step 1 requirements, provided the student remains within the maximum program length of six (6) years from matriculation.

USMLE Step 1

Eligibility & Requirements

- Students must satisfactorily complete all first- and second-year courses and meet promotion requirements to be eligible to sit for USMLE Step 1.
- Students with a status of probation or inactive are not eligible to sit Step 1.
- Students must pass USMLE Step 1 to be promoted to the third year.
- Students are allowed a maximum of three (3) attempts to pass USMLE Step 1, while remaining within the six-year maximum program length.

Scheduling & Preparation

- Clinical Sciences sets the institutional Step 1 target date approximately one year in advance, typically the second Saturday in July, to enable third-year scheduling.
- Students are solely responsible for registering, scheduling, and complying with USMLE policies, including accommodations in a timely manner.
- SJBSM will not adjust institutional deadlines due to Prometric site conflicts, USMLE scheduling changes including accommodations.
- Students are required to participate in the Step 1 Prep Course (Pass/Fail), which provides structured study plans, feedback, and continuous assessment. To obtain a Pass in the course, students must take Step 1 before the course ends. Students who fail to take Step 1 during the course will receive an IC-F until the exam is taken and passed.

NBME Diagnostic Exams & Benchmarks (CBSSA/CBSE)

- Students will be scheduled to take an NBME CBSE diagnostic test immediately after completing Year 2 coursework which serves as a baseline for their Step 1 preparation.

- During the designated study time, students must submit evidence of a minimum of three NBME CBSSA diagnostic test to demonstrate progress and be able to sit for an NBME CBSE diagnostic test prior to taking the exam.
- A minimum score of 76 (NBME scaled) on the final CBSE prior to sitting for Step 1 must be achieved to be able to sit for the Step 1.
- Students who do not meet the benchmark must reschedule Step 1. In this case, to be eligible for promotion to third year in January, Step 1 must be rescheduled no later than the last week of November. Extensions for rescheduling will be limited to the maximum six-year limit required to complete the program.

Deadlines & Timeline

The following timeline governs USMLE Step 1 preparation, attempts, and promotion eligibility:

Requirement / Event	Deadline	Decision Authority	Status / Effect
Initial Benchmark Step 1	Exam schedule no later than second Saturday in July if the student achieves a minimum score of 76 (NBME scaled) on the final CBSE.	Prep Course coordinator authorization required	Conditioned Academic Progress until Step 1 passed
Benchmark Extension	Extension for Step 1 no later than last week of November	SEPC approval of extended time	Academic Probation; eligible to begin third year rotations in January if Step 1 is taken and passed
First Step 1 Failure	Extension to retake subject to six-year limit and no later than June 30 of same academic year	SEPC imposes remediation; monitors progress	Academic Probation; eligible for promotion next academic year after receiving pass
Second Step 1 Failure	As scheduled within six-year limit	SEPC imposes remediation; may grant extended time	Academic Probation; continued eligibility contingent on progress and chronological time limit
Third Step 1 Failure	N/A	SEPC	Subject to dismissal
Maximum Program Length	Within six (6) years of matriculation	SEPC; Registrar monitors compliance	Non-compliance results in dismissal

Attempts & Limits

- Students are permitted up to three (3) Step 1 attempts, subject to the six-year maximum program length from matriculation.
- After a first failure, students are placed on Academic Probation and referred to SEPC. To be eligible for promotion to third year in January, Step 1 must be rescheduled no later than the last week of November. Extensions for rescheduling will be limited to the maximum six-year limit required to complete the program
- After a second failure, students remain on Academic Probation and are referred to SEPC. To be eligible for promotion to third year in January, Step 1 must be rescheduled no later than the last week of November. Extensions for rescheduling will be limited to the maximum six-year limit required to complete the program
- After a third failure, SEPC refers the case for dismissal consideration; the student has the right to appeal.

USMLE Step 2 CK

Eligibility & Requirements

- Students must satisfactorily complete all third-year clerkships and meet promotion requirements to be eligible to sit for USMLE Step 2 CK.

Scheduling & Preparation

- Students will have dedicated preparation time from July to September following completion of third-year clerkships.
- A diagnostic exam will be offered at the end of third year to establish a baseline for Step 2 CK readiness.
- Students must complete three NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Self-Assessments (CCSA) exams: (1) immediately after completing Year 3 coursework; (2) after four weeks of review; (3) ten days prior to the scheduled Step 2 exam.
- Students must demonstrate progress across CCSA exams prior to sitting for Step 2.
- Students with a status of probation or inactive are not eligible to sit Step 1.
- Students are required to meet with Academic Advisor who will provide assistance with structured study plan, feedback, and continuous assessment.

Deadlines & Timeline

Requirement / Event	Deadline	Decision Authority	Status / Effect
Initial Step 2 CK Attempt	No later than September	Associate Dean of Clinical Sciences; SEPC oversight	Conditioned Academic Progress until passed
First Failure Remediation	Pass by June 30 of same academic year	SEPC	Academic Probation; remediation and extended time contingent on six (6) year limit; eligible for

			graduation after pass
Second Failure	Within six-year program limit	SEPC	Academic Probation; may grant extended time contingent on six (6) year limit
Third Failure	N/A	SEPC	Subject to dismissal
Maximum Program Length	Within six (6) years of matriculation	SEPC; Registrar monitors compliance	Non-compliance results in dismissal review

Attempts & Limits

- Students are permitted up to three (3) attempts to pass Step 2 CK, subject to the six-year maximum program length.
- After a first failure, students are placed on Academic Probation and referred to SEPC; they must pass by June 30 of the same academic year.
- After a second failure, students remain on Academic Probation and may be granted extended time if within the program limit.
- After a third failure, SEPC refers the case for dismissal consideration; the student has the right to appeal.

Responsibility for implementation

The final responsibility for the enforcement of this policy rests in the Academic Advisor.

The dispositions contained in this Executive Order will be effective immediately.

Related documents and legislation

This policy is designed to meet the expectations outlined in LCME Standard 11.1

Appendices- NONE

History

Adopted: January 2016

Revised: October 2021

July 2023

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