



American University of the Caribbean  
School of Medicine

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

### General Information:

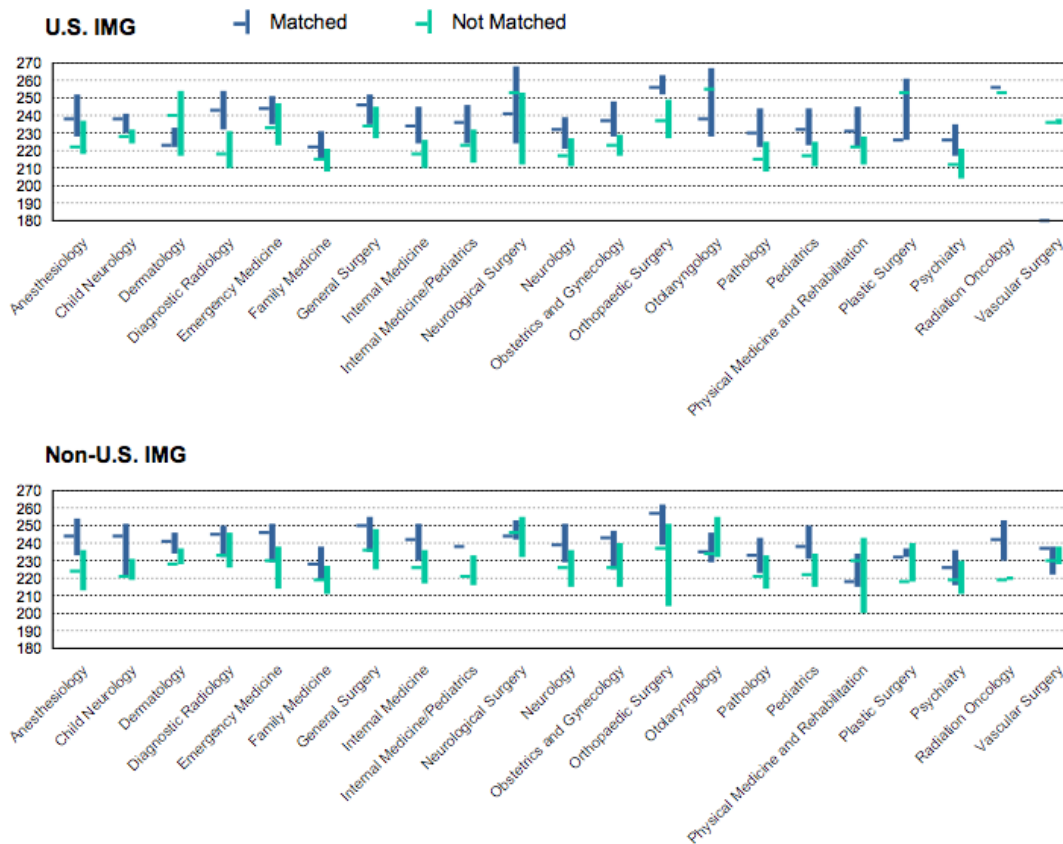
1. ***What is Step 2 CK?*** USMLE Step 2 CK is similar to USMLE Step 1 in that you are expected to demonstrate knowledge that you have previously been tested on with the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME) shelf exams during your core clinical clerkships and that the exam is computer-based in the format of multiple choice questions. For latest updates please refer to the [USMLE website](#).
2. ***What is the minimum passing score on Step 2 CK?*** For any student taking the CK exam on or after July 1, 2014, the minimum passing score is 209. (<http://www.usmle.org/transcripts/>). However, a student with a 209 on Step 2 CK may not be a competitive applicant for any residency. If you scored low on Step 1, you should aim for a higher score on Step 2 CK to be competitive in The MATCH®. For more information on average scores for AUC students by specialty, please refer to the [Office of Student and Professional Development \(OSPD\)](#).
3. ***What is the mean score and standard deviation?*** In the past two years, the mean and standard deviation for Step 2 CK first-time examinees from the US and Canadian medical schools were approximately 242 and 17, respectively. ([http://www.usmle.org/pdfs/transcripts/USMLE\\_Step\\_Examination\\_Score\\_Interpretation\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.usmle.org/pdfs/transcripts/USMLE_Step_Examination_Score_Interpretation_Guidelines.pdf))
4. ***How important is Step 2 CK?*** A passing score on Step 2 CK is required for all medical students prior to beginning residency training and is a graduation requirement of AUC. CK tests clinical knowledge, such as internal medicine, surgery, OBGYN, pediatrics, and psychiatry. More information about Step 2 CK content is available on the [USMLE website](#). A strong Step 2 CK score demonstrates your ability to apply clinical knowledge, which can be an essential component to your residency application regardless of specialty. **Failing Step 2 CK or CS can decrease your chances of matching.** Some residency programs may filter out applicants by Step scores, so it is important to perform as best you can.
5. ***Who will see my Step 2 CK score and how does it affect my residency application?*** It is highly recommended for you to take the Step 2 CK exam *before* you submit your

