Pathway to Medical Licensure in the United States: A General Guide

**U.S. Pre-Medical**
- Register for **MCAT**
- Apply with **AMCAS** and/or **AAMC**

**U.S. Medical School**

**1st Year**
- **USMLE Step 1**

**2nd Year**
- **USMLE Step 1**
- **COMLEX-USA Level 1**

**3rd or 4th Year**
- **USMLE Step 2 CK**
- **COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE**
- **COMLEX-USA Level 2 PE or Clinical Skills/Performance Assessments**

**U.S. Medical School**

**4th Year**
- **Register for NRMP**
- **Register for AOA Match**
- **Register for ERAS**
- **Obtain MD or DO degree**

**After the Start of U.S. Residency**
- **USMLE Step 3**
- **COMLEX-USA Level 3**
- **Apply for state training license, if indicated, or full and unrestricted state medical license, if eligible**

**Before the End of U.S. Residency/Fellowship**
- Begin to apply for employment or make plans for independent practice
- Apply for full and unrestricted state medical license(s)
- Apply with FCVS (may be required)
- Apply with Uniform Application (available in many states)
- Apply with individual state medical board(s) (if applicable)

If indicated/desired:
- Apply for ABMS/AOA Specialty Board Certification Exam
- Apply for hospital privileges
- Apply for provider status with health insurance companies
- Apply for DEA Registration, if applicable
- Obtain Medicare/Medicaid privileges, if applicable

**Ongoing Medical Practice**
- **State licensure renewal**, including state-specific requirements, if indicated, such as:
  - **Continuing Medical Education**
  - **Maintenance of Certification** and/or **Osteopathic Continuous Certification**, if desired
  - If more than one state medical license is desired, apply for **IMLC** where applicable

**IMG Preparation for U.S. Residency**
- Obtain MD degree or equivalent
- **USMLE Step 1**
- **USMLE Step 2 CK**
- Obtain ECFMG certification
- Obtain Visa, if indicated

More information is available at www.fsmb.org.
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Definition

AACOMAS – The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service is a centralized application service for colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States through the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine®.

AMCAS® – The American Medical College Application Service®, a program of the Association of American Medical Colleges, is a centralized application processing service that is only available to applicants to first-year entering classes at participating allopathic (MD) U.S. medical schools.

COMLEX-USA – The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) is a multi-part assessment given by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) to students and graduates of osteopathic medical education programs accredited by the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation. The NBOME eligibility criterion requires COMLEX Level 1 to be taken after successful completion of the 1st academic year of an osteopathic medical school program. Level 2 Cognitive and clinical skills/performance assessment requirements cannot be taken until after successful completion of the 2nd academic year and passing Level 1. The COMLEX-USA Level 3 is usually taken during residency training and after successful completion of Levels 1-2, though in certain circumstances Level 3 may be taken by osteopathic medical school graduates prior to beginning residency training.

ECFMG® – The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) provides a certification program for international medical graduates (IMGs) to assess their readiness prior to entering into ACGME-accredited residency or fellowship training programs in the United States.

ERAS® – The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS®) was developed by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) to allow medical school students and graduates to apply electronically for residency positions in accredited U.S. programs of graduate medical education.

FCVS – The Federation Credentials Verification Service, a service of the Federation of State Medical Boards, is a standardized, multiple-choice examination designed to assess the examinee’s problem solving, critical thinking, knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. A new version of the test is expected in 2015.

MCAT® – The Medical College Admission Test® is a standardized, multiple-choice examination designed to assess the examinee’s problem solving, critical thinking, knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. A new version of the test is expected in 2015.

MOC® – The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) assists 24 approved medical specialty boards in the development and use of standards in the ongoing evaluation and certification of physicians. In 2000, the 24 Member Boards of ABMS agreed to evolve their recertification programs to one of continuous professional development – ABMS Maintenance of Certification® (ABMS MOC®). In 2006, all Member Specialty Boards received approval of their ABMS MOC programs, which have 8-10 year renewal cycles.

NRMP® – The National Resident Matching Program provides a uniform date of appointment to positions in graduate medical education (GME). It provides an impartial venue for matching applicants’ and programs’ preferences for each other consistently.

OCC – The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists consists of 18 specialty-certifying boards. Effective in 2013, each AOA specialty certifying board requires an Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) process for all doctors of osteopathic medicine (DOs) with time-limited certifications. OCC runs on a 6-10 year cycle depending upon the specific specialty board.

UA – The Uniform Application, a service of the Federation of State Medical Boards, is a Web-based application that standardizes, simplifies and streamlines the licensure application process for MDs, DOs and Residents. Applicants fill out the online UA once and then use it whenever they apply for a license in another state for the rest of their careers. The UA is a standard licensure application form that serves as the core of a state’s license application without replacing unique state-level requirements, which are collected and submitted via a state-specific addendum.

USMLE® – The United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) is a jointly sponsored program of the Federation of State Medical Boards and the National Board of Medical Examiners®. The USMLE is open to students/graduates of accredited medical school programs issuing the MD or DO degree and to students/graduates of international medical schools eligible for certification by the ECFMG. In general, Step 1 is usually taken at the end of the 2nd academic year of medical school; Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) is generally taken before the end of the 3rd academic year. Most examinees take Step 3 within the first 18 months of residency training, though under certain circumstances some IMGs and U.S. medical school graduates may take Step 3 prior to beginning residency training.