

## MICHIGAN MEDICAL DOCTOR (MD) LICENSING GUIDE FOR SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

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### 1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

#### OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you as a foreign-educated medical doctor must do to become eligible for licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background on the larger medical doctor profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

#### REGULATION OF THE MEDICAL DOCTOR PROFESSION

The practice of a medical doctor (MD) in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). You must be licensed to practice as an MD in Michigan.

This guide assumes that you are an international medical doctor who is beginning to build your career in the U.S. and that your Michigan license will be your first U.S. MD license. The guide will include steps that come before the final state licensing process which includes ECFMG Certification, exams, and completion of a 2-year post graduate training program.

You will become an MD by examination. The United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) is the qualifying examination for a Michigan medical doctor license. However, this is the last step in a longer process of education and examinations that international MD's must complete to practice in the State.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

### OVERVIEW

Internationally educated medical doctors need to meet several requirements to receive Licensure by Examination as an MD in Michigan.

- I. Complete your Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification.

To be eligible for certification by ECFMG, an international medical graduate (IMG) must meet the following requirements.

International medical students/graduates must submit an Application for ECFMG Certification before they can apply to ECFMG for examination. The Application for ECFMG Certification consists of questions that require applicants to confirm their identity, contact information, and graduation from or enrollment in a medical school that is listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools (World Directory) as meeting eligibility requirements for its students and graduates to apply to ECFMG for ECFMG Certification and examination. As part of the application, international medical students/graduates must also confirm their understanding of the purpose of ECFMG Certification and release certain legal claims.

To meet the examination requirements for ECFMG Certification, an IMG must:

1. Satisfy the medical science examination requirement. USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) are the exams currently administered that satisfy this requirement.
2. Satisfy the clinical skills requirement. USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) is the exam currently administered that satisfies this requirement.

There are time limits for completing the examinations for ECFMG Certification. For detailed information, including information on time limits and using a passing performance on former exams to satisfy these requirements, see Examinations for ECFMG Certification in the ECFMG Information Booklet.

To meet the medical education credential requirements for ECFMG Certification, an IMG must:

- Be a graduate of a medical school listed in the World Directory as meeting eligibility requirements for its students and graduates to apply to ECFMG for ECFMG Certification and examination. The World Directory is available at [www.wdoms.org](http://www.wdoms.org). For those medical schools that meet ECFMG eligibility requirements, there will be an ECFMG note on the Sponsor Notes tab of the schools' World Directory listing. If there is no ECFMG note on your medical school's Sponsor Notes tab, you are not eligible to apply to ECFMG for ECFMG Certification or examination. The IMG's graduation year must be included in the ECFMG note on the Sponsor Notes tab of the school's World Directory listing.
- Have been awarded credit for at least four credit years (academic years for which credit has been given toward completion of the medical curriculum) by a medical school that is listed in the World Directory as meeting eligibility requirements for its students and graduates to apply to ECFMG for ECFMG Certification and examination. There are restrictions on credits transferred to the medical school that awards an IMG's medical diploma that can be used to meet this requirement.
- Document the completion of all requirements for, and receipt of, the final medical diploma. ECFMG must also receive copies of the IMG's final medical school transcript and, if required, transcripts to document credits that were transferred to the medical school that awarded the IMG's medical diploma.

Additionally, ECFMG must obtain primary-source verification of the IMG's medical diploma and transcript(s).

- II. Successfully complete 2 years postgraduate training in a board-approved hospital or institution.

All active postgraduate training programs accredited by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education, College of Family Physicians of Canada, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, or the Conjoint Accreditation Service are approved by the board.

If you have been accepted into a residency program in the State of Michigan, you must apply for an educational limited license at <http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154->

[72600 72603 27529 27541---,00.html](#), which allows you to practice under the supervision of a graduate medical program in an approved training program under the supervision of a medical doctor. An educational limited license may be renewed not more than 5 years.

