

## INSTITUTIONAL POLICY: E23

**CATEGORY:** Education

**SUBJECT:** Promotion Requirement National Board Examination -  
Passage of COMLEX

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** May 22, 1998

**LAST REVISION DATE:** September 15, 2007

---

### I. Introduction

- A. This exam policy defines a scheduled structure to the process of taking the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) Level 1, Level 2-CE, and Level 2-PE. At all levels, dates for taking the exams and sanctions for failures are expressly dictated. Details of procedures that apply to each sanction are defined separately in the document *Procedures to Be Followed in Cases of COMLEX Failure*.

### II. Definitions

- A. **Institution**—Institution refers to the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM)
- B. **Cognitive Exam**—the knowledge-based exam given by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) as COMLEX Level 1 and Level 2-CE, provided as a computer-delivered exam.
- C. **Performance Exam**—the clinical skills exam given by the NBOME as COMLEX-PE, provided at the NBOME testing center near Philadelphia.
- D. **Reference Exam**—the first taking of the any of the exams; this has special meaning in terms of performance statistics.
- E. **Exam Window of Opportunity**—the block of time defined by this document, (listed under each exam level below), or by the Student Promotions Committee in which a student is required to take the COMLEX computer-based exam.
- F. **Unexcused Failure for taking the COMLEX Exam**---Students, must have their reasons for not taking the exam, during the required window, approved prior to the exam, by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean in order for the reason to be considered “excused.” Such reasons will be limited to unexpected events

such as, but not limited to: a death in the family, documented accidents, illness documented by a physician, weather related travel delays, and documented technical problems at the testing site. Students who fail to notify the Dean that they are not taking the exam within the required window at least one week prior to the test date, or, in the case of an unexpected, documented accident, crisis, or death in the family, within five days after the unexpected incident, will receive an “unexcused failure” to take the exam.

**F. Prep Track**—the form of remediation and help defined in association with failure of the exam.

### III. COMLEX Level 1

#### A. Requirement for Passage

1. In order to continue clinical rotations in the third year, a student must pass the COMLEX Level 1 examination.

#### B. Reference Exam (First Time)

1. A student must have passed the first and second years of course work with a grade of 70 or better, pass the second year comprehensive clinical skills examination—the Objective Structured Clinical Examination [OSCE]), and have turned in all required assignments, in order to be eligible to take the COMLEX Level 1.
2. All students are required to sign up for and take the exam. The student is also responsible for obtaining a seat at the computer testing site.
3. The required exam window of opportunity for taking this exam is May, June, and July at the end of the second year of coursework. The absolute deadline for taking the examination is July 31<sup>st</sup> of the student’s second year of course work. In the event that the National Board changes the examination window of opportunity, the absolute deadline to take this examination will be the last day of the published exam window at the end of the second year of coursework.
4. The student may not schedule an exam for any day in this window when student academic business is scheduled by WVSOM.
5. A student who does not meet the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline for taking this exam will not be allowed to continue on clinical rotations, unless a deferment has been granted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean. The deferment will allow the student to continue rotations until a specified date, by which the student must have taken the COMLEX level 1 examination.
6. See Section VI *Failure to Take the Exam*.

### C. Academic Probation

Any unexcused failure to take, or failure to pass the COMLEX Level 1 examination by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of coursework, will cause the student to be placed on academic probation.

### D. Failure of the COMLEX Level 1 Examination

#### 1. First Failure

- a. Any student failing the exam once must retake the exam before November 15<sup>th</sup> of the beginning of the student's 3<sup>rd</sup> year of coursework.
- b. If a student fails to reach a total score of 350 on the COMLEX Level 1 examination, he or she must take 4 weeks from rotations as a focused study period before the retake exam date.

