

4/24/2020 – Letter re: Step 1, USMLE & Prometric

Dear MS2 students,

As you are aware, a few days ago Governor Cuomo extended the PAUSE order for New York State through May 15. Prometric had planned to restart testing after May 1 on a site-by-site basis, but today announced that they are extending their closure of test centers across the U.S. and Canada until May 31, except for certain essential services programs. The USMLE now has confirmed that USMLE is “considered an essential program, and certain centers will still be able to resume testing in accordance with local social distancing guidelines on May 1, 2020.”

Unfortunately, we do not yet know how these guidelines will impact specific testing centers. Prometric had said they will be taking measures to keep students safe throughout the process, including allowing test takers to wear masks. Additionally, to keep separation between examinees, "Prometric plans to cancel a significant number of upcoming scheduled appointments. ... Random selection of canceled appointments will occur, and impacted candidates will be notified by Prometric starting today."

Fortunately, Prometric does plan to "expand testing capacity through increased test center hours and days of operation." As Prometric cancels non-essential exams, perhaps additional spots may open for essential exams like USMLE. We hope this will mean that most of you will not have to change your exam date. While you wait for notifications from Prometric about your specific exam appointment, we encourage you to continue to plan for the date you have scheduled.

You have worked hard studying the foundational sciences over the past two years. We know that many of you are ready (and want) to take your Step 1 exam and we hope that option is available to you. You can and should be looking at the assessments you take and your q-bank average for markers about performance. If you are feeling prepared and have a location that works for you, we recommend proceeding as planned.

To accommodate those students who unfortunately are displaced from their planned testing date and unable to suitably reschedule due to this devastating global pandemic, the College of Medicine plans to extend the Step 1 deadline for the class of 2022* to July 1, 2021. As we announced at Monday night's Town Hall, we are in the process of obtaining the necessary approvals and will send more information soon.

(*Certain students with unique circumstances have been given specific deadlines regarding the Step 1 exam and must adhere to those deadlines.)

Students who are ready and able to take the Step 1 exam before starting MS3 clerkships are strongly encouraged to do so. Other opportunities to take the exam will be during the winter break/online learning period (December 19, 2020 to January 17, 2021), elective block G (January 19 to February 14, 2021), elective block J (April 12 to May 9, 2021) and after the end of MS3 clerkships (May 10 to July 1, 2021) – except on NBME holidays and blackout days during those periods. Students will not be allowed time off during clerkship blocks to take the

Step 1 exam.

Students considering delaying the exam until after MS3 clerkships are reminded that students usually take Step 2 CK and CS exams a month or two after clerkships end and they will need to plan their time accordingly. Most residency programs want to see Step 2 scores prior to ranking candidates and some like to see them with the ERAS application.

We hope that this extended deadline and flexibility in testing windows will assist all of our students in passing their Step 1 exam and succeeding in MS3 clerkships. We recommend that you contact Mary Ann Grandinetta in Academic Support or your basic science advisor to discuss the best timing for your exam, given your readiness, exam availability, and other factors.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns.

Regards,

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