residency application through Electronic Residency Application Service® (ERAS) (typically in mid-September). Programs will then receive your score report for both Step 1 and Step 2 CK. Please keep in mind that many residency programs filter out applicants by Step scores and incomplete applications due to the competitiveness of the match process.

If you take the Step 2 CK exam *after* you submit your residency application through ERAS, programs will only receive your Step 1 score report. However, some residency programs require your Step 2 CK and CS scores in order to offer you an interview, and most programs require your Step 2 CK and CS scores before they will rank you for The MATCH®. Ensuring that your application to residency is complete with all necessary exam scores can help programs evaluate whether they want to interview you and can maximize your chances of matching. Students who take Step 2 CK or CS after submitting their residency application must go into their ERAS account and release that score to programs manually.

6. ***What CK score do I need to achieve to match in my preferred specialty?***

**Chart 7 USMLE Step 2 CK Scores of International Medical Graduates by Preferred Specialty, Match Status, and IMG Applicant Type**



USMLE Step 2 CK scores are a measure of an applicant's ability to apply the medical knowledge, skills, and understanding of clinical science essential for providing patient care. Overall, matched U.S. IMGs had *mean* USMLE Step 2 CK scores of 232.6 (s.d. = 15.0) and matched non-U.S. IMGs had *mean* USMLE Step 2 CK scores of 238.8 (s.d. = 15.6), both well above the 2016 minimum passing score of 209. Step 2 CK scores were available for 85 percent of U.S. IMGs and 91 percent of non-U.S. IMGs who gave consent to research.

This chart along with the National Resident Matching Program®'s (NRMP) 2016 Charting Outcomes in the Match for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) may be found at: <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Charting-Outcomes-IMGs-2016.pdf>.

You can also refer to [OSP](#) for average scores of AUC students matching into specialties.

### Preparation:

1. **How important are NBME Shelf Exams and the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam?** NBME Shelf exams should be treated as high stakes exams that test your medical knowledge in core clinical specialties. Higher performance in shelf exams translates into higher performance on the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam and Step 2 CK. The NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam can be a predictor for readiness to take Step 2 CK and must be passed before AUC students are cleared to take Step 2 CK. A passing score of a 74 on the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam correlates with a passing score of a 210 on Step 2 CK.

