

The ABC's of Board Prep

COMLEX-USA Level 1 and USMLE Step 1... A Roadmap to Success

***An Overview of Milestones and Criteria:
COMBANK, Qualifying Exams (QEs) and COMLEX***

COCA Accreditation Requirements – COMLEX USA Level 1 and Level 2-CE

Must pass the **NBOME COMLEX-USA Level 1 & Level 2-CE exams** in sequence to advance in the curriculum & **graduate**

- COMLEX-USA Level 1

- MUST **sit for** COMLEX-USA Level 1 **prior to June 16, 2025**, between 2nd & 3rd academic year
 - Cannot start clinical rotations until COMLEX taken
- MUST **register & schedule** a Level 1 test date **as soon as possible**
- NBOME COMLEX Level 1 website: <https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/level-1/>

- COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE

- Must complete or schedule a date that will provide a score release prior to June of graduation year
- If not, CUSOM cannot certify a student for graduation in time to start their residency training
- NBOME COMLEX Level 2-CE website: <https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/level-2-ce/>

What About USMLE?

COMLEX must be the priority during board prep

- In order to **graduate with the DO degree**, you must pass COMLEX Level 1 and Level 2-CE
- In order to obtain an unrestricted **license to practice medicine**, you must additionally pass COMLEX Level 3 during residency
- As such, **COMLEX, not the USMLE**, must be the **primary focus** of board preparation

COMLEX Level 1 and USMLE Step 1 are **very different** exams

Most students **do not need to take USMLE** (and in many cases, should NOT take it)

The determination as to whether taking USMLE is appropriate for you should **only be made** **after very careful consideration**

- Of **your specific situation** (specialty of choice, geographic targets, competitiveness of the specialty, your competitiveness for the specialty, and many other factors)
- Of your potential for success on the USMLE (performance in years 1 & 2, on review questions, practice exams, etc.)
- Including a detailed **discussion** with the **corresponding Clinical Chair** and CUSOM Clinical Affairs and GME faculty
- Performance on the **CBSSA USMLE Practice Exam** - **strongly correlates** with potential to pass USMLE

CUSOM Student Specialty Selection

- 61% of C/O 2024 entered a primary care residency training program
 - FM, IM, IM/Peds, Peds, OB/Gyn**
- 82% of C/O 2024 entered residency in the above specialties w/ the addition of **Psych, EM, & Gen Surg**

Specialties Supporting the Acceptance of COMLEX as equivalent to USMLE



- Any similarities to the specialties most frequently chosen by CUSOM students?
- A significant # of residency programs from other specialties not listed also accept COMLEX

The decision to take USMLE should only be made after **very careful consideration** of your specific situation and **only in consultation** with the corresponding Clinical Chair, CUSOM Clinical Affairs and GME

Family Medicine

Oct 2022 – The Association of Departments of Family Medicine, Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors, North American Primary Care Research Group, and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine

DO applicants **should not be required** to undergo licensing examinations other than the COMLEX-USA and consider DO applicants within context of COMLEX-USA.

[Learn More](#) ↗

Psychiatry

May 2023 – The American Association of Directors of Psychiatry Residency Training (AADPRT)

Recommend that programs **accept COMLEX-USA** when considering DO applicants to their training programs

[Learn More](#) ↗

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

May 2023 – The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R), the Association of Academic Physiatrists, and the American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AOCPMR)

Clearly state policy regarding the acceptability of COMLEX-USA scores and recommend programs **accept COMLEX-USA** when considering DO applicants

[Learn More](#) ↗

Pediatrics

May 2023 – The Association of Pediatric Program Directors, Council on Medical Student Education in Pediatrics, Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs, FuturePedsRes, and NextGenPediatricians

Osteopathic applicants to residency programs **should not be required** – nor made to feel like they are required – to undergo licensing examinations other than the osteopathic (COMLEX-USA) licensure exam.

[Learn More](#) ↗

Anesthesiology

May 2023 – Association of Anesthesiology Core Program Directors (AACPD)

Residency programs **should not require** osteopathic trainees to undergo other licensing examinations in addition to COMLEX-USA.

[Learn More](#) ↗

Obstetrics / Gynecology

Sept 2023 – The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Residency programs should **accept COMLEX-USA** and **not require or pressure** applicants with DO degrees to take additional licensing exams

[Learn More](#) ↗

Emergency Medicine

Oct 2023 – The Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine

Encourage all programs to **accept COMLEX-USA results** as equivalent to ensure equitable consideration for osteopathic applicants

[Learn More](#) ↗

Internal Medicine

Mar 2024 – The Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine

Encourage all programs and subspecialty fellowship programs, in their holistic review of applicants, to **accept that the COMLEX-USA results are equivalent**

[Learn More](#) ↗

Remember, CUSOM is Already Helping you Prepare for COMLEX Level 1!

1. **CUSOM Curriculum****
2. Block 4 Comprehensive Exam
3. CABS I & CABS II
 - COMBANK Questions, Pharmacology Cards
 - CABS 1 Exam – Block 5
4. Dr. Rizk's Biochem/Genetics Board Review Program: **Feb 7-8, 2025**
5. CUSOM Qualifying Exams
6. Kaplan Full-length Practice Exams (optional)
 - 2 student exams—take on your own
 - TBD: Looking into the possibility of secure/proctored exam(s)
7. Kaplan Board Review: **April 28-May 21, 2025** (3 days/week, 7 hours/day)
8. CBSSA USMLE Practice Exam (Optional – CUSOM pays for 1 attempt)
 - Three offerings: **April 23, 2025, April 24, 2025, May 29, 2025**
 - Performance **strongly correlates with potential to pass USMLE**

Exam	Date	Format
Practice QE	January 3, 2025	400 questions 8-hours
QE #1	March 7, 2025 (Block 7 Finals Week)	200 questions 4-hours
QE #2	April 22, 2025	200 questions 4-hours
QE #3	May 28, 2025*	400 questions 8-hours

That's a lot of preparation!

Friday, February 7, 2025	Time
Integrated Quiz 5	8:30
01/30/25 - 02/05/25	
Quiz Review	9:00
OPTIONAL	
Clinical Skills 09	9:30
Small Group Clinical Case (1 hour)	10:00
	10:30
	11:00
FMP Assignment 02	11:30
Due 6 pm	
PCC Assignment 02	12:00
Due 6 pm	
Study Time	12:30
BOARD REVIEW PROGRAM	1:00
FRIDAY (1-4p)	
(Pharmacology, Enzyme Kinetics and Neuropharm, Biostatistics)	1:30
SATURDAY (9a-Noon)	2:00
(General Biochem, Lysosomal Storage Disorders, Carbohydrate/Lipid Metabolism and Disorders)	2:30
SATURDAY (1-5p)	
(Nucleotide Metabolism and Disorders, Molecular Biology, Cellbio and Genetic Disorders)	3:00
SUNDAY (9a-noon)	3:30
(Hemoglobin and Porphyrrias, Amino Acid Metabolism and Disorders, Urea Cycle, Vitamins and their Deficiencies)	4:00

Qualifying Exams for COMLEX Level 1

Qualifying Exams (QEs)