#### 2. Second Failure

- a. Any student failing the second time must leave clinical rotations when the current rotation has ended.
- b. The individual student's case will be heard by the Student Promotions Committee. (This committee is defined in the Faculty Handbook. The job of this committee is to review all student performance and make recommendations regarding a student's continued academic status to the Dean). The student may be dismissed from the institution. If the Committee recommends to retain the student and this decision is approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, then the following apply.
  - 1) If the student has scored 350 or better on the first retake, he or she will enter the Prep Track. The student will retake the exam in the May/June window of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of coursework.
  - 2) If the student has scored below 350 on the first retake, he or she will repeat the second year of coursework in their original curricular track, beginning with the next break in the academic schedule.
    - a) The student will terminate the repeat of the second year of coursework after all courses have been retaken.
    - b) The student will retake the exam a third time within two months following the completion of the repeated second year coursework.
- c. The student may resume rotations as a beginning third year student after retaking the exam pending the test results.

- d. If the exam is passed, the student will continue rotations as a third year student.

### 3. Third Failure

- a. Any student failing the third time will leave clinical rotations when the current rotation has ended.
- b. If the exam is failed the third time, and the student has already taken the second year for the second time, (see 2-b-2 above, under Second Failure) they will be dismissed from the institution.
- c. If the student did not repeat the second year, the student will meet with the Student Promotions Committee. The student may be dismissed from the institution. In documented extraordinary circumstances, they may be retained as a student. This recommendation will be passed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, who will endorse or modify the proposal. The final decision regarding retention of the student is made by the V.P. for Academic Affairs and Dean. If the decision by the Dean is dismissal, this recommendation must be forwarded by the Dean to the President, who has the final decision regarding dismissal.
- d. If retained, the student may be required by the Committee and/or the V.P. for Academic Affairs and Dean to complete the following steps.
  - 1) The student will retake the second year of their particular curricular track, beginning in August of the first year following their third failure of the exam.
  - 2) The student will retake the exam a fourth time within two months following the completion of the repeated second year coursework.
  - 3) The student will enter rotations as a beginning third year student pending the test results.
  - 4) If the exam is passed, the student will continue rotations as a third year student.

### 4. Fourth Failure

Regardless of the circumstance that led to a fourth attempt at the exam, failure four times will result in the dismissal of the student from WVSOM.

## IV. COMLEX Level 2-CE

### A. Requirement for Passage

- 1. Regardless of the background leading up to the passage of COMLEX Level 1, passage of the Level 2-CE is a requirement for graduation.

## B. Reference Exam

1. A student must have successfully completed the third year of coursework, with a grade of 70 or above in all rotations, have turned in all assignments, and passed the Third Year OSCE, to be eligible to take the COMLEX Level 2-CE.
2. All students are required to sign up for and take the COMLEX Level 2-CE. The student is also responsible for obtaining a seat at the computer testing site.
3. The required window for taking the exam is July, August, and September at the beginning of the fourth year, with a deadline for taking the exam being September 30<sup>th</sup> of that year.
4. A student who does not meet the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for taking this exam will not be allowed to continue on clinical rotations unless a deferment has been granted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean.
5. See Section VI *Failure to Take the Exam*.

## C. Academic Probation

Any unexcused failure to take, or failure to pass the COMLEX Level 2-CE will cause the student to be placed on academic probation.

## D. Failure

### 1. First Failure

- a. Any student failing the exam once must retake the exam before February 1<sup>st</sup> of the year subsequent to the failure.
- b. If a student fails to reach a score of 350, he or she must take 4 weeks from rotations as a focused study period before the retake exam date.

### 2. Second Failure

- a. Any student failing the second time will leave clinical rotations when the current rotation has ended.
- b. The individual student's case will be heard by the Student Promotions Committee. The student may be dismissed by the institution. If the Committee recommends to retain the student and this is approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, then the following apply.
  - 1) If the student has scored 350 or better on the first retake, he or she will enter the Prep Track. The student will retake the exam, for the third time, in the June/July window of that same year.

