

Stepping Up to USMLE™

.....tips to help you survive your Step 1 or Step 2 testing adventure

24/7 On-Line Scheduling Now Available

You can now schedule your USMLE examination appointment with a few clicks of a mouse - an online system is now available through Prometric, Inc.®. Once you receive your Scheduling Permit, go to **www.2test.com** and follow the directions on each screen. You must enter the scheduling number from your permit (in SSN format) in order to make your appointment. You will be prompted to enter the state in which you plan to take Step 1 or Step 2, then the site will show you all the centers available in that state. After you select a center, a calendar with available

dates will appear for that location. You can move back and forth across the months in your eligibility period to find a date that fits your schedule, or, if nothing is suitable, you may select another center and repeat the process. On the last screen, verify your appointment data and provide an e-mail address. Prometric will follow-up with a confirmation e-mail.

NOTE: Use this web site for making your initial exam appointment **only**. To reschedule or change your test center location, contact Prometric at 1-800-MED-EXAM.

NBME Interactive Website for Applicants and Examinees

The NBME's *Interactive Web Site for Applicants and Examinees* is available at the URL shown below. The site enables you to track the progress of your application for Step 1 or Step 2, and to check other data the NBME has in its records, such as your address. You no longer have to call the NBME to find out if your application was received, when your Scheduling Permit was sent, or

the date your scores were mailed. (You **will not** be able to access your scores on this website.) You'll even be able to check the date you're scheduled to take the exam.

The first time you visit the site, you will be asked for information to identify yourself to the NBME. Once authenticated, you will receive a password by e-mail and instructions on how to proceed.

https://oas.nbme.org/ciwc/java/candidate_menu

One Minute Scheduling Tips

- ✓ When you receive your orange Scheduling Permit, double check that your name and eligibility period are correct. If either one is wrong, this could affect your ability to schedule or sit for your exam. Contact the NBME as soon as possible if there is a discrepancy.
- ✓ Try not to schedule your exam on or near the last day of your eligibility period. If something unexpected happens (e.g., you become ill), you may have to request an eligibility period extension.
- ✓ When scheduling your appointment, be sure to provide two telephone numbers, in case you need to be reached prior to your test date.
- ✓ Make your exam appointment as far in advance as possible. Centers can fill up quickly, especially during the peak testing periods of May - June and November - December. Don't forget that USMLE is only one of many examinations that Prometric administers and appointments are made on a first-come, first-served basis.
- ✓ If you need to change your test date, call Prometric by noon Eastern Time at *least five business days* before the date you originally scheduled. Otherwise, Prometric will charge you \$90 to reschedule Step 1 and \$100 to change your Step 2 appointment.

When to Contact the NBME

215-590-9700 www.nbme.org

Address or name change
Duplicate Scheduling Permit
Duplicate score report
Eligibility period extensions
Report a problem at test center

When to Contact Prometric

1-800-MED-EXAM www.prometric.com

Schedule an exam appointment
Confirm, cancel or reschedule exam appointment
Directions to the test center
Change test center location

Give Me A Break

Break time and its use or misuse are sources of confusion for many examinees. Read on to find out how to use this feature to your best advantage.

Just the Facts

You'll have a minimum of 45 minutes of break time to take at your own pace throughout the day. You may add to your overall break time (but not your testing time) by finishing the tutorial or exam blocks early. **YOU** are responsible for keeping track of the amount of break time you use throughout the day. (See *Keeping Track of Your Time*.)

After you exit each block of questions, the monitor will display a break screen. You may take authorized breaks between blocks of questions only. (If you leave your workstation in the middle of a block of questions, this will be reported to the NBME.) Be sure that the break screen shows on your monitor before you leave your workstation.

It's OK to use study materials during a break, but only if the break screen is showing on your computer.

How Did That Happen?

