AY2020-21 Changes to USMLE Exam Deadlines

Background and Rationale

The UUSOM has the authority to set USMLE exam deadlines and graduation requirements. Currently the Student Handbook requires the following USMLE Step examinations as a graduation requirement – USMLE Step 1, Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS). Current deadlines are that Step 1 must be taken prior to starting clinical clerkships, that Step 2 CK must be taken before Oct 31st of the MS4 year, and Step 2 CS must be taken before Dec 31st of the MS4 year. For students about to start a Leave of Absence (LOA), the deadline for their respective USMLE exam is August 15th.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically affected students’ ability to adhere to current UUSOM deadlines. Specifically, the pandemic is affecting the ability for Prometric testing sites to schedule and proctor the USMLE Step examinations. Prometric sites are currently closed for CK testing until May 1st 2020 and closed for CS testing until at least June 1st 2020. It is anticipated that there will be additional cancellations of currently scheduled testing dates.

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NMBE) has recently announced that Completion of Step 1 will be a prerequisite for taking Step 2 CS starting March 2021.

Students Impacted

The MS2022 cohort (Step 1), the MS2021 cohort (Step 2 CS and Step 2 CK) and students taking a LOA (Step 1, Step 2 CK, Step 2 CS) are all impacted by the current COVID-19 disruption to Prometric site availability.

Data Reviewed and Resources Consulted

NBME announcements and recommendations were consulted for potential guidance.

Recommendations

MS2021 Cohort with Expected Graduation Date of May 2021

USMLE Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS

- Step 2 CK deadline of Oct 1st 2020 is waived
- Step 2 CS deadline of Dec 31st 2020 is waived
- Passing Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS will continue as graduation requirements
• Strong recommendation that students seek counseling and advising to identify the most optimal timing to take these exams – factors include away rotations, match services ranking deadlines, and NBME reporting deadlines. Student Affairs and the Academic Success program can help with this advising.

**MS2022 Cohort**

**USMLE Step 1**
(In the event that students are unable to sit for the USMLE Step 1 examination before the official start of the Phase 3 Curriculum due to Prometric closures and/or rescheduled examination dates, the following would be put into effect for all students):

- The requirement to take Step 1 prior to the start of any clinical clerkship is waived
- Strong recommendation that students take Step 1 at the earliest possible time during the Phase 3 curriculum.
- Step 1 must be taken prior to the start of any 4th year required course and prior to taking Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS
- Passing Step 1 continues as graduation requirement
- For students who need to delay taking Step 1 beyond the first available opportunity, we strongly recommend they seek counseling and advising to identify the most optimal timing to take Step 1. Students should expect to use unscheduled time that would otherwise be used for elective coursework to prepare. Student Affairs and the Academic Success Program can help with this advising.
- As in the past, students who fail Step 1 would continue to be allowed to complete the clinical course in which s/he is currently enrolled. Students would not be allowed to participate in any further curricular activities or courses until s/he retakes the exam.

**USMLE Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS**
- Deadlines to take USMLE Step 2 CK and CS will be determined prior to the beginning of AY 21-22 and will be communicated to the student cohort

**Leave of Absence Cohort**

**USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS**
- The requirement to take the relevant Step exam prior to August 15th is changed to “within 6 months of start date of the initiation of the Leave of Absence.”