

Virginia Board of Medicine

Policy on USMLE Step Attempts

This document captures the position of the Board on the number of attempts that will be allowed for the Step Exams of the USMLE.

The following is the response to an inquiry of NBME regarding its policy for the number of attempts allowed for each Step Exam of the USMLE.

"The USMLE Program announced in August 2011 that it was introducing a limit on the total number of times an examinee can take the same Step or Step Component. Effective January 1, 2013, an examinee is ineligible to take a Step or Step Component if the examinee has made six or more prior attempts to pass that Step or Step Component, including incomplete attempts. All attempts at a Step or Step Component are counted toward the limit, regardless of when the exams were taken. The sole exception to this policy allows a state medical board to request an additional administration in unique and specific cases in which the board feels strongly about doing so on behalf of an individual with a nexus to the state who would be eligible for licensure in that state if he/she passed USMLE. You may ask a state medical board (such as that in the state where you reside or have some other compelling connection), which is fully aware of your complete testing history, to petition the USMLE program to grant you an additional attempt."

At its February 21, 2013 meeting, the Board of Medicine indicated its concurrence with the recommendation to limit attempts at Step 3 to six, and directed staff to indicate to those that inquired that it was Board policy not to authorize extra attempts at Step 3.

At its October 24, 2013 meeting, the Board reviewed the NBME policy statement above and indicated its concurrence, to include all four exams in the Step sequence. Staff is directed to inform those who inquire that it is policy of the Board of Medicine that additional attempts past six are not be authorized for any Step Exam.