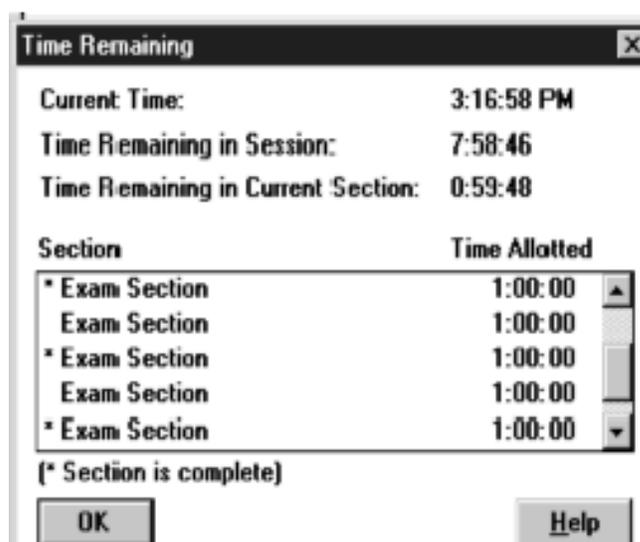
There are two scenarios in which you could inadvertently shorten your break time and/or total testing time. **If time runs out in the block you are working in and:**

- **a test question is on the monitor.** You will be able to enter a response to that question, but *the block won't end until you click the mouse or use the keyboard.* (Also, you cannot go back to answer any additional questions in that block.)
- **the Item Review Screen is on the monitor.** The block *will not end until you click the mouse or use the keyboard.*

Time is **not** suspended while the computer is waiting for you to use the mouse or keyboard. The clock for the entire exam day is still running. The same amount of time you spend deciding your next move is also being subtracted from your break time and/or total testing time. Be sure to exit quickly if the time allotment for a block runs out before you have completed it.

Keeping Track of Your Time

Here's how to figure out how much break time and testing time you have left in your exam session. Click on the small clock icon at the top right of a question screen. The window below appears:



“Time Remaining in Session” refers to the total amount of time you have left for the day, *including* your break time. To find out how many blocks of questions are left, count the sections *not* marked by an asterisk. To figure out how much break time you have left, total up the amount of time allotted for these unopened sections plus the time remaining in the current section, then subtract this number from the time remaining in your session. Feeling math-challenged? You can make this calculation on the laminated note board provided for your use at the center.

TIP: The clock in the examination software is the “official” time counter for the day. Don't be tempted to compute your break time by using either the test center clock or the times you enter in the logbook when you start and end a break. They won't be in sync with the official examination clock.

Plan Ahead

- Confirm your exam appointment and center location at least one week in advance. Call the Prometric telephone number provided on your Scheduling Permit (1-800-MED-EXAM), **not** the test center where you are scheduled to take the exam.
- Look for your orange Scheduling Permit a few weeks ahead of time, too. If you can't find it, then you'll have time to request a duplicate from the NBME.
- Make sure you know how to get to the test center and how long the trip will take. Take a dry run if you need to. Call the test center for directions or arrive at the test center 30 minutes *before* your scheduled testing time.
- Bring your lunch. You probably don't want to use up your break time trying to find fast food.
- Don't bring a lot of "stuff" to the test center. You'll be assigned a locker for all of your personal belongings, but its storage space is limited. You will be given a locker key to keep with you during the day. You may not bring any personal items (other than the clothes you are wearing), food or drink into the testing room. Only an analog watch (without digital readouts) can be worn at your workstation.

Sidestepping ID Problems

When you arrive at the test center, you must present your Scheduling Permit and a *government-issued ID* (e.g., a driver's license or passport) that includes both a recent photo and your signature. Here's how to avoid being turned away because of ID problems:

- **Your ID must be current.** An expired driver's license, for example, is *not* an acceptable form of ID for USMLE testing purposes.
- **The name on your ID *must exactly match* the name on your Scheduling Permit.** If you recently changed your name and your ID reflects that (but your permit doesn't), remember to notify the NBME as far in advance of your test date as possible. A name change form is available at the NBME website. Complete the form and mail or fax it along with the required documentation to the NBME. You'll then receive a letter verifying the change which you must bring to the test center along with your Scheduling Permit.
- **If your government-issued ID has only a photo but not your signature,** a second form of *unexpired* identification with your signature is required, such as a student ID or a credit card. The name on this secondary ID also must *exactly* match the name on your Scheduling Permit.

Is It Worth It?

In 2001, the USMLE Committee on Irregular Behavior reviewed reports and other information relating to 43 USMLE examinees. The USMLE transcripts of 28 examinees were annotated for irregular behavior and, for some behaviors, the examinees were barred from USMLE for a period of time. The types of behavior that resulted in annotation included bringing unauthorized material into the testing room, making notes while in the testing room, and not adhering to proctor instruction. Behavior which resulted in both transcript annotation and being barred from USMLE for a period of time included falsification of information on USMLE documents, such as application forms and score reports, and reproducing secure USMLE test materials on the internet subsequent to test administration.