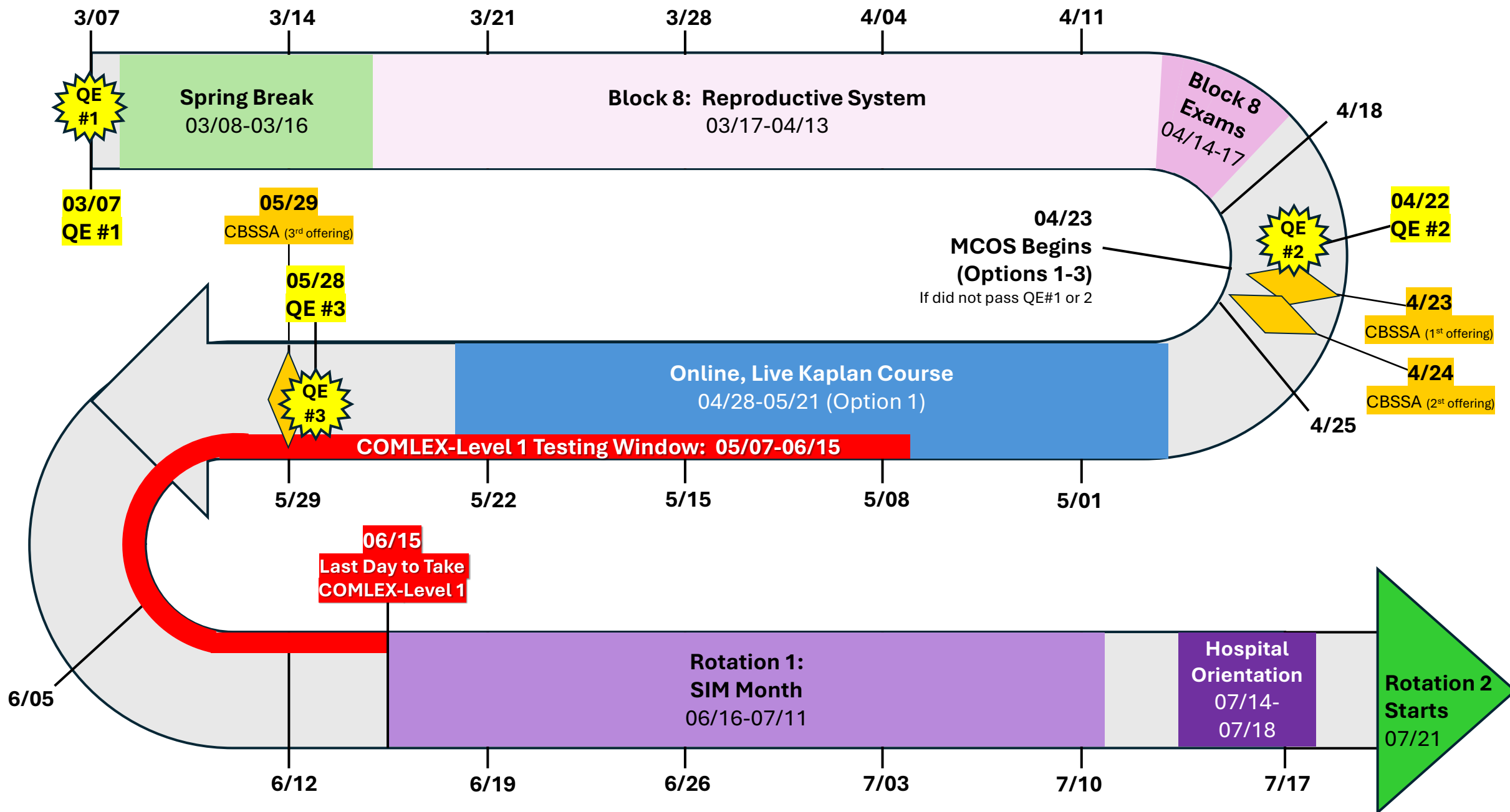
1. Utilized to help **assess student readiness to take COMLEX**; **protects students** from taking COMLEX if **↑ risk of failing**
2. Passing one or more of the QEs is predictive of a higher likelihood of passing COMLEX (but not a guarantee)
3. Failing to achieve a passing score on the QEs is **predictive of ↑ risk of failing COMLEX**; indicates **additional preparation needed**
4. CUSOM covers cost of all QEs

Exam	Date	Format
Practice QE	January 3, 2025	400 questions 8-hours
QE #1	March 7, 2025 (Block 7 Finals Week)	200 questions 4-hours
QE #2	April 22, 2025	200 questions 4-hours
QE #3	May 28, 2025*	400 questions 8-hours

Qualifying to Take COMLEX Level 1 – Two Pathways

Two Pathways to Qualify for COMLEX Level 1

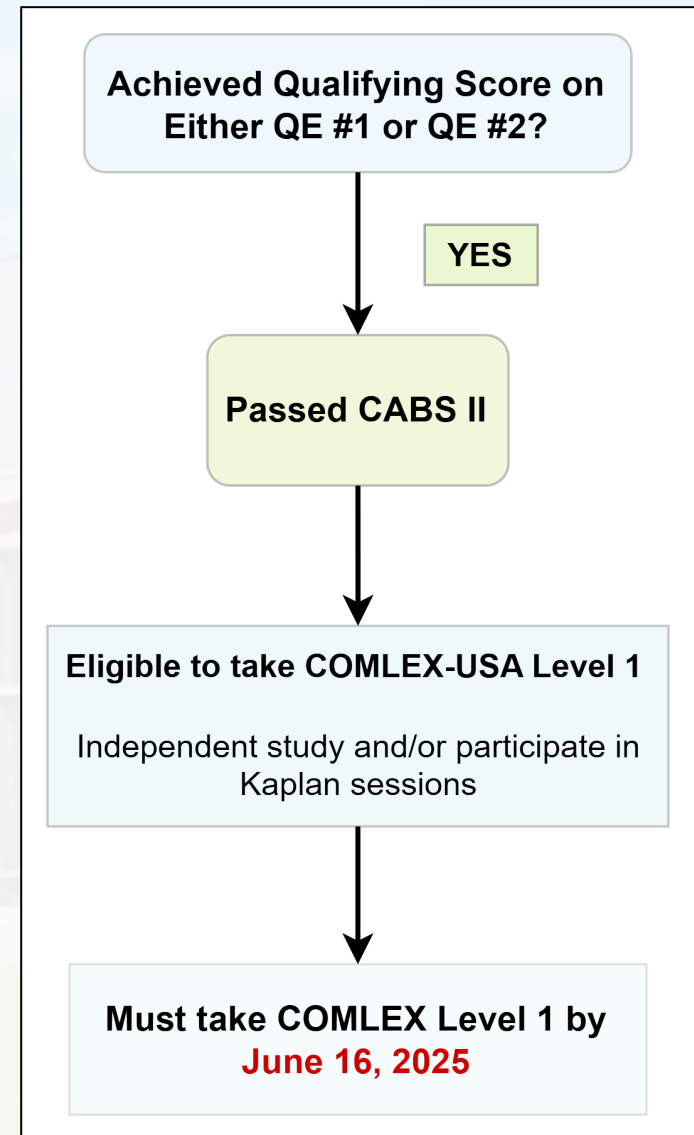
1. **Pathway 1**: Pass Qualifying Exam 1 (QE #1) or Qualifying Exam 2 (QE #2)
2. **Pathway 2**: Enter a Modified Course of Study (MCOS) to **complete a Board Preparation Program – 3 options**
 - Option 1: Complete the **Kaplan** Program and **pass Qualifying Exam 3 (QE #3)**
 - Option 2: Successfully complete the Boards Boot Camp (**BBC**) Program & all associated requirements
 - Option 3: Successfully complete the **PASS Program** & all associated requirements



