

COMLEX Level 2-PE Review Guide

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I would like to dedicate this book to my father, Eugene Kauffman, who once said the job of every father is to make the life of his children better than his own. At this, he has succeeded.

To my wife, Michele, who has brought me three wonderful children, Sam, Kevin, and Jade, and whose patience with me seems eternal.

And to my students, one of whom sat in the front row shaking his head after one lecture. When I asked him what was wrong, he said, "I don't know why you are teaching; you would make such a great practicing physician." With a smile, I replied, "Wouldn't you rather be taught by a good clinical physician who chooses to teach?"

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Introduction

The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) is a three-level examination administered by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) that is designed to document the attainment of national standards in medical knowledge and clinical skills of the candidates of osteopathic medicine.^{1p1}

The levels of examination are denoted as COMLEX Level 1, COMLEX Level 2, and COMLEX Level 3, and are formatted as a written examination. In 2004, the addition of the COMLEX Level 2 Performance Evaluation (PE) incorporated the assessment of the osteopathic student's clinical skills to document competency in patient encounters and manipulation that would attest to the safety of delivery of medical care. Level 2 was then designated as having two components: the COMLEX Level 2 Cognitive Evaluation (COMLEX 2-CE) and the COMLEX Level 2-PE.

Levels 2 and 3 of the examination require prior successful passage of the previous COMLEX level. Students must pass both the COMLEX 2-CE and COMLEX 2-PE to be eligible to take the COMLEX Level 3 examination. Successful passage of each level of the COMLEX-USA examination is required for attainment of medical licenses. Currently in development is the fusion of the written examinations into one comprehensive COMLEX exam. The COMLEX 2-PE will continue to be required.

The COMLEX 2-PE format for evaluation consists of standardized patient encounters where candidates interview trained professional patients in mock clinical settings. Patients present a variety of chief complaints that are commonly encountered in primary care settings. These include well visits and acute visits for illness.

For evaluation purposes, the patient encounter is divided into two components. The first component is called the Biomedical/Biomechanical domain and assesses the candidate's ability to take a complete history and perform a physical examination, develop an assessment plan that incorporates osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM), and document the encounter with a standard subjective, objective, assessment, plan (SOAP) note.^{1p17,2}

The second component is the Humanistic domain, an assessment that focuses on the candidate's communication skills during the clinical encounter.

A candidate must pass both domains to pass the examination.

WELL WISHES

Good luck and please feel free to provide both negative and positive feedback, recommendations, and suggestions from your preparation for the COMLEX 2-PE to mkauffman@LECOM.edu. Thank you.

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