

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.

Effective July 1, 2021, the USMLE program reduced the Attempt Limit from 6 attempts to 4 attempts, including incomplete attempts, per Step. The policy change has been in effect for USMLE Step applications submitted on or after July 1, 2021. This policy change applies to all Step exams. The sole exception to the four-attempt rule is sponsorship by a state board for one additional attempt at the Step for which the examinee has failed four or more times.

At its discretion, the Board may support a one-time 5th attempt at a USMLE Step exam. Such approval will be limited to those individuals that: 1) have submitted a complete application to the Board of Medicine; 2) have previously passed all three Steps of the USMLE; 3) qualify for licensure in all ways except that the Step exam sequence took more than ten years; and 4) a passing score would bring the individual's sequence of exam scores into compliance with Board of Medicine regulation 18VAC85-20-140(E).

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title18/agency85/chapter20/section140/>

Further information on eligibility for USMLE Step exams can be accessed at:

<https://www.usmle.org/bulletin-information/eligibility>