If there is a determination that you engaged in irregular behavior, your medical career may be put in jeopardy. Don't forget that the third parties who receive your annotated transcript make decisions that could interrupt your medical education, adversely affect your application to residency, or prevent you from getting a license to practice medicine. Think before you act and remember that all examinees are expected to be familiar with the *USMLE Bulletin of Information*, including the section on Indeterminate Scores and Irregular Behavior.

Don't Leave Home Without It

The Scheduling Permit shows your **confidential** Candidate Identification Number. **Test center staff do not have access to this number.** It is printed **only** on your Scheduling Permit. You must enter this number on your workstation computer to start your exam and to begin each block of questions.

Getting Started

- Sign the Test Center Log. Show your Scheduling Permit and form(s) of identification when your name is called. You may have to wait until you can be seated at your workstation, since examinees are usually started one at a time.
- Review the USMLE information sheet that you are given. It outlines the testing schedule and important facts about your testing day.
- Smile. A digital photo will be taken of you for identity verification, if necessary.
- You should be offered a set of earplugs – take them. You may find yourself distracted by a ringing phone, by staff or other examinees entering and leaving the testing area (which is normal), or by the test-taking “idiosyncrasies” of other examinees.
- Two double-sided, laminated boards and a marker will be given to you for taking notes. If you need to replace these during the day, contact the proctor. Leave these at your workstation during breaks and return them to the proctor at the end of the exam.
- You will be assigned a locker for your belongings and escorted to your designated workstation.
- The bottom portion of your Scheduling Permit that shows your Candidate Identification Number will be torn off and handed to you to keep for the rest of the exam. **Don't lose it** because you'll need it to be readmitted after a break.

During the Exam

- If you need to take a break, get up from the workstation, sign the Test Center Log and indicate if you are in the middle of a block of questions or between blocks. When you return you must sign the log again and show your photo ID and bottom

portion of the Scheduling Permit to be readmitted.

- Did your screen just go blank? Did your mouse or keyboard stop working? Don't panic! Notify a proctor right away. If your computer crashes, your exam can usually be restarted within a few minutes with no loss of testing time.
- If you experience a software or hardware problem that you think may have had a negative impact on your exam, *please write the NBME after your testing session.** (Test center staff should also report it to the NBME.) NBME staff will perform a thorough investigation and communicate the results to you.

NOTE: If a Prometric problem prevented you from completing your exam, *write to the NBME for information on retesting.** The NBME has to review your exam data, then your record has to be resent to Prometric – so it will take at least a week before you can schedule another examination. (You won't be charged a rescheduling fee.) Your retest will be a full day of testing, not just the exam blocks you weren't able to finish the first time.

***Fax letters to NBME Test Administration: 215-590-9457**

When Will I Receive My Score?

Step 1 and Step 2 scores are released weekly. With routine processing, your score should be reported three to four weeks after your test date. (Because of the many quality control checks built into the scoring process, this time frame is not likely to decrease in the foreseeable future.) If you still haven't received your score six weeks after your test date, however, contact the NBME.

Disability Services

USMLE provides services to examinees with disabilities who are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Call Disability Services at **215-590-9869** for general information about ADA coverage or if you have any questions before your scheduled test date. You can also visit www.usmle.org (click on *Test Accommodations*) for details. Please remember that you must submit a written request for test accommodations. Here are some important reminders:

- ✓ **Send** your request for test accommodations directly to Disability Services at the *same time* you submit your Step 1 or Step 2 application. (But send your application separately to the address shown in the application instructions.)
- ✓ **Provide** complete and up-to-date information to expedite processing of your request.
- ✓ **Review** your confirmation of accommodations letter to be sure you understand your testing arrangements.
- ✓ **Call** the Prometric *Special Conditions Unit* (the number is shown on your Scheduling Permit) to schedule your accommodated exam. Do not call a test center directly.
- ✓ **Practice** using any assistive device such as a touch pad, screen magnification tool, audio rendition of an exam, etc., that you may require *before* your test date. Remember that changes to confirmed accommodations *cannot* be made the day of testing.