

**COLORADO MEDICAL BOARD**

**RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO STEP 3 OF THE UNITED STATES  
MEDICAL LICENSING EXAMINATION AND LEVEL 3 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE  
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL LICENSING EXAMINATION-USA**

**Basis and Purpose:** The authority for the promulgation of these rules and regulations by the Colorado Medical Board (“Board”) is set forth in Sections 12-36-104 (1)(a), 12-36-111, and 12-36-107(1)(a), (b) and (c), C.R.S.

The purpose of the rules and regulations is to set forth administrative guidelines for eligibility and acceptance of The United States Medical Licensing Examination (“USMLE”) and The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination–USA (“COMLEX-USA”), as approved examinations pursuant to 12-36-107 (1)(a). These rules are not meant to preclude acceptance of any licensing exam previously approved by the board.

**Rule:**

1. To be eligible for USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3, applicant must (a) have obtained the M.D. or D.O. degree, and (b) have successfully completed both USMLE Steps 1 and 2 or COMLEX-USA Level 1 and 2.
2. To be eligible to sit for the USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3, an applicant must be serving in or have completed one year of postgraduate training in a program of graduate medical education accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education of the American Medical Association or the American Osteopathic Association.
3. An examinee who fails USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX-USA Level 3 may be reexamined at any subsequent examination upon payment of the required fee.
4. In order to be eligible for licensure, an applicant must successfully complete USMLE Steps 1, 2, and 3 or COMLEX-USA Levels 1,2, 3, within seven (7) years of the date the applicant first sat for any step of the USMLE or any level of the COMLEX, irrespective of whether the applicant passed said step or level. This paragraph (5) shall not apply to applicants who are enrolled in a Ph.D. degree program from a regionally accredited university simultaneously with an LCME accredited medical degree program or an AOA accredited osteopathic degree program. However, such Ph.D./M.D./D.O. applicants must have successfully completed USMLE Steps 1,2, and 3 or COMLEX-USA Levels 1,2, and 3 within ten (10) years of the date the applicant first sat for any step of the USMLE or any level of the COMLEX, irrespective of whether the applicant passed said step or level.

5. The Board shall accept the minimum passing score as recommended by the National Board of Medical Examiners for USMLE Step 3 and by National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners for COMLEX-USA Level 3. Each USMLE step or COMLEX-USA level must be passed individually in order to complete successfully the USMLE or COMLEX-USA examination. Individual step or level scores shall not be averaged to compute an overall score.
6. A failure of any USMLE step or COMLEX-USA level, regardless of the jurisdiction in which the examination was administered, shall be considered a failure of that step for purposes of Colorado licensure and shall be considered for purposes of determining compliance with paragraph 5 above.
7. Upon a showing of good cause, by the applicant, the board may waive the time requirements in paragraph 5 of this rule. Any such waiver shall be based upon the circumstances relating to the particular individual's application. The decision to grant or deny such a waiver shall be in the sole discretion of the board.
8. The USMLE examination is designed to supersede and replace the FLEX examination and the National Board of Medical Examiners' examination sequence ("NBME") over time. Since some medical students and physicians may have already successfully completed part of the FLEX or National Board examination sequence, in order to facilitate a smooth transition to USMLE and to avoid undue burden on applicants for licensure, it is desirable to designate those combinations of examinations, which shall be considered comparable to the existing examinations. Those combinations and the passing score for each examination component are as follows:

NBME Part I (passing score = 75) or USMLE Step 1 (passing score = 75)  
NBME Part II (passing score = 75) or USMLE Step 2 (passing score = 75)  
NBME Part III (passing score = 75) or USMLE Step 3 (passing score = 75)

**or**

FLEX Component 1 (passing score = 75)  
**plus**  
USMLE Step 3 (passing score = 75)

**or**

NBME Part I (passing score = 75) or USMLE Step 1 (passing score = 75)  
**plus**  
NBME Part II (passing score = 75) or USMLE Step 2 (passing score = 75)  
**plus**  
FLEX Component 2 (passing score = 75)

In order to meet the examination requirement for licensure, the examination sequence combinations illustrated above must be successfully completed no later than January 1, 2000.

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