



American University of the Caribbean
School of Medicine

The United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE) Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) Exam – FAQs

1. **What is USMLE Step 2 CK?** USMLE Step 2 CK is similar to USMLE Step 1 in that you are expected to demonstrate knowledge that you have previously been tested on with the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME) shelf exams. The exam is computer-based in the format of multiple choice questions.
2. **Is passing USMLE Step 2 CK a requirement for graduation?** Yes, AUC students must take both parts of USMLE Step 2 (CK and CS) and receive passing scores prior to graduation.
3. **How important is the USMLE Step 2 CK anyway?** A passing score on the USMLE Step 2 CK is required for all medical students prior to graduation from AUC and before beginning residency training. A strong USMLE Step 2 CK score can only help your residency application and may be necessary to be competitive for residency in a particular specialty.
4. **When should I take USMLE Step 2 CK?** The decision about when to take the USMLE Step 2 CK is one that should be informed by a number of factors including your USMLE Step 1 score, the number of weeks you will require to adequately prepare, your schedule of clinical rotations, and the individual requirements of the residency programs to which you are applying. Details of AUC's USMLE Step 2 CK Policy can be found on page 37 of the [Student Handbook](#). Ideally, students should complete all five core clerkships and attain a score result of 74 on the NBME Clinical Comprehensive Examination ("the COMP") prior to taking the USMLE Step 2 CK. Some students may qualify for an exception to this rule and be eligible to take the COMP earlier. Please refer to the Student Handbook for details.

Students are recommended to take USMLE Step 2 CK by December 31, 2016 to help ensure that results will be available in time to participate in the 2017 Main MATCHSM. While it is important to note that for International Medical Graduates (IMGs), you may improve your chances of obtaining residency program interviews if your USMLE Step 2 CK score is submitted with your Electronic Residency Application Service® (ERAS) application in mid-September if at all possible, rushing ahead with the USMLE Step 2 CK when you are not prepared in order to meet this deadline could backfire if you receive a failing score. Always err on the side of caution if you are not certain of your preparation.

You should talk to your advisor or the Associate Dean of Clinical Student Affairs (ADCSA) about the appropriate timing for you.

5. **How do I schedule the COMP?** Students must contact the Office of the Registrar at aucregistrar@aucmed.edu to schedule testing windows for the COMP Examination. Testing windows are seven days in length ranging from Monday to Sunday. The timeframe to receive scores from the COMP will be Tuesday of the following week (except during observed holidays when scores may be slightly delayed).
6. **How do I schedule USMLE Step 2 CK?** Visit the [USMLE website](#) to apply. You will need to familiarize yourself with [eligibility periods](#) for the exam. When applying to take USMLE Step 2 CK, you must select a three-month period, such as August-September-October, during which you can take the exam. This three-month period is referred to as your “eligibility period.” You must take the exam during the eligibility period assigned to you. You can take the exam on any day that it is offered during your assigned eligibility period, provided there is space available at the test center that you choose.
7. **I won't complete all five core clerkships until September 9, 2016, and I am not eligible to take the COMP early. How can I ensure I receive my score back as soon as possible?**
 - a. Determine when you are eligible to take the COMP. In this case, the earliest you could schedule the testing window would be the following week, Sept. 12-16.
 - b. Determine the last day in which you could receive your score, which would be Tuesday of the following week or, in this case, Sept. 20.
 - c. Schedule the USMLE Step 2 CK eligibility period so that there's additional time in case you do not pass the COMP on the first attempt. Should you fail the COMP, you would need to reschedule USMLE Step 2 CK. In this case, an eligibility period of September-October-November would allow you enough time to confirm a passing score on the COMP in order to take USMLE Step 2 CK any time after Sept. 20.

Regardless of exactly when you plan to take USMLE Step 2 CK, register for it and get a scheduling permit relatively early in your fourth year so you have the time and flexibility to take the exam when it best fits your schedule.

8. **How long should I study for the exam?** AUC students generally need at least one month or more to prepare for the USMLE Step 2 CK exam. Some resources commonly used by AUC students include, but are not limited to:
 - Study guides and resources used in preparation for NBME Subject Examinations
 - NBME Self-Assessments (at this time, a score of 510 or higher is correlated with a passing score of the CK)
 - The NBME Clinical Comprehensive Examination (students with scores below 78 may want to consider enrolling in a live review course or an online live review course).
 - A comprehensive review book such as *First Aid for the USMLE Step 2 CK* or Conrad Fisher's *Master the Boards*

- Pharm Cards may be helpful in preparing for questions such as “what drug may have caused what side effect” or “what drug for what organism.”
- Question banks such as the UWorld Q-bank for USMLE Step 2 CK or the Kaplan Medical Q-bank
Courses offered by Becker Professional Education (with significant savings for AUC students), Kaplan Medical, and USMLEagle Prep.
- Clinical Fellows can be an excellent source of knowledge and tips for preparing for both USMLE Step 2 exams.

You may contact the ADCSA Dr. Kim Kirkland at kkirkland@aucmed.edu at any time for assistance in developing an effective individualized study plan.

9. **How much does the USMLE Step 2 CK cost?** The 2016 fee is \$880. Please reference [ECFMG’s Fee Page](#) for more information.
10. **Other than studying, how else can I prepare for USMLE Step 2 CK?** Reduce stress! In all of the planning you are going to do for USMLE Step 2 CK, ensure you build in study breaks. These need to include both: physical breaks (sports, jogging, walking), which should be done OUTSIDE if at all possible and mental breaks (time with friends, movies, TV, non-medical reading). A regimented sleep schedule is also extremely important. Sleep is the time our brain uses to assimilate and organize the material from the day. Studying late into the night will deprive you of the benefit sleep provides.
11. **What is the minimum passing score?** USMLE may change the passing score for this examination at any time so please be sure to consult the website for the most current information. At this time the [minimum passing score is 209](#).
12. **What is the mean score and standard deviation?** In 2013-2014, the mean and standard deviation for first-time examinees from the US and Canadian medical schools were approximately 240 and 18, respectively. Please reference the [USMLE Step Examination Score Interpretation Guide](#) for more information.
13. **How long will it take to receive my USMLE Step 2 CK score?** Scores are generally available in 3-4 weeks; however, delays are possible and in 2015 occurred for students who took the exam after July 10. Due to routine modifications of the USMLE Step 2 CK item pool, for those who sit for the exam after July 10, it may take up to 8 weeks to receive the score. Students are recommended to sign up for the ECFMG E-Newsletter called the [ECFMG Reporter](#) and to monitor the ECFMG website in order to stay up-to-date on important information related to IMGs such as possible reporting delays for 2016.
14. **Who will see my USMLE Step 2 CK score?** If you take the USMLE Step 2 CK exam *before* you submit your residency application through ERAS (typically in mid-September), programs will receive a score report for both USMLE Step 1 and USMLE Step 2 CK.

If you take the USMLE Step 2 CK exam *after* you submit your residency application through ERAS, programs will only receive your USMLE Step 1 score report. However, some residency programs require your USMLE Step 2 CK score in order to offer you an interview, and most programs require your USMLE Step 2 CK score before they will rank you for The MATCH. Therefore, students who take USMLE Step 2 after submitting their residency application must go into their ERAS account [and release that score to programs manually](#).

15. ***What USMLE Step 2 CK score do I need to achieve to match in my preferred specialty?*** Target step scores for different specialties can be found on [NRMP 2014 Charting Outcomes in the Match for IMGs](#).