

NAVIGATING SHELF/CCSE/STEP 2CK DURING CLINICAL YEARS

Matthew Bellesheim

Plan for Today

- Background
- What to Expect on test day for Shelf Exams/CCSE/Step 2CK
- Active vs Passive Learning
- Resources Available
- Realistic Schedule
- Role of Tutoring

Score Transparency

Percentiles calculated from score report average and standard deviations

- Peds Shelf: 91 (93rd percentile)
- OBGYN Shelf: 88 (87th percentile)
- Psych Shelf: 95 (97th percentile)
- Family Med Shelf: 91 (98th percentile)
- Surgery Shelf: 90 (97th percentile)
- IM Shelf: 91 (96th percentile)
- CCSE (halfway through IM rotation): 260 (84th percentile)
- Step 2CK: 269 (94th percentile)

Subject Clerkship Exam (Shelf Exam)

- 110 questions; no breaks.
- Similar to NBME shelf exam questions.
- Grading is given as a numerical score out of 100.
- Mean score and standard deviation change depending on the specific shelf exams and timing of exam.
 - School determines the percentage the exam will count towards clinical grade.

Comprehensive Clinical Science Exam

- COMP but for Step 2.
- 200 questions; 4 blocks.
- Allowed to have 15 minutes break in between blocks 2 and 3.
- Similar to NBME shelf exam questions.
- Passing score to move forward to Step 2CK usually set by the institution (similar to Step 1).
- Mean score 245; standard deviation of 15.

Physician Task (% Items Per Test)

Patient Care: Diagnosis	(40 - 50%)	
Patient Care: Pharmacotherapy, Intervention & Management	(22 - 29%)	
Applying Foundational Science Concepts	(12 - 16%)	

System (% Items Per Test)

Cardiovascular System	(8 - 12%)	
Gastrointestinal System	(7 - 11%)	
Respiratory System	(7 - 11%)	
Behavioral Health	(6 - 10%)	
Musculoskeletal Syst/Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	(6 - 10%)	
Nervous System and Special Senses	(6 - 10%)	
Immune, Blood and Lymphoreticular Systems	(6 - 8%)	
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	(5 - 9%)	
Endocrine System	(4 - 8%)	
Female Reproductive & Breast	(4 - 8%)	
Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Puerperium	(4 - 8%)	
Renal & Urinary System & Male Reproductive	(4 - 8%)	

Discipline (% Items Per Test)

Medicine	(50 - 60%)	
Surgery	(31 - 37%)	
Pediatrics	(20 - 28%)	
Obstetrics & Gynecology	(10 - 20%)	
Psychiatry	(10 - 15%)	

USMLE Step 2CK

- 9 hour exam.
- 320 questions – 8 blocks.
- 36-40 questions each (due to Pharmacology brochure questions).
- 45 minutes break + 15 minutes tutorial which you can skip.
- Passing Score is now 214.

Physician Task	(% Items Per Test)	
PC: Diagnosis	(34 - 46%)	
PC: Pharmacotherapy, Interventions & Management	(26 - 38%)	
PC: Health Maint, Prevention & Surveillance	(8 - 12%)	
Ethics/Professionalism	(5 - 7%)	
Systems-Based Practice/Patient Safety	(5 - 7%)	

Abbreviation: PC, Patient Care.

System	(% Items Per Test)	
Cardiovascular System	(8 - 10%)	
Gastrointestinal System	(7 - 9%)	
Respiratory System	(7 - 9%)	
Musculoskeletal Sys/Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	(6 - 10%)	
Behavioral Health	(6 - 8%)	
Nervous System & Special Senses	(6 - 8%)	
Blood & Lymphoreticular System	(4 - 6%)	
Endocrine System	(4 - 6%)	
Female Reproductive & Breast	(4 - 6%)	
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	(4 - 6%)	
Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Puerperium	(4 - 6%)	
Renal & Urinary System & Male Reproductive	(4 - 6%)	
Immune System	(3 - 5%)	

Discipline	(% Items Per Test)	
Medicine	(50 - 60%)	
Surgery	(25 - 30%)	
Pediatrics	(20 - 25%)	
Obstetrics & Gynecology	(10 - 20%)	
Psychiatry	(10 - 15%)	

Step 1 and Step 2 CK Content Distribution Changes

On [May 15](#), the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) program announced that [content distribution changes](#) on Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) would be delayed until at least September 2020 because of the impact COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has had on USMLE testing. Below is the current timetable for implementing these changes:

- Beginning in **October 2020**, Step 1 will increase the number of items assessing communication skills.
- Beginning in **November 2020**, Step 2 CK will increase the number of items assessing systems-based practice, patient safety, legal/ethical issues, and professionalism.

Active vs Passive Learning

- Passive Learning = Receiving in the learning experience.
 - Examples: videos, reading, listening.
 - Usually less taxing; good for connecting the dots of concepts.
- Active Learning = Engaging in the learning experience.
 - Examples: flash cards, questions, tutoring.
 - Usually more taxing; better for recall and specific pieces of information.

Recommendations Regarding Resources

- What I recommend: UWorld + Anki + NBME Practice Exams.
 - Keep it simple. There is much less time to study compared to basic sciences.
 - Some people also like:
 - OnlineMedEd (free version is very general and some videos are outdated)
 - Boards and beyond (relatively new)
 - Master the Boards
 - Step Up to Medicine
 - First Aid for Step 2CK (not as heavily regarded as for Step 1)
 - Emma Holiday Youtube videos (old)
 - Divine Intervention podcasts
 - Amboss (good secondary qbank after UWorld)

Practice Exams for Step 2CK

- Uworld Self Assessments 1 and 2
 - To the best of my knowledge, has not been updated to reflect the 2020 changes.
- Free 120
 - Good source of extra questions before exam day.
 - Some of the imaging/prompts were seen on exam day.
- NBME 9, 10, 11, 12
 - Best reflection of Step 2CK as they were updated to reflect the Step 2CK content changes.
 - Some of the imaging/prompts were seen on exam day.

Study Plan

- Any of these exams come down to two principles: content and application.
- Content: do you know the information (memorization, understanding the concept, etc.).
- Application: can you use your information regardless of the question (understanding that the question is written as a patient with a certain diagnosis. One answer choice will line up with that diagnosis, the other answer choices will either be for different diagnoses or for a different indication of the same diagnosis).
- Choose one resource to cover each principle (1 main resource for Content (I prefer Anki) and 1 main resource for Application (I prefer Uworld)).
- At the hospital when your time is less predictable, focus on your content resource.
- At home where you can set aside a certain amount of time dedicated to studying, focus on your application resource.
- For Uworld, I would focus on the shelf questions while you are in your rotation, then leave the remainder of the questions that are Step 2CK specific for any dedicated time after rotations.
- Aim to finish the NBME practice exams before your shelf exam. Try to finish at least one comp practice exam before CCSE, and complete the UWSA 1 and 2, remainder of comp practice exams, and Free 120 before Step 2CK.

Tutoring

- From the student receiving tutoring side:
 - Pros: offers flexibility and individual feedback.
 - Cons: expensive.
- From the tutor side
 - Pros: looks good on ERAS applications, pays well.
 - Cons: volume is variable, must stay up to date.
- Interesting Articles
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8368558/>
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4237985/>
 - <https://bmcmmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-016-0589-1>

Q&A