Qualifying for COMLEX Level 1: **Pathway 1 – Passing QE #1 or QE #2**

Achieving a Qualifying Score on QE #1 or QE #2

1. Earn passing grade for CABS II course
2. Eligible to take COMLEX Level 1 (testing cycle opens May 7th)
3. Continue independent study; welcome to participate in any/all of the Kaplan Review sessions & remaining QE exam(s)
4. **Must take COMLEX Level 1 prior to June 16, 2025**
5. Start SIM Month (first 3rd-year clinical rotation) on **June 16, 2025**
6. Considered a provisional 3rd-year student until receive a passing score on COMLEX Level 1



MCOS to Qualify for COMLEX Level 1: **Pathway 2 - Option 1: Kaplan**

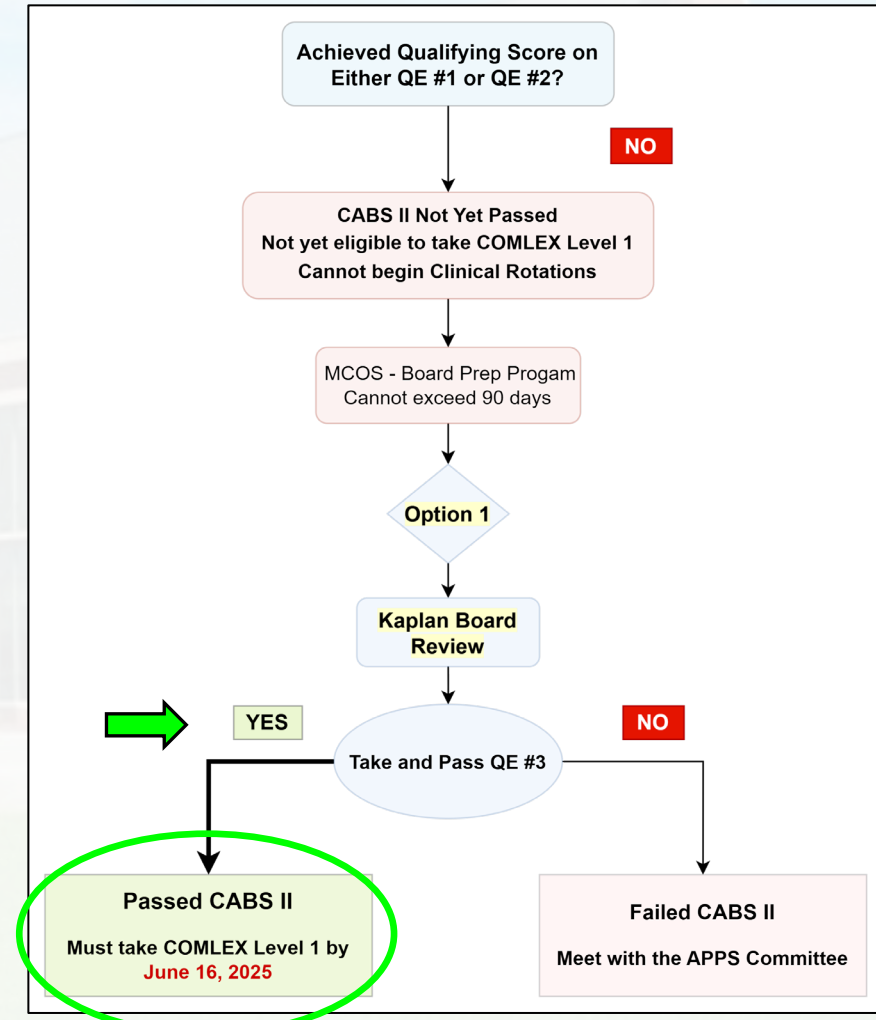
Students who do not achieve a passing score on QE #1 or QE #2 may be placed in a Modified Course of Study (**MCOS**) to complete a Boards Preparation Program – 3 options

Pathway 2 - **Option 1**: Kaplan Review Program

1. Virtual/online, live, synchronous program (3 days/week, 7 hours/day)
2. High-yield content review

Must Complete Kaplan Review **& Pass QE #3**

1. Earn passing grade for CABS II course
2. Eligible to take COMLEX Level 1 (but not until passes QE #3—*after May 28th*)
3. Continue independent study until exam
4. **Must take COMLEX Level 1 prior to June 16, 2025**
5. Start SIM Month (first 3rd-year clinical rotation) on June 16, 2025
6. Considered a provisional 3rd-year student until receive a passing score on COMLEX Level 1



MCOS to Qualify for COMLEX Level 1: **Pathway 2 – Option 2: Boards Boot Camp (BBC)**

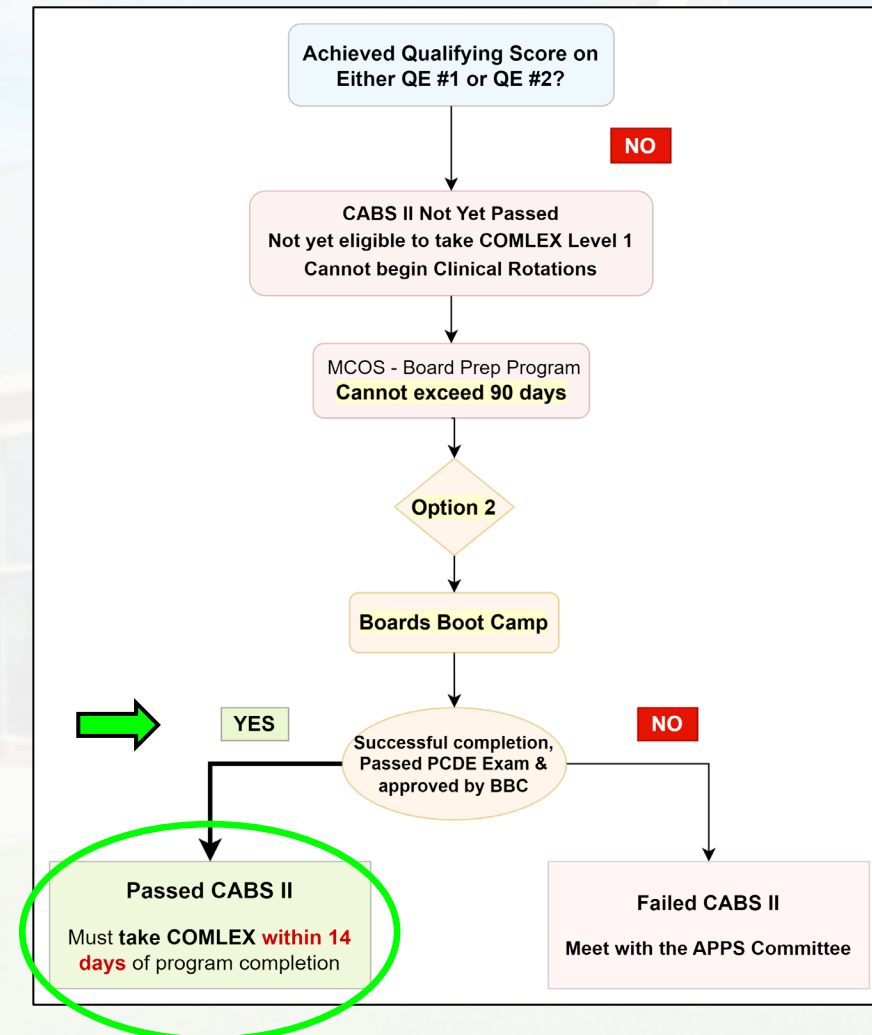
Students who do not achieve a passing score on QE #1 or QE #2 may be placed in a Modified Course of Study (**MCOS**) to complete a Boards Preparation Program – 3 options

