

Westchester County Health Care Corporation

WMCHEALTH NETWORK

Administrative: Policy & Procedure

Manual Code: To be assigned by
PolicyHelp

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SUBJECT: Policy Regarding USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 for Residents and Fellows

EFFECTIVE: 03/2019

___ REVIEWED OR _X_ REVISED date: 08/2026

Applicable Campus:

☒ Good Samaritan Hospital ☒ HealthAlliance Hospital ☒ MidHudson Regional Hospital
☒ Port Jervis Community Hospital ☒ St. Anthony Community Hospital ☒ Westchester Medical Center

Patient population:

☐ Neonate ☐ Pediatric ☐ Adult ☐ Behavioral Health ☒ Not applicable

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional requirements for the timely passage of the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) Step 3 or Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Exam (COMLEX) Level 3 by residents and fellows enrolled in Graduate Medical Education (GME) training programs.

SCOPE:

Residents and Fellows at Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMC)

RESPONSIBILITY:

WMC Graduate Medical Education (GME) Committee, WMC Program Directors, WMC Designated Institutional Official (DIO)/Chief Medical Education Officer

POLICY STATEMENT:

All residents should take USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 during PGY-1. Residents must provide documentation of passing USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 no later than November 1 of their PGY-2 training year. Failure to provide documentation of passing USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 by November 1 of the PGY-2 training year shall result in the issuance of a conditional renewal of the resident's appointment agreement. Failure to provide documentation of passing USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 by February 15 shall result in non-renewal.

Residents entering a program at PGY-2 (such as Anesthesiology, Radiology, etc.) who have not passed USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 by the start date of their WMC Residency training must complete and pass USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 by November 1 of their PL-1 year of training. Failure to fulfill this requirement by November 1 shall result in the issuance of a conditional renewal of the resident's appointment agreement. Failure to provide documentation of passing USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 by February 15 shall result in non-renewal.

Applicants to a subspecialty fellowship program or resident transfers at a PGY-3 Level or higher who have not passed USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 must be approved by the Program Director and DIO and may be referred for GMEC vote at the discretion of the DIO. Such applicants

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may not receive an offer letter of acceptance into the program or be ranked in a matching process without such approval. If it is determined to rank or accept such an applicant, the applicant must provide documentation of passing USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 by November 1st of the first year of training at WMC. Failure to fulfill this requirement shall result in the issuance of a conditional renewal of the resident's appointment agreement, followed by a non-renewal of appointment if documentation of exam passage is not received by February 15.

No residents may complete a WMC GME program without documentation of USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 passage. Extension of training to meet this program completion requirement is at the discretion of the Program Director and DIO.

Non-renewals of appointment based on failure of a resident to comply with this policy are not subject to appeal.

All programs must provide a copy of this policy to program applicants as part of the program's terms and conditions during the interview process, and applicants must sign an attestation acknowledging receipt of this policy.

EXAMINATION ATTEMPTS:

Applicants must meet all USMLE/COMLEX examination attempt and time interval requirements in the Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility and Appointment Policy. Applicants who exceed the maximum number of attempts or time interval of exam attempts permitted under that policy are not eligible for appointment unless an exception is reviewed and approved in accordance with the Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility and Appointment Policy.

BACKGROUND:

Residents should complete and pass USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 as soon as eligible to do so. Residents delaying completion of USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 are less likely to pass the exam as the medical knowledge accrued in medical school is redirected to specialty/subspecialty content. Delayed preparation for USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 defers acquisition of medical knowledge necessary for the more contemporary clinical learning environment. Failure to concentrate on residency-specific knowledge and skills leads to inadequate mastery of the specialty field in which the training is occurring and additional challenge for individual specialty board certification and program-based specialty board performance metrics. Successful completion of USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3 is an important component of progression toward eligibility for unrestricted medical licensure.

All WMC Programs must proactively monitor residents' progress in taking and passing USMLE Step 3/COMLEX-USA Level 3. Score reports must be uploaded into New Innovations and scores must be recorded in New Innovations. USMLE/COMLEX performance must be included in the Program Director formative assessment process and Clinical Competency Committee review, as applicable.

All candidates to WMC programs must provide official USMLE/COMLEX score reports inclusive of all exam attempts. Unofficial examinee reports of individual exam attempts cannot be accepted.

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DEFINITIONS:

Graduate Medical Education (GME): Formal training completed by physicians, dentists, and podiatrists following completion of professional school.

Program Director: Faculty member with authority and accountability for the overall program, including compliance with all applicable program requirements.

Designated Institutional Official (DIO): Individual who, in collaboration with a Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC), has authority and responsibility for the oversight and administration of each of the Sponsoring Institution's GME programs, as well as for ensuring compliance with accreditation and recognition requirements.

Resident: Refers to all Residents and Fellows enrolled in accredited, recognized, or non-accredited GME training programs.

Post-graduate Year (PGY): The trainee's overall year of graduate medical education following medical school as determined by their current training program enrollment, which may differ from the PGY-level assigned for salary determination purposes.

Program Level (PL): The trainee's year of training within their current residency or fellowship program.

Archival history:

Reviewed:	
Revised:	