

Applying to the United States

ECFMG

WWW.ECFMG.ORG

This organization will process:

- your applications and score reports for all USMLE steps
- Match applications
- accompanying paperwork (letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc.)
- issues ECFMG certificate, which lets you practice medicine in USA

You only get the ECFMG certificate once you pass **Step 1, Step 2 CK, Step 2 CS, and finish medical school.** You need this or need to be eligible for it to participate in the Match.

Certificate of Identification

- Form 186
- Generated after you do the online application for an eligibility periods for any of the USMLE steps.
- Need a passport sized photo
- There is a specific person at each university that is eligible to sign this form, ensure that you have the correct person by checking with the medical school's administration
- This takes a while, apply as early as possible

USMLE Exams

- Step 1 Basic sciences and Pre-Clinical Knowledge
- Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK)
- Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS)

- Need to pass all before mid-February of the year you plan to match (the Match itself is in March)
- Can take them in any order you wish
- Most programs look at Step 1 scores before the rest of your application

Step 1

- 8 hour multiple choice exam based on the first two years of medical school (in US)
- Basic science and mechanisms of disease
- Questions have a clinical aspect to them
- Many resources available:
 - First Aid for the USMLE Step 1 is most commonly used
- Practice questions are important, subscribe to an online USMLE Step 1 question bank
- Try to take time to study for only this exam
- Aim for an above average score (Pass is ~188, average is ~222)
 - 60-70% is a passing grade
- Can be written at testing centres in Australia

More on USMLE Step 1

Things to know:

- Diseases more common in America (sarcoid, sickle cell, Lymes disease, and exotic things like Chagas disease)
- How drugs work (esp. antibiotics), what they are used for, and side effects.
- Buzz words: there are 5-6 clues in each questions stem: so know stains (esp Gram +/-), special media (like chocolate agar etc), shapes (diplococci etc), and classic presentations of a disease which will give you a big hint for the answer
- Graphs-such as oxygen dissociation curve, competitive and non-competitive drugs, respiratory (TLC, RV, etc)
- Oncogenes, translocations, and chromosomes where common diseases lie
- Pedigrees for AD, AR, X-linked, and mitochondrial inheritance
- Glycogen storage disease, and lysosomal diseases of childhood (like Tay Sachs, Gaucher' s, PKU, Maple Syrup urine)

Step 2 CK

- 8 hour multiple choice exam based on the clinical years
- Focuses more on management than mechanism
- Good to take around final exams in Australia
- Many review texts available
- Again, know your buzzwords
- Passing score is 189
- Can be written at testing centres in Australia

Step 2 CS

- 1 day practical exam that you can only take in the USA.
- 5 centers where you can go: LA, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago, Houston
- 12 patient encounters where you must take a history and do an exam in 15 minutes. Then write a patient note in 10 minutes.
- Not just a big OSCE. You need to ask specific questions for each presenting problem.
- Score broken in three parts: English proficiency, patient interaction, and information gathering skills. Need to pass all 3 parts.
- Score is Pass/Fail

Study Resources

- First Aid Series for all three exams
- Online Question banks
- Made Ridiculously Simple series
- BRS series
- Goljian lectures and notes
- Kaplan review courses available at a 10% discount to ISN members

How to take a Step

1. Fill out the online application from the IWA section of the ECFMG website
2. Get your certificate of identification done
3. Apply for an 3-month eligibility period when you want to take the exam
4. Can take any Step in any order
5. You will get a scheduling permit in an e-mail and a link to Prometric. Go to Prometric website to get a test day
6. There is a Prometric Center in Sydney, Melbourne and in Perth

Timeline

- Most people try to take Step 1 before applying for the Match, you must have completed your pre-clinical years before your 3 month exam period
- Match is in the March after you graduate
- Need all Steps done before mid-February
- Probably better to have scores before you apply to programs
- Only take exams when you feel ready and know you can pass

Step 2 CS

- This one can only be taken in the USA
- Only 5 centers: Houston, Atlanta, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles
- Get scheduling permit from ECFMG
- Look for eligible times and centers on the ECFMG website
- Need to bring a white lab coat and your own stethoscope
- Some people might need visas

Elective

- A great opportunity to get experience in the USA at programs where you want to apply
- Be affable, available, and keen
- Try to get letters of recommendation (LOR) while you are there. Some programs will only accept letters from American doctors and programs
- It looks especially good when you apply to a program to have a LOR from that same program
- You need at least 3 LOR per specialty

Applying for the Match

- Need to apply through www.aamc.org (Association of American Medical Colleges) in July before Match. Get a token from ECFMG/Oasis to get AAMC ID number and start application. ERAS is AAMC online application service.
- Also need to register for Match through www.nrmp.org (National Residency Matching Program). Match opens August.
- Send supporting documents to ECFMG. Need two cover letters for LOR, one from ERAS and one from ECFMG, available online. Other documents only need the ECFMG cover letter, which you print specifically for each.

ERAS

- Online application that goes to all designated programs
- Can apply to as many specialties as you want
- Can send to 10 programs in one specialty for same price. Can apply to as many as you wish, but after 10 it costs more
- Try not to apply to different specialties at the same school, it might be questioned in the interview

Interviews

- Programs will send you e-mails through ECFMG/ERAS. Interviews start around September and go until January/February
- Be sure to know about each program and specialty and be prepared to discuss why you want to go to their particular program

The Match

- Occurs over four days in March
- Day 1 - check NRMP, to find out *if* you Match, but not *where*
- Day 2 - The Scramble. Results for filled and unfilled programs released. Locations of unfilled programs released at noon. Start contacting unfilled programs directly at noon
- Day 4 - Match day. Results posted on NRMP website at 1pm

Important Websites

- www.ecfmg.org
- www.aamc.org
- www.nrmp.org