Option 2: Boards Boot Camp Ultra Program

1. Asynchronous online, **comprehensive** review program; **cannot exceed 90 days**
2. CUSOM pays for BBC (to get student a discount), then bills student's account
3. **Very structured**; **must follow all BBC timelines & requirements**
4. Successful completion requires passing Post-Course Diagnostic Exam – PCDE (or other BBC-designated exam) **and** be approved BBC

Successful Completion of BBC

1. Earn passing grade for CABS II course
2. **Must take COMLEX within 14 days** of program completion
3. Start clinical rotations after taking COMLEX
4. Considered a provisional 3rd-year student until receive a passing score on COMLEX Level 1



MCOS to Qualify for COMLEX Level 1: **Pathway 2 - Option 3: PASS Program**

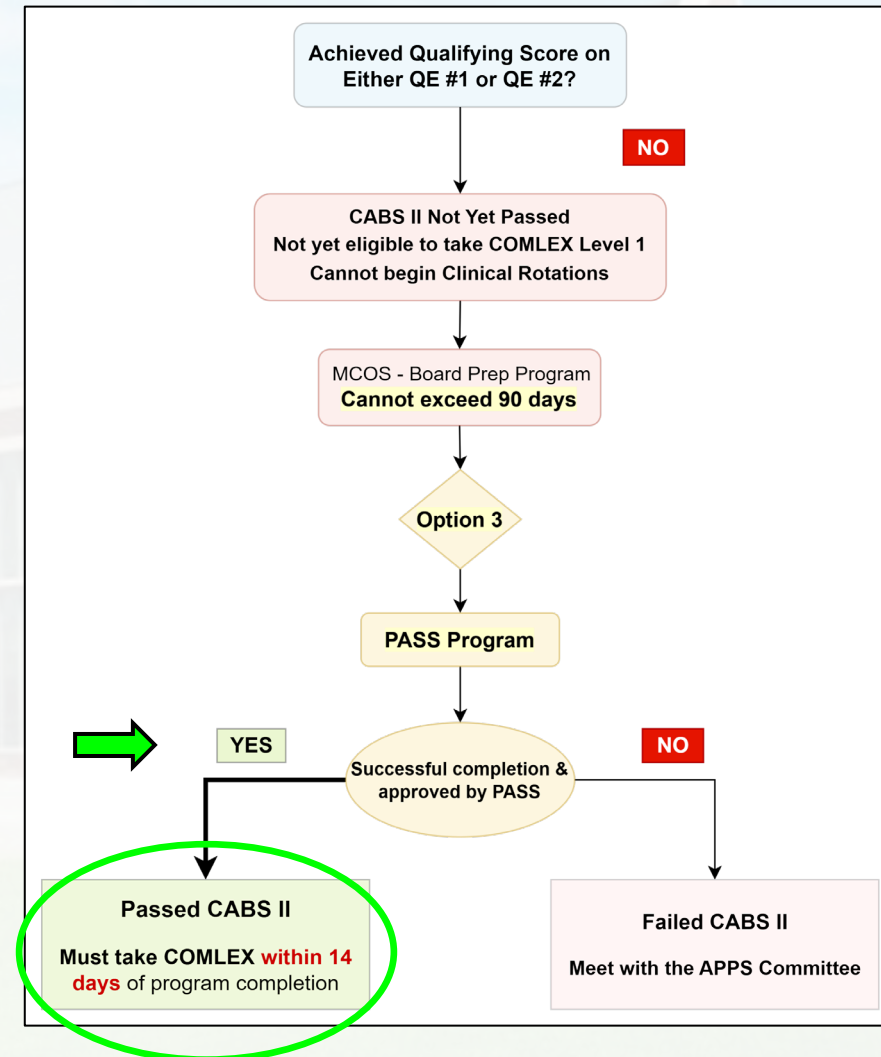
Students who do not achieve a passing score on QE #1 or QE #2 may be placed in a Modified Course of Study (**MCOS**) to complete a Boards Preparation Program – 3 options

Option 3: PASS Program

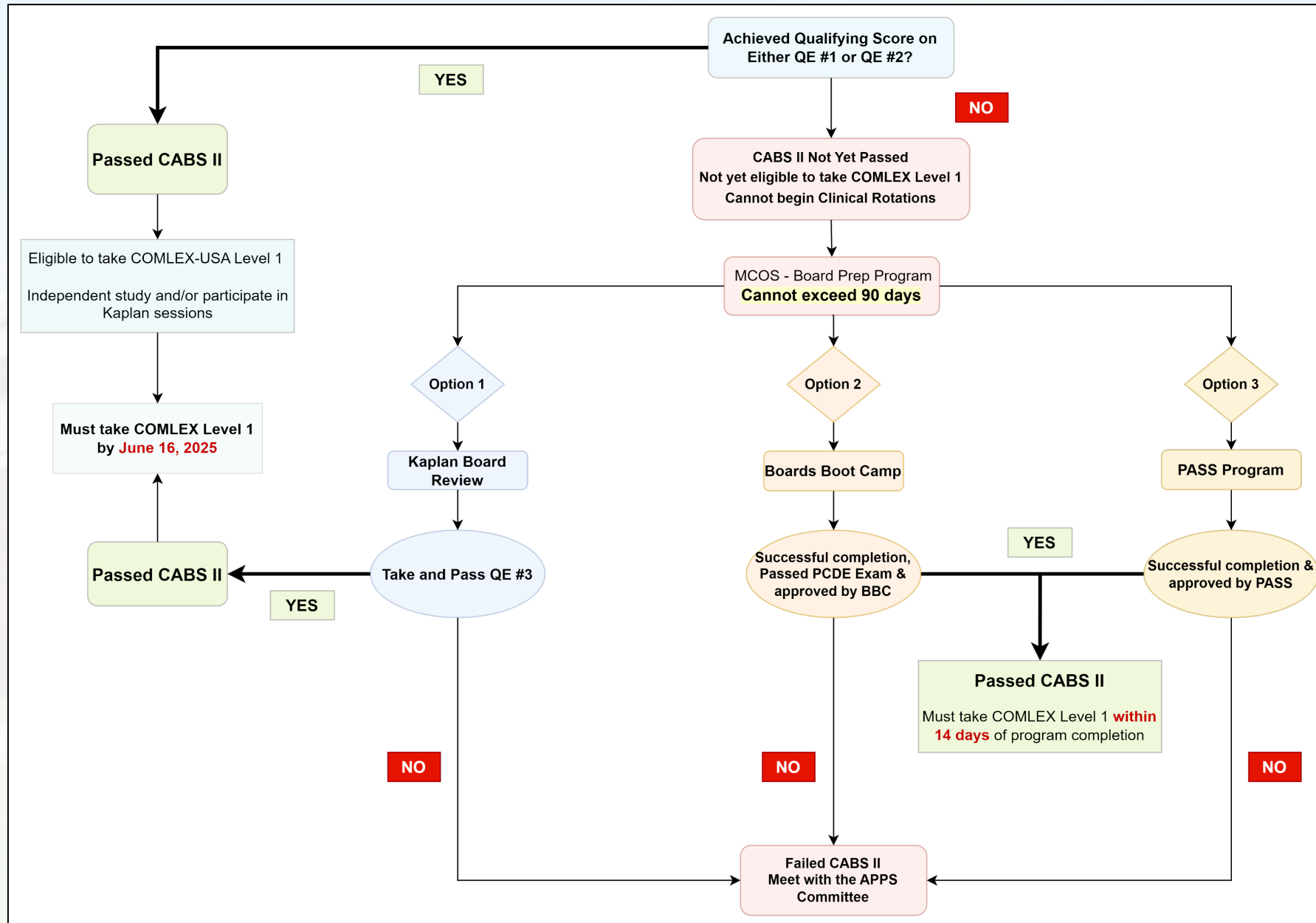
1. Live in-person or online review program, approx. 5 weeks in duration
2. **Cannot exceed 90 days**
3. **Must follow all PASS program requirements**
4. PASS must indicate successful program completion (may include passing one or more qualifying exams determined by PASS) & verify readiness for COMLEX

Successful Completion of PASS

1. Earn passing grade for CABS II course
2. **Must take COMLEX within 14 days** of program completion
3. Start clinical rotations after taking COMLEX
4. Considered a provisional 3rd-year student until receive a passing score on COMLEX Level 1



Summary of Pathways for Qualifying for COMLEX Level 1



Registration for COMLEX Level 1

The window for taking COMLEX is **May 7 – June 15, 2025**

1. Simulation Medicine (first clinical rotation of year 3) begins on **June 16, 2025**
2. Must take COMLEX **prior to beginning clinical rotations**
3. Students must **register with the NBOME & schedule a COMLEX Level 1 exam** date within the **May 7 – June 15, 2025**, window
 - NBOME advises candidates attempt to schedule an exam **at least 120 days in advance** of the desired test date
 - NBOME COMLEX Registration and Scheduling website: <https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/bulletin-of-information/registration-scheduling/>

Testing Accommodation Requests for COMLEX

1. Students who wish to request testing accommodations from the NBOME should do so **NOW**
2. Substantial documentation may be required; NBOME may take up to 75 days (or longer) to review & render decision
3. **Important:** previous awarding of accommodations, including by CUSOM, **does not mean accommodations will be granted by the NBOME**

[Test Accommodations – NBOME](#)

COMBANK Requirements

2,000 questions *minimum* to be completed **prior to start of CABS II on April 28, 2025**

- Part of the requirements for the CABS II Course
1. **1,300** due before the practice exam on January 3, 2025
 - **1000+ already completed in the CABS I course**
 - **300** on or before **January 3, 2025**
 - Includes any other COMBANK questions already completed in Blocks 5 & 6 beyond the 1,000 required for CABS I
 2. Requirements **between January 4, 2025 & April 28, 2025**
 - **350 more before QE #1** on March 8, 2025 (before Spring Break)
 - **350 more before QE #2** on April 22, 2025 (after the Reproductive System)
 - These 700 additional questions brings the total 2,000 COMBANK COMLEX-USA Level 1 questions.

COMBANK Requirements

Why does CUSOM require the completion of so many questions?

CUSOM's data analysis shows a **direct correlation** between **total number of questions** a student completes and a **higher score/pass rate** on their NBOME licensing exams.

- For example, the CUSOM DO Classes of 2017-2023 (2024 – first class without scores) students scoring > 700 (*mean = 500; passing = 400*) on COMLEX-USA Level 1 averaged between **5,000 & 20,000 questions**
- While COMLEX Level 1 is Pass/Fail, a **numerical score** is still provided on **COMLEX Level 2-CE**
- To meet these question totals, students need to supplement COMBANK questions with questions from other banks:
 - **COMQUEST**, Kaplan, COMTESTMed, BoardVitals, etc.
 - U-World (**only** if taking USMLE or have completed other test banks)

Use COMBANK to Complement Course Study in Blocks 7 & 8

Time	Monday, February 10, 2025	Tuesday, February 11, 2025	Wednesday, February 12, 2025	Thursday, February 13, 2025
8:30	Endocrine 27	Gastrointestinal 43	CS Pre-Session 11	Gastrointestinal 45
9:00	Endocrine Pancreas Pathology Dr. Proia	Large Intestine Pathology Drs. Proia / Larson	Inflammatory Bowel Disease Dr. Gumber	Drugs for Inflammatory Bowel Disease Dr. Kadir
9:30	Endocrine 28	Endocrine 29	Endocrine 33	Gastrointestinal 47
10:00	Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia & Paraneoplastic Syndromes Dr. Proia	Endocrine Imaging Dr. Larson	Endocrine Emergencies II: Diabetic Emergencies Dr. Powers	Malabsorption Dr. Wohl
10:30	Gastrointestinal 41	Gastrointestinal 44	Endocrine 34	Gastrointestinal 48
11:00	Patient Presentation: Diarrhea Dr. Cappola	Immunology of Gastrointestinal Tract Dr. Hinkelman	Diabetes in Children Dr. Langdon	Irritable Bowel Syndrome Dr. Wohl
11:30	Gastrointestinal 42	Endocrine 30	Endocrine 35	OMM 06
12:00	Small Intestine Pathology Drs. Proia / Larson	Clinical Approach to Diabetic Patient Dr. Agnello	Case-based Application Session III: Adrenal Gland, Pancreas Drs. Brenseke / Cappola	Adjunctive Treatment Options for Osteopathic Manipulation Dr. Hon
12:30	Lunch	Endocrine 31 Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00	Clinical Skills 10	Endocrine Pancreas Pharmacology I Dr. Harris	OMM Pre-Session 06 Week 7 Content - Due 6 pm	
1:30		Endocrine 32		OMM Lab 06
2:00		Endocrine Pancreas Pharmacology II Dr. Harris		
2:30				Exercise Prescription as an Adjunct to Osteopathic Manipulation



