

Since 1991, the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) has partnered with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in the development and administration of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). The USMLE is a three-Step examination that remains the primary tool used by medical licensing authorities to meet their statutory requirement for an assessment of a physician's knowledge and skills prior to issuing an initial, unrestricted medical license. Since its inception, there have been 1.5 million administrations of the examination.

The USMLE engages in a continuous process of enhancement and quality improvement. Significant changes to the structure and content of USMLE Step 3 are scheduled for 2014. Content changes include expanded assessment of foundational medical science and improved assessment of examinee's ability to critically interpret and apply clinical information and data from various formats. These enhancements are consistent with the USMLE's desire to better incorporate an assessment of those core competencies (e.g, medical knowledge, patient care, practice-based learning and improvement) deemed critical to all physicians regardless of their ultimate intended specialty or practice focus.