

**MEDICAL LICENSING EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS  
(USMLE OR COMLEX)**

**USMLE Steps 1 and 2 (CK and CS) and COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2-CE**

To ensure that all Residents\* meet minimal standards, the UT College of Medicine Chattanooga and its Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) requires that **all** Residents entering any UT College of Medicine Chattanooga GME program must have passed the United States Licensing Examination (USMLE) Steps 1 and 2 (Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Sciences) or examinations judged equivalent by individual license (COMLEX–USA or MCCQOE). This means that departments have the discretion of accepting the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) Level 1 and 2 CE for osteopathic medical school graduates.

Any Agreement of Appointment Letter or Initial Letter of Commitment will be contingent upon the physician’s passing USMLE Steps 1 and 2 (CK and CS) or COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2-CE. Each Resident is responsible for providing copies of passing these exams to the Program Director and to the Director of Graduate Medical Education and will not be permitted to begin training until this documentation is submitted. A valid ECFMG certificate will be accepted as proof for international medical school graduates.

Accepted or matched Residents who have not passed Steps 1 and 2 (CK and CS) or COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2-CE by July 1 (or the official training start date) will be released from their appointment. Any program that releases a Resident who matched through the NRMP will be required to obtain a release from the NRMP before offering the position to another applicant.

**USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3:**

All Residents are required to pass USMLE Step 3 before they can advance to the PGY-3 level (or comparable exam). **All PGY-2 level Residents must register for Step 3 (or Level 3) no later than February 28 of the PGY-2 level**. Failure to register will result in the Resident being placed on leave without pay until proof of registration is provided to the Program Director and the Director of Graduate Medical Education. For Residents on a standard cycle, they must provide proof of passing Step 3 by June 30 in order to be promoted to the PGY-3 level. Failure to provide proof of passing by June 30 may result in non-reappointment to the program, and the Resident may be terminated. It is the Resident’s responsibility to provide the necessary proof to the Program Director and Director of Graduate Medical Education.

Residents who are off cycle must register for the exam no later than the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of training during the PGY-2 level **or be placed on leave without pay until registered**. Proof of passing must be provided no later than the last day of the PGY-2 level or the Resident may not be reappointed to the program, and the Resident may be terminated.

Applicants for advanced Residency or Fellowship positions (PGY-3 or greater) must have passed USMLE Step 3 (or equivalent exam such as COMLEX Level 3) before entering the UT College of Medicine Chattanooga program.

Any Agreement of Appointment or Letter of Commitment to begin training at the PGY-3 level or higher will be contingent upon the physician having passed Step 3 (or equivalent exam) before the start date. Accepted or matched Residents who have not passed Step 3 (or equivalent exam) prior to their scheduled start date will not meet eligibility requirements for entering those programs and will be released from their commitment. Any program that releases a Resident who has matched through the NRMP will be required to obtain a waiver from the NRMP before offering the position to another applicant.

### **Exceptions**

Any Resident who passed USMLE Step 2 prior to 2004 will not be required to take Step 2 Clinical Skills. Any Resident who passed Steps 1 and 2 prior to June 1994 will not need to take Step 3. Any entering Resident who already holds an unrestricted Tennessee medical license already meets the USMLE requirement and does not have to provide additional documentation.

Individual programs may have earlier examination deadlines or specific score requirements. The Resident will be responsible for meeting individual program requirements if the program's requirements exceed the Graduate Medical Education Office requirements.

Any exception to this policy may be brought to the GMEC by the Program Director at his or her discretion. Only the Program Director may submit the written request and present it formally at the GMEC meeting. If an exception is granted by the GMEC, the Resident will be placed on leave without pay on their original advancement date and take USMLE Step 3 at the next available test date. The Resident will bring proof of passing to the Program Director and to the Director of Graduate Medical Education. Only when the documentation has been received can the Resident be removed from leave without pay and advanced to the next level of training. The Resident may be required to extend training to make up any time and experience missed in accordance with the specific Residency Review Committee and board eligibility requirements. Failure to pass will result in immediate termination. The decision of the GMEC is final.

### **Resident Responsibilities**

Each Resident is responsible for contacting the appropriate licensing authority to register for the examination. All examination fees are the responsibility of the Resident, although some departments may permit the Resident to be reimbursed from professional development funds at the discretion of the Chair and Program Director. Each Resident should carefully review the exam dates and policies to ensure that results will be available by the required deadlines.

Information on Step 3 is available in the [USMLE Bulletin of Information](#).

Information on COMLEX-USA Level 3 is available in the [COMLEX-USA Bulletin of Information](#).

In addition, many states have restrictions regarding time intervals between the three steps, so Residents should familiarize themselves with these requirements. In Tennessee, all USMLE steps must be taken and passed within seven years. General information regarding state-specific requirements for initial license can be obtained from the [Federation of State Medical Boards](#)

\*The term “Resident” refers to both Resident and Faculty trainees.

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