2. ***How do I schedule the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam?*** Students must contact the [Office of the Registrar](#) to schedule “testing windows” for the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam. The Office of the Registrar typically needs 4 weeks of lead-time to get a student into a testing window. Testing windows are seven days in length ranging from Monday to Sunday. The timeframe to receive scores from the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam will be Tuesday of the following week (except during observed holidays when scores may be slightly delayed).
3. ***How can I study for the Step 2 CK and what resources should I use?*** Preparing for the Step 2 CK starts on day 1 of clinical rotations. AUC students should be preparing for Step 2 CK every single day during clinical sciences. You can accomplish that by utilizing clinical resources and treating NBME Shelf Exams as high stakes exam. It is recommended AUC students study for at least **one full month or more** to prepare for the Step 2 CK exam. Resources include, but are not limited to:
- People: If you are working with a Clinical Education Fellow in the TCM Program, they can be a source of knowledge and tips for preparing for both Step 2 CK and CS.
  - Review Books: A comprehensive review book such as Conrad Fisher’s *Master the Boards* or *Step Up to Step 2* may be useful and give more in-depth information. We also suggest *Step Up to Medicine* for a thorough review of internal medicine and its subspecialties.
  - Flash Cards: 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” on Step 2 CK.
  - Study guides and resources a student may have used in preparation for NBME Subject Examinations and the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam.
  - NBME Self-Assessments may be useful in gauging your readiness to sit for the Step 2 CK. An NBME Self-Assessment score of 340 or higher is correlated with a passing score on Step 2 CK.
  - Review Courses: AUC students with one or more failures of the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam prior to passage, or passing scores between 74 and 78, may want to consider enrolling in a live review course or an online live review course. These types of courses are offered by Becker Professional Education (Becker), Kaplan, and USMLEagle. Special pricing for Becker courses are available to AUC students on <http://becker.com/aucmed>.
  - Question Banks: The UWorld Qbank for Step 2 CK and the Kaplan Qbank are some question banks available for purchase. UWorld Qbank subscriptions are available at a special savings on <http://becker.com/aucmed> once you have signed in with your AUC email address.
4. ***Other than studying, how else can I prepare for Step 2 CK?*** Our recommendation is to reduce stress and take care of yourself! In all of the planning you are going to do for Step 2 CK, ensure you build in study breaks. These need to include both 1) physical breaks (sports, jogging, walking), which should be done OUTSIDE if at all possible and 2) 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.

### Registering for Step 2 CK:

1. ***How do I schedule Step 2 CK?*** Visit the [ECFMG Website](#) to apply. When applying for Step 2 CK, you must select a three-month period, such as August-September-October, during which you would like to 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.
2. ***How much does Step 2 CK cost?*** \$865.
3. ***How long will it take to receive my CK score?*** Scores are generally available in 3-4 weeks; however, delays are possible. Historically, there is a score reporting delay every summer for students who take the exam after late July. For those who sit for the exam after late July, it may take up to 8 weeks to receive a score. Students are recommended to sign up for the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates® ([ECFMG Reporter](#)) and monitor the ECFMG website in order to stay up-to-date on important information related to IMGs such as possible reporting delays.
4. ***When should I take Step 2 CK?*** The decision about when to take Step 2 CK is one that should be informed by a number of factors including your Step 1 score, the individual requirements of the programs to which you are applying, the number of weeks you will require to adequately prepare, and your schedule of clinical rotations. According to the AUC USMLE Step 2 CK Policy which can be found in the [Student Handbook](#), **students must complete all five core clerkships and attain a score result of at least 74 on the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam prior to taking the Step 2 CK.** Students may request to take the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam before all core clerkships are completed if the student will not complete all core clerkships by **July 10th** of the year prior to the expected graduation date. Students should refer to the Student Handbook for specifics requirements for taking the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam early.

Students need to take USMLE Step 2 CK by December 31, 2018 to help ensure that results will be available in time to participate in the 2019 Main Match. While it is important to note that for IMGs, you may improve your chances of getting residency program interviews if your CK score is submitted with your ERAS application in mid-September if at all possible, rushing ahead with the 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.

If you are unsure about when you should take CK, schedule a meeting with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs before proceeding. The ideal time to speak to a dean is before you schedule the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam.

5. ***EXAMPLE: I won't complete all five core clerkships until September 11, 2018, and I am not eligible to take the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam early. How can I ensure I receive my score back as soon as possible?***
- a. Determine when you are eligible to take the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam. In this case, the earliest you could schedule the testing window would be the following week, Sept. 17-23.
  - 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. 25.
  - c. Schedule the USMLE Step 2 CK eligibility period so that there's additional time in case you do not pass the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam the first attempt. Should you fail the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam, you would need to reschedule the 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 NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam order to take USMLE Step 2 CK any time after Sept. 22.