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←
Create a Test
Start Test →

Create
Custom Create
Questions # 25
Name Test 1

Body System	AVAILABLE / TOTAL	Discipline	AVAILABLE / TOTAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Asymptomatic & General Symptoms	[65 / 138]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anatomy	[27 / 192]
<input type="checkbox"/> Cardiovascular System	[144 / 208]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biochemistry, Genetics, & Molecular Biology	[20 / 133]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Endocrine System	[79 / 119]	<input type="checkbox"/> Biostatistics	[21 / 68]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gastrointestinal System	[122 / 196]	<input type="checkbox"/> Diagnosis & Management	[31 / 251]
<input type="checkbox"/> Genitourinary System	[122 / 158]	<input type="checkbox"/> Embryology	[1 / 18]
<input type="checkbox"/> Head & Neck	[49 / 94]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Histology	[7 / 24]
<input type="checkbox"/> Hematology/Oncology	[62 / 87]	<input type="checkbox"/> Immunology	[11 / 66]
<input type="checkbox"/> Integumentary System	[81 / 103]	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Ethics	[9 / 61]
<input type="checkbox"/> Musculoskeletal System	[72 / 293]	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Jurisprudence	[1 / 4]
<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous System	[174 / 224]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microbiology	[21 / 161]
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatry	[53 / 97]	<input type="checkbox"/> Osteopathic Principles and Practice	[33 / 293]
<input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive System	[87 / 126]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pathology	[48 / 224]
<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory System	[96 / 152]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pharmacology	[30 / 286]
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physiology	[48 / 186]
		<input type="checkbox"/> Preventive Medicine	[7 / 36]

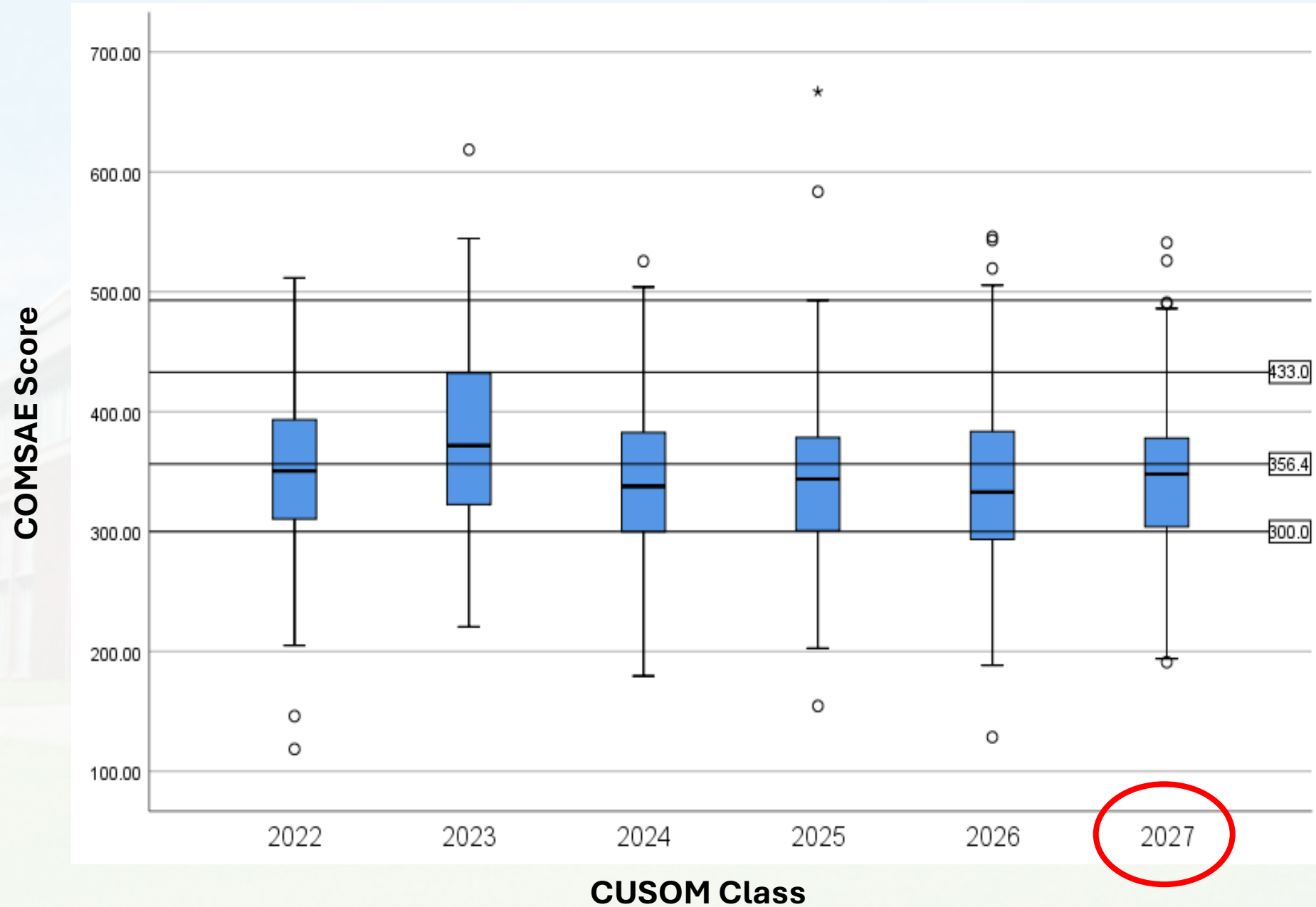


CUSOM DO 2022 – 2027

January COMSAE Performance

Where Are You Now?

January COMSAE Performance by Class



January COMSAE Performance by Class

CUSOM Class	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Median	Minimum	Maximum
2022	155	351.49	64.08	350.50	118.50	511.50
2023	156	375.40	73.92	371.75	220.50	618.50
2024	152	342.69	67.85	337.75	179.50	525.50
2025	156	345.63	70.98	343.75	154.50	667.00
2026	154	340.51	70.53	333.00	128.50	546.00
2027	160	347.94	61.37	348.00	191.00	541.00



COMLEX Level 1 Preparation

Helpful Hints

Student Feedback

Strategies for COMLEX Level 1 Preparation

1. Familiarize Yourself with the Exam (e.g., structure, content, etc.)
2. Develop a Study Schedule
3. Stick to a Few Resources (that work for **YOU!**)
4. Integrate Content Review AND Practice Questions
5. Take Practice Exams

Take care of yourself:

