

Graduate Medical Education Policy	USMLE Step 3 / COMLEX Level 3
Facility/Sponsor	CMC/GMEC
Policy Origin Date	February 2008
Revision Date	October 2022

PURPOSE

Residents must take and pass either the USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX Level 3 to be allowed to advance in their residency program. Residents cannot become licensed to practice medicine independently without passing either USMLE 3 or COMLEX 3.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all residents in categorical ACGME accredited post-graduate training programs sponsored by Carilion Medical Center (CMC). This policy does not apply to allopathic (MD) or osteopathic (DO) residents in Preliminary Surgery or Preliminary Medicine residency programs.

DEFINITIONS

USMLE Step 3 (United States Medical Licensing Examination) is the final step in the examination process used by the National Board of Medical Examiners to assess a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care. State licensing boards may utilize the results of the USMLE examinations in the decision to grant a license to practice medicine independently.

COMLEX Level 3 (Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensure Examination) is the final step in the examination process used by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners to assess an osteopathic physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care. State licensing boards may utilize the results of the COMLEX examinations in the decision to grant a license to practice medicine independently.

PGY (Post Graduate Year) refers to training year in programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

PROCEDURE

1. Allopathic residents in ACGME accredited GME programs:
 - a. Are notified of this requirement as stated in their PGY1 contract.
 - b. MUST take the USMLE Step 3 exam during their PGY-1 year, and
 - c. MUST successfully pass USMLE Step 3 no later than six (6) months into the PGY-2 year of training.
 - d. Failure to successfully pass USMLE Step 3 will result in non-renewal of contract and failure to advance to a PGY-3 position at Carilion Clinic (see Discipline - Non-Renewal of Contract policy).
2. Osteopathic residents in ACGME accredited GME programs:
 - a. Are notified of this requirement as stated in their PGY1 contract.
 - b. MUST take either the USMLE Step 3 or the COMLEX Level 3 exam during their PGY-1 year, and
 - c. MUST successfully pass either the USMLE Step 3 or the COMLEX Level 3 no later than six (6) months into the PGY-2 year of training.

- d. Failure to successfully pass either of the examinations will result in non-renewal of contract and failure to advance to a PGY-3 position at Carilion Clinic (see Discipline - Non-Renewal of Contract policy).
- 3. Fellowship applicants must have passing scores for USMLE III or COMLEX Level 3 for their application to a Carilion Clinic based fellowship to be considered.
- 4. One-time exemption:
 - a. Program Directors may petition the Graduate Medical Education Committee for a one-time exemption for residents who have failed to successfully pass the required exam by 6 months into the PGY-2 year of training.
 - b. A simple majority vote by the GMEC will approve the exemption.
 - c. The one-time exemption will allow the resident to receive a six-month extension to complete the required exam successfully. Failure to successfully pass the examination by the end of the six-month extension (end of PGY-2 year) will result in non-renewal of contract and dismissal from the training program.
 - d. Residents who are granted an exception should:
 - i. Be in good standing within the program and meet other program requirements.
 - ii. Have reasonable expectations of passing the exam-during the six-month extension.
- 5. Examination Fees:
 - a. The resident is responsible for paying all costs associated with taking the examination.

Designated Institutional Official	Reviewing Committee	Date Approved
Daniel Harrington, MD	GMEC	
Donald Kees, MD	GMEC	August, 2013
Donald W. Kees, MD	GMEC	April, 2016
Donald W. Kees, MD	GMEC	July 16, 2019
Arthur Ollendorff, MD	GMEC	October 18, 2022