- 2) If the student has scored below 350 on the first retake, he or she will repeat all required third year rotations, beginning with the next rotation, under the direction of Clinical Education. No grades will be issued, but the student must take exams and pass all courses.
  - a) The student will terminate the repeat of the third year after all required rotations have been retaken.
  - b) The student will retake the exam, for the third time, within two months of completing the repeated, required rotations in the third year.
- c. The student may resume rotations after retaking the exam pending the outcome of the exam.
- d. If the student passes the exam, he/she will continue with the fourth year of coursework.

### 3. Third Failure

- a. Any student failing the COMLEX Level 2–CE exam for the third time will leave clinical rotations when the current rotation has ended.
- b. If the exam is failed the third time, and the student has already taken the third year for the second time, (see 2-b-2 above, under Second Failure), the student will be dismissed from the institution.
- c. If the student did not repeat the third year, the student will meet with the Student Promotions Committee. The student may be dismissed from the institution. In documented extraordinary circumstances, the committee may recommend that the student may be retained. This recommendation will be passed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, who will endorse or modify the proposal. The final decision regarding retention of the student is made by the V.P. for Academic Affairs and Dean. If the decision by the Dean is dismissal, this recommendation must be forwarded by the Dean to the President, who has the final decision regarding dismissal.
- d. If retained, the student may be required by the Committee and/or Dean to complete the following steps.
  - 1) The student will retake the third year of the curriculum, as a third-year student, under the direction of Clinical Education.
  - 2) The student will retake the exam, for the fourth time, as a fourth year student within two months of completing repeated third year rotations.
  - 3) If the exam is passed, the student will continue rotations as a fourth year student.

4. A fourth failure will result in the student's dismissal from the institution.

## V. COMLEX Level 2-PE

### A. Requirement for Passage

To graduate, a student must pass the Level 2-PE.

### B. Exam Requirements

1. A student must have successfully completed the third year of coursework with a grade of 70 or better in each rotation, turned in all assignments, and passed the third year OSCE, in order to be eligible to take the COMLEX Level 2-PE.
2. All students are required to sign up for and take the exam. The student is also responsible for obtaining a slot at the NBOME Clinical Skills Testing Center.
3. For a student wishing to graduate in May, the exam must be taken and passed by April 30<sup>th</sup> of the graduation year, to qualify for graduation.
4. The institution imposes no other deadlines or windows regarding when to take the exam or how often.

### C. Failure

1. In the case of failure, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain a date for retaking the exam, as necessary.
2. If the student fails to pass the Level 2-PE by April 30<sup>th</sup> of the graduation year, he or she will return to Lewisburg and complete a PE Prep Track under the direction of Clinical Education. The student will then retake the exam within 2 months of completing the Prep Track. A fee for the Prep Track will be assessed to the student.
  - a. If the student fails the COMLEX Level 2 PE again, the case will be remanded to the Student Promotions Committee, who will either recommend the student repeat all or part of the third year required rotations or dismiss the student from the institution.
  - b. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean will endorse or modify the recommendation. The final decision regarding retention of the student is made by the V.P. for Academic Affairs and Dean. If the decision by the Dean is dismissal, this recommendation must be forwarded by the Dean to the President, who has the final decision regarding dismissal.
  - c. Subsequent failure will result in dismissal from the institution.

## **VI. Failure to Take an Exam or Meet an Exam Deadline**

- A. A student who misses a scheduled exam must arrange with the exam administrator to take the exam at the next possible date.
- B. Regardless of reason or circumstances, if delay takes the exam date past the window defined for that exam, written permission for delay must be obtained from the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean or designee.
- C. In cases where there is no justifiable reason for delaying the exam, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean may remove the student from clinical rotations when he or she has completed the rotation that the student is currently on at the time of this decision, and consider the student to have failed the exam. The student must then follow the appropriate policy for having failed the exam, based on the level of exam taken (e.g., COMLEX level 1, COMLEX Level 2, etc.) and the number of failures for this exam. (e.g., first failure, second failure, etc.)

## **VII. Appeal**

Some of the requirements found in this policy may constitute an academic sanction which may be appealed. See the Student Handbook for information on appealing an academic sanction.