Sleep
Hydration
Breaks & rest
Exercise
Eat well
Celebrate progress

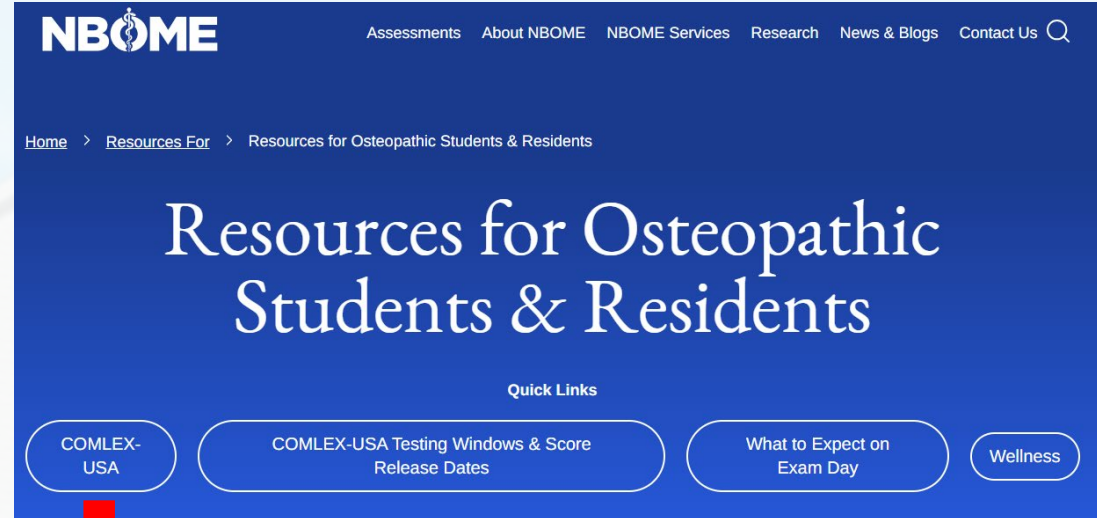
Strategies for COMLEX Level 1 Preparation

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Make Sure to Explore the NBOME Website



<https://www.nbome.org/resources-for/osteopathic-students-residents/>



<https://www.nbome.org/assessments/comlex-usa/>

NBOME Website – Master Blueprint



INTRODUCTION

COMLEX-USA MASTER BLUEPRINT

TEST SPECIFICATIONS FOR EACH EXAMINATION

			TEST SPECIFICATIONS PERCENTAGES					
DIMENSION 1: COMPETENCY DOMAINS			Level 1	Level 2-CE	Level 2-PE*		Level 3	Series Minimum
					HUM*	BM/BM*		
1	Osteopathic Principles, Practice, and Manipulative Treatment		12%	10%	0%	15%	10%	10%
2	Osteopathic Patient Care and Procedural Skills		6%	30%	0%	25%	40%	25%
3	Application of Knowledge for Osteopathic Medical Practice		60%	26%	0%	15%	15%	30%
	3.1	Foundational Biomedical Sciences Knowledge Base	75%	25%			10%	
4	Practice-Based Learning and Improvement in Osteopathic Medical Practice		4%	7%	0%	5%	8%	5%
5	Interpersonal and Communication Skills in the Practice of Osteopathic Medicine		3%	5%	60%	20%	5%	10%
6	Professionalism in the Practice of Osteopathic Medicine		3%	7%	30%	5%	6%	5%
7	Systems-Based Practice in Osteopathic Medicine		2%	5%	0%	5%	6%	5%
DIMENSION 2: CLINICAL PRESENTATIONS			Level 1	Level 2-CE	Level 2-PE*	Level 3	Series Minimum	
1	Community Health and Patient Presentations Related to Wellness		12%	12%	14%	12%	12%	
2	Patient Presentations Related to: Human Development, Reproduction, and Sexuality		5%	5%		5%	5%	
3	Patient Presentations Related to: Endocrine System and Metabolism		5%	5%		5%	5%	
4	Patient Presentations Related to: Nervous System and Mental Health		10%	10%	14%	10%	10%	
5	Patient Presentations Related to: Musculoskeletal System		13%	13%	14%	13%	13%	
6	Patient Presentations Related to: Genitourinary/Renal System and Breasts		5%	5%		5%	5%	
7	Patient Presentations Related to: Gastrointestinal System and Nutritional Health		10%	10%	14%	10%	5%	
8	Patient Presentations Related to: Circulatory and Hematologic Systems		10%	10%	14%	10%	10%	
9	Patient Presentations Related to: Respiratory System		10%	10%	14%	10%	10%	
10	Patient Presentations Related to: Integumentary System		5%	5%		5%	5%	

*For the classes of 2020-2027, Level 2-PE is substituted with attestation by the COM Dean that a candidate has graduated and demonstrated the fundamental osteopathic clinical skills necessary for graduation.

*HUM: Humanistic Domain | BM/BM: Biomedical/Biomechanical Domain

Strategies for COMLEX Level 1 Preparation

1. Familiarize Yourself with the Exam (e.g., structure, content, etc.)
- 2. Develop a Study Schedule**
3. Stick to a Few Resources (that work for YOU!)
4. Integrate Content Review AND Practice Questions
5. Take Practice Exams

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Celebrate progress

Developing a Study Schedule:

How to Integrate Board Prep into Blocks 7-8

Tips:

1. Do well in your courses for Blocks 7-8
 - Review First Aid content that coincides with coursework
 - Practice board-style questions that coincide with coursework
2. Reflect on your weakest area(s)...and do content review **PLUS** questions
 - Prioritize weakest → strongest
 - Some things may require more repetition
3. Block off “breaks” from studying
4. Check in with yourself regularly!
 - How are you doing in your courses? How is your board prep going?
 - How are YOU doing? Does anything need to be adjusted???

Developing a Study Schedule: Full-Time Board Prep (after Block 8)

Tips:

1. Reflect on QE #1 and #2:
 - What progress have you made?
 - Where should you put more focus?
2. Develop a study schedule working backwards from your target exam date

As you get closer to the exam date, shift to doing more questions and timed, practice exams.

Developing a Study Schedule: Full-Time Board Prep (after Block 8)

Example Schedule

- 6:30 – 7:30 am: BREAKFAST/meditation/plan day
- 7:30 – 9:30 am: **Questions** (recommend practicing timed and tracking how many you got through in 2 hrs; working toward goal of 45+ questions)
- 9:30 – 10:00 am: Break (go for a walk/catch up with a friend/etc.)
- 10:00 – 11:30 am: **Review performance** on questions, stopping to understand and make notes for questions missed or guessed correctly, and **do content review of missed concepts** (take 5 min. breaks *prn*)
- 11:30 – 12:30 pm:
- 12:30 – 1:30 pm:
- 1:30 – 2:00 pm:
- 2:00 – 4:00 pm:
- 4:00 – 4:30 pm: Break
- 4:30 – 6:00 pm: **Review performance** on questions, stopping to understand and make notes for questions missed or guessed correctly, and **do content review of missed concepts** (take 5 min. breaks *prn*)
- 6:00 – 7:00 pm: DINNER (and relax)
- 7:00 – 7:30 pm: **Plan for next day**
- 7:30 – 9:00 pm: FREE TIME
- 9:00 – 10:00 pm: Get ready for bed and SLEEP

8.5 hrs/day = STUDY time

8 hrs/day = SLEEP

7 hrs/day = Rest/exercise/eating well/etc.

*Build in “**OFF**” days or half-days too!