III. Pass Step 3 of the USMLE examination.

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) determines exam eligibility for Step 3 of the USMLE examination [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org). In order to be eligible to take Step 3, you must:

- Possess an MD or equivalent degree. (For recent graduates, apply only after the date of graduation on your diploma.)
- Pass USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS
- If you are a graduate of a medical school outside of the US or Canada, obtain ECFMG certification or successfully complete a Fifth Pathway program. (Apply only after the issue date on your ECFMG or Fifth Pathway certificate.)

IV. Submit your licensure application, required supporting documents, and pay the application fee.

Your application sent to the Michigan Board of Medicine should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from [www.michigan.gov/healthlicense](http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense)
- Appropriate Fee
- Contact ECFMG to have your certificate electronically submitted directly to the State of Michigan. Visit [www.ecfm.org](http://www.ecfm.org) for information and instructions on how to arrange for your ECFMG status report to be sent to the State of Michigan.
- Contact either the FSMB by visiting their website [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org) or the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) (if tested May 1994 or earlier) [www.nbme.org](http://www.nbme.org).
- Certification of successful completion of 2 years postgraduate training in a program approved by the Board. The Director of Medical Education where you completed your postgraduate training must submit the Certification of Postgraduate Training form directly to this office.

- An applicant whose educational program was taught in a language other than English must submit a certified score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language – Internet Based Test of not less than 80.

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not met all licensing requirements within those 2 years you will need to submit a new application and pay the appropriate fee again.

- V. Be fingerprinted by a Michigan-approved vendor for a criminal background check.

Directions for completing the fingerprint requirement are mailed to you from the Department upon receipt of your application.

### 3. TESTS

Michigan requires all USMLE (Steps 1 through 3) for an MD to become licensed in Michigan. It does not require additional tests.

Your main point of contact for exams for Step 1 and Step 2 will be USMLE and the ECFMG. Step 3, which comes after you have started your residency, is administered by the FSMB. All USMLEs except the Step 2 Clinical Skills test are given at Prometric test centers in the U.S. and abroad.

#### USMLE STEP 1

Step 1 is a one-day examination. It is divided into seven 60-minute blocks and administered in one 8-hour testing session. The number of questions per block on a given examination form will vary, but will not exceed 40. The total number of items on the overall examination form will not exceed 280.

Sections focusing on individual organ systems are subdivided according to normal and abnormal processes, including principles of therapy. Each Step 1 examination covers content related to the following traditionally defined disciplines:

- anatomy
- behavioral sciences
- biochemistry

- biostatistics and epidemiology
- microbiology
- pathology
- pharmacology
- physiology

The Step 1 examination also covers content related to the following interdisciplinary areas:

- genetics
- aging
- immunology
- nutrition
- molecular and cell biology

## **USMLE STEP 2: CK**

Step 2 CK is a one-day examination. It is divided into eight 60-minute blocks, administered in one 9-hour testing session. Test item formats may vary within each block.

The number of items in a block will be displayed at the beginning of each block. This number will vary among blocks, but will not exceed 40 items. The total number of items on the overall examination form will not exceed 318 items. Regardless of the number of items, 60 minutes are allotted for the completion of each block.

On the test day, examinees have a minimum of 45 minutes of break time and a 15-minute optional tutorial. The amount of time available for breaks may be increased by finishing a block of test items or the optional tutorial before the allotted time expires.

Step 2 CK test questions are classified in one of 18 major areas, depending on whether they focus on concepts and principles that are important across organ systems or within individual organ systems. Test questions focus on the principles of clinical science that are deemed important for the practice of medicine under supervision in postgraduate training.

The following system areas may be covered on the Step 2 CK examination:

- General Principles of Foundational Science
- Immune System
- Blood & Lymphoreticular Systems
- Behavioral Health
- Nervous System & Special Senses
- Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue
- Musculoskeletal System
- Cardiovascular System
- Respiratory System
- Gastrointestinal System
- Renal & Urinary Systems
- Pregnancy, Childbirth, & the Puerperium
- Female Reproductive System & Breast
- Male Reproductive System
- Endocrine System
- Multisystem Processes & Disorders
- Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health
- Interpretation of the Medical Literature

An additional organizing construct for Step 2 CK design is physician tasks and competencies. Items are constructed to focus on assessing one of the competencies listed below:

1. Medical Knowledge/Scientific Concepts
2. Patient Care: Diagnosis
  - History/Physical Examination
  - Laboratory/Diagnostic Studies
  - Diagnosis
  - Prognosis/Outcome
3. Patient Care: Management Health Maintenance/Disease Prevention
  - Pharmacotherapy
  - Clinical Interventions
  - Mixed Management

- Surveillance for Disease Recurrence
4. Professionalism
- Systems-based Practice/Patient Safety
  - Practice-based Learning

## **USMLE STEP 2: CS**

Step 2 of the USMLE assesses the ability of examinees to apply medical knowledge, skills, and understanding of clinical science essential for the provision of patient care under supervision, and includes emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention. Step 2 ensures that due attention is devoted to the principles of clinical sciences and basic patient-centered skills that provide the foundation for the safe and effective practice of medicine.

Step 2 CS uses standardized patients to test medical students and graduates on their ability to gather information from patients, perform physical examinations, and communicate their findings to patients and colleagues.

Step 2 CS administration includes twelve patient encounters. These include a very small number of non-scored patient encounters, which are added for pilot testing new cases and other research purposes. Such cases are not counted in determining your score. 15 minutes is allowed for each encounter.

Announcements will tell you when to begin the patient encounter, when there are 5 minutes remaining, and when the patient encounter is over. In some cases you may complete the patient encounter in fewer than 15 minutes. If so, you may leave the examination room early, but you are not permitted to re-enter. Be certain that you have obtained all necessary information before leaving the examination room. Re-entering an examination room after leaving will be considered misconduct. Continuing to engage the patient after the announcement to stop has been made may be considered irregular behavior, will be reported to the USMLE, and could jeopardize your continued participation in the USMLE program.



## **USMLE STEP 3**

Step 3 is a two-day examination. The first day of testing includes 233 multiple choice items divided into 6 blocks of 38-40 items; 60 minutes are allotted for completion of each block of test items. There are approximately 7 hours in the test session on the first day, including 45 minutes of break time and a 5-minute optional tutorial. Note that the amount of time available for breaks may be increased by finishing a block of test items or the optional tutorial before the allotted time expires.

There are approximately 9 hours in the test session on the second day. This day of testing includes a 5-minute optional tutorial followed by 180 multiple-choice items, divided into 6 blocks of 30 items; 45 minutes are allotted for completion of each block of test items. The second day also includes a 7-minute CCS tutorial. This is followed by 13 case simulations, each of which is allotted a maximum of 10 or 20 minutes of real time. A minimum of 45 minutes is available for break time. There is an optional survey at the end of the second day, which can be completed if time allows.

### **Day 1**

#### **Step 3 Foundations of Independent Practice (FIP)**

This test day focuses on assessment of knowledge of basic medical and scientific principles essential for effective health care. Content areas covered include application of foundational sciences; understanding of biostatistics and epidemiology/population health, and interpretation of the medical literature; and application of social sciences, including communication and interpersonal skills, medical ethics, systems-based practice, and patient safety.

The test day also includes content assessing knowledge of diagnosis and management, particularly focused on knowledge of history and physical examination, diagnosis, and use of diagnostic studies. This test day consists solely of multiple-choice questions and includes some of the newer item formats, such as those based on scientific abstracts and pharmaceutical advertisements.

## Day 2

### Step 3 Advanced Clinical Medicine (ACM)

This test day focuses on assessment of the ability to apply comprehensive knowledge of health and disease in the context of patient management and the evolving manifestation of disease over time. Content areas covered include assessment of knowledge of diagnosis and management, particularly focused on prognosis and outcome, health maintenance and screening, therapeutics, and medical decision making. Knowledge of history and physical examination, diagnosis, and use of diagnostic studies also is assessed. This test day includes multiple-choice questions and computer-based case simulations.

### SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES OF THE USMLE

Students and graduates of medical schools outside the US and Canada should apply for Step 1, Step 2 CK, and Step 2 CS by following the instructions on the ECFMG website at <https://secure2.ecfmq.org/emain.asp?app=iwa>.

