

**COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)  
AND COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE EXAMINATION (CBSE)  
GAUGING READINESS FOR USMLE® STEP 1**



CBSSA and CBSE results can be used in conjunction with other information to gauge readiness for the United States Medical Licensing Examination® Step 1, especially when the assessments are taken in conditions that mirror your Step 1 administration (e.g., testing in one sitting, not consulting resources while testing). When making decisions about readiness, it is important to consider each of the following:

**1. Your total equated percent correct score**, indicating the percentage of the content you have mastered on a 0-100 scale. CBSSA and CBSE scores are statistically adjusted (equated) to account for slight variations in exam form difficulty, allowing you to accurately track progress if taking more than one CBSSA/CBSE.

**2. The location of your CBSSA/CBSE likely score range in relation to the Step 1 low-pass range.** The CBSSA/CBSE likely score range shows how much your score could vary if you tested again without learning or forgetting any information. Under those conditions, your score would fall within 4 points of the reported score two-thirds of the time (it could be 4 points lower or higher). The Step 1 low-pass range represents performance that is above but near the passing standard, or performance that is sufficient to pass Step 1, but only by a small margin. → Any overlap between your likely score range and the Step 1 low-pass range should warrant extra caution. ←

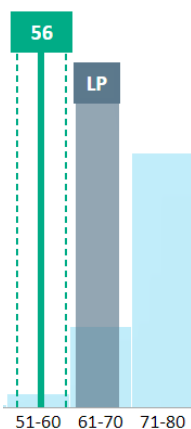
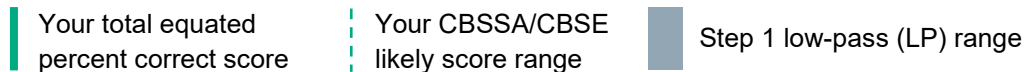
**3. Your estimated probability of passing Step 1 within a week**, which ranges from 1% to 99% and is calculated using a statistical model based on a large group of examinees who tested within one week before taking Step 1 for the first time. This estimated probability should be considered along with the other results and information in the Examinee Performance Report when evaluating readiness for Step 1.

**Please see the next page for guidance on specific scenarios.**

## **KEEP IN MIND**

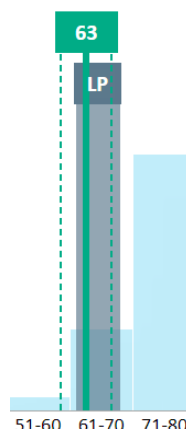
- A 90% estimated probability of passing Step 1 within a week still means that 1 out of 10 students with the same level of performance will fail based on the predictive model.
- The estimated probability is not the same as the percentage of the content mastered. A 90% estimated probability of passing Step 1 is not the same as having mastered 90% of the content.
- Your estimated probability of passing may be different if CBSSA/CBSE is taken more than a week before Step 1 because there is a greater chance for additional learning to occur or for material to be forgotten. Similarly, if you take CBSSA/CBSE under conditions that differ from the conditions under which you will be taking Step 1 (e.g., you used self-paced timing on CBSSA or consulted resources while testing), or if you take the same CBSSA/CBSE more than once, the probability and other results will not be as reliable in helping you evaluate your readiness to take Step 1.
- The probabilities are based on a model that is updated annually. The date of the latest update is provided in the Examinee Performance Report.
- Since many factors (e.g., changing levels of knowledge) may impact performance on Step 1, your estimated probability is not a guarantee of your future Step 1 performance.

## GUIDANCE BY SCENARIO



If your CBSSA/CBSE likely score range is completely below the Step 1 low-pass range, you are at risk of failing Step 1.

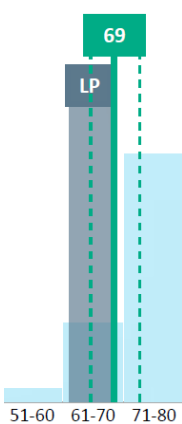
Additional preparation is strongly recommended.



If your CBSSA/CBSE likely score range is partly below the Step 1 low-pass range, your performance on CBSSA/CBSE is borderline.