Strategies for COMLEX Level 1 Preparation

1. Familiarize Yourself with the Exam (e.g., structure, content, etc.)
2. Develop a Study Schedule
3. **Stick to a Few Resources (that work for YOU!)**
4. **Integrate Content Review AND Practice Questions**
5. **Take Practice Exams**

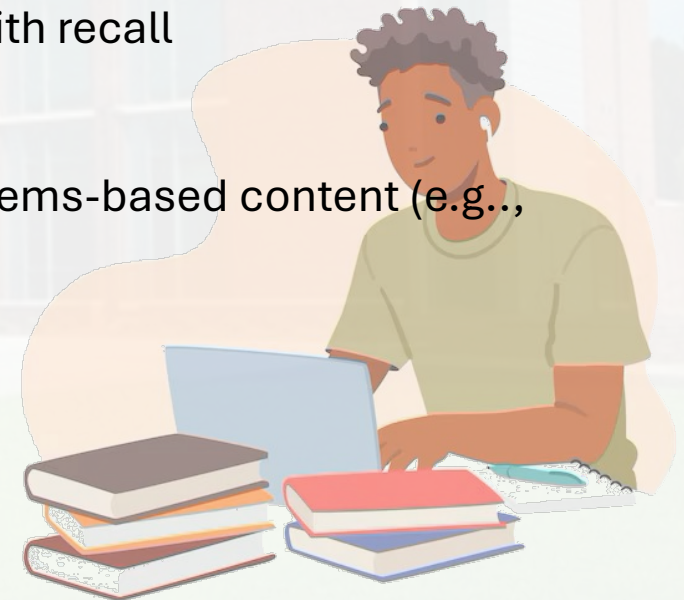
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Some Resources for Content Review

- **First Aid:** good “overview” of the high-yield content across all major topics (good resource to annotate)
- **Savarese’s OMT Review:** “green book”; overview of OMT techniques, diagnosis, and clinical applications
- **Kaplan Online Course & Review Books:** comprehensive online course & books covering all subject areas (plus question bank)
- **Boards & Beyond:** videos on foundational topics for understanding core concepts (biochem, pharm, path, and phys)
- **Sketchy:** videos with illustrated stories (micro, pharm, etc.); good for helping with recall
- **Picmonics:** videos & mnemonics; good for helping with recall
- **Pathoma:** book & videos for pathology & the integration of pathology in the systems-based content (e.g., cardio, GI, etc.)
- **Anki:** Use as a spaced repetition tool for high-yield facts/details

And many others!!! Remember, worry about YOU!



Question Banks & Practice Exams

Student-Directed Practice:

- **Kaplan**—>3,000 practice questions & 2 full-length practice exams
- **COMBANK/TrueLearn**—practice questions & exams

Practice Exams Scheduled by CUSOM:

- **Practice QE**—2 COMSAEs in January ✓
- **QEs #1-3**—2 COMBANK/TRUELEARN exams & 1 CUSOM full-length exam

Optional Practice Exams Scheduled by CUSOM:

- **Kaplan**—TBD
- **CBSSA**—*practice exam for the USMLE Step 1 (optional—3 different offerings)*

**Already freely
available
to you!!!**

Want even more practice???

Available for student purchase for COMLEX Level 1:

- **COMSAE**—NBOME practice exam for COMLEX Level 1 (\$60)
- **COMQUEST**—practices questions & exams

If taking USMLE Step 1, available for student purchase:

- **CBSSA**—NBME practice exam for the USMLE Step 1 (\$62)
- **UWorld**—practice questions & exams

Want to hear from current MS-3 students?

Boards Prep Q&A Session with MS-3 Peer Learning Partners

Tuesday, February 4 at 6 p.m. via Zoom (optional, not recorded)

Look for invite!!!





What do other CUSOM
students have to say?

CUSOM Student Survey Question:

*What **advice** would you give other students preparing to take COMLEX-USA Level 1/USMLE Step 1 regarding planning their study time?*

*What would you **do differently** if you could change how you approached preparation for the test?*

Common themes:

- **Make a study plan**, and start studying early, integrating board study into coursework.
- Complete as **many practice questions as possible**.
- Try to do **practice questions on a DAILY basis** to help reinforce the material.
- Read and use the USMLE First Aid book as a study source.
- Focus on your weaknesses.
- Take more practice exams.

CUSOM Student Survey Question:

What advice can you give to members of future CUSOM students to help them be successful on Level 1 / Step 1?

- “No one is really going to tell you when you should start building time into your schedule for board studying. **SLOWLY introduce it, even if it is just 1-5 questions a day.** Definitely don't immediately start cramming for boards on topics you haven't even covered yet. Also don't start ignoring what is going on in class in order to board study.”
- “**Don't focus on what everyone else is doing** - what may work for you may not work for someone else and vice versa. Trust what you are doing.”
- “Don't burn yourself out by studying too early! Review everything by studying in systems. **Do questions according to system then as you move on do them all together. Take notes in First Aid and reference First Aid. ANKI helps, especially for micro and pharm.**”
- “Listen to CUSOM!! They know what they're doing. **Do the TrueLearn questions, use a resource to help you form a study schedule, and take practice tests.** Use other question banks too. **If you need help** with what you should be doing or how to structure your dedicated study time, **reach out and ask because they are super helpful.**”
- “**Focus on weak areas and do a lot of questions on those topics.** I would review a topic, then focus on doing questions based on my review, and then at the end of the day if I had time, do questions on things I thought I needed to work on and get better at. That way I was still reviewing material that was listed on my study schedule but staying fresh on things I had already looked at.”

Practices of Students Successful in Passing COMLEX

1. Address test-taking anxiety (*reach out to CUSOM Behavioral Health NOW if needed*)
2. Follow sound advice & what works for YOU
3. Thoughtfully complete lots of questions (**DO THOUSANDS OF QUESTIONS!**)
4. Complete timed practice exams, especially an **8-hour day**
 - *Do some double COMSAEs (maybe do them in this building not your home: out of your “comfort zone”)*
 - *Kaplan has 2 full-length non-proctored practice exams for Step 1*
5. Limit your study materials
 - *Using too many study guides and other resources is not efficient & increases anxiety*
6. Establish a study plan well in advance
 - *Adhere to your plan, especially the “routine” and planned periods of board prep.*
 - *Allow some flexibility to adjust the focus of content review and practice questions based on YOUR data—where are those weak areas? What areas have you mastered?*
 - *Anticipate some “burn” days by building in margin from your anticipated test date.*



Some final thoughts...

Take Away Points

- GPA, COMBANK Q's & Exam, COMSAE... **do correlate with COMLEX...BUT** (*a big but* 😊):
 - A Low GPA *does not mean* a student will FAIL COMLEX; just increases the importance of a good prep plan
 - A High GPA *does not mean* a student PASS COMLEX; don't get complacent - must continue to prepare
- The information in this presentation is provided to help you make informed (educated) decisions (not to scare you 😊)
 - Self-reflect, be honest with yourself, and reach out for help if needed
- *While CUSOM offers* suggestions, students ultimately decide how to prepare
- Remember what got you into medical school and that almost everyone will succeed (even if for a few it means taking COMLEX a second time)