All medical school graduates who have passed Step 1, Step 2 CK, and Step 2 CS should apply through FSMB at <http://www.fsmb.org/licensure/usmle-step-3/>.

On the day of the exam you must bring your scheduling permit and the required identification as described on your scheduling permit. You should arrive at least a half hour early.

### FAILING THE USMLE

You can take the same Step or Step Component of the USMLE not more than three times a within a 12-month period. The State of Michigan limits the total number of times an applicant may attempt to pass any part of the USMLE to three attempts.

## PRACTICING FOR THE USMLE

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for the content and the computer based testing technology. There are a variety of test preparation resources available for low cost.

For a fee, those who want the opportunity to become familiar with the Prometric test center environment may take a practice exam at the test center.

## 4. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

### LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider whether taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as an MD. Working in healthcare in a different capacity and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages:

- Your employer may pay for some costs associated with licensing
- You can focus more energy on studying
- You will have a chance to adapt to the U.S. healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment
- An opportunity to network with U.S. healthcare professionals, which may prove more useful when gathering Letters of Recommendation for your application

You may immediately qualify for several hospital staff positions which require little or no additional training, such as Certified Nurse Assistant or Phlebotomy Technician. You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans. You may find some employers have benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that will support your goals.

### HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if

you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

## 5. BEYOND LICENSING

### MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Your Michigan medical doctor license must be renewed every three years through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing. Your license will expire on January 31. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You must renew online. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty-day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to January 31. If you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

Every time you renew your license you must certify that you have met a 150-hour continuing education requirement. You need to retain documentation of meeting the continuing education requirement in case you are audited. There are many opportunities to earn these hours, but special rules apply. You should check the Department website for details, or consider joining a professional association that offers continuing education opportunities to members.

### LICENSING MOBILITY (ENDORSEMENT)

The State of Michigan grants licensing to MDs either by examination (the process described in this topic) or by endorsement. A medical doctor licensed in another state, who wants to practice in Michigan, must independently meet all Michigan requirements for licensing. If you become licensed in Michigan and want to practice medicine in another state, you will need to research the legal requirements for that state.

## 6. IMPORTANT LINKS

### LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is [www.michigan.gov/healthlicense](http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense).
- The page that focuses specifically on medical doctors is: [http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600\\_72603\\_27529\\_27541---\\_00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_27541---_00.html). It includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs  
Bureau of Professional Licensing  
PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909  
  
Telephone Number: 517-335-0918  
Fax: 517-373-1044  
Email: [bplhelp@michigan.gov](mailto:bplhelp@michigan.gov)
- The laws that regulate licensing for all health professions including medical doctors can be located at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>
- The laws that regulate controlled substance licensing can be located at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-7>
- The administrative rules governing medical doctors practice in Michigan can be located at: [http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/Files/AdminCode/1313\\_2013-114LR\\_AdminCode.pdf](http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/Files/AdminCode/1313_2013-114LR_AdminCode.pdf)

### USMLE

- Register for USMLE Step 3 [here](#), through the [FSMB](#).
- The Federation Credentials Verification Service (FCVS) is an electronic portfolio of your education and residency credentials. It is a way to maintain proof of your most important credentials over time without having to return for original documentation. You may sign up for its [Physician Information Profile](#) when you register for the USMLE Step 3 in Michigan. FCVS's help number is: 817-868-5000 OR 888-ASK-FCVS (this number can be reached only when calling from within the US), or send an email to [fcvs@fsm.org](mailto:fcvs@fsm.org).

## ECFMG CERTIFICATION

- The [World Directory of Medical Schools](#) has been developed through a partnership between the World Federation for Medical Education and the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research and is searchable online. It lists schools whose graduates are eligible to participate in the certification program.
- The [ECFMG](#) provides certification for graduates of foreign medical schools to compete for residency in the US.
- [Apply for USMLEs](#) through the Interactive Web Application.

## TESTING

- NBME offers [practice materials](#) for all USMLE computer-based tests (Step 1, Step 2 CK, and Step 3).
- [Descriptions and content outlines of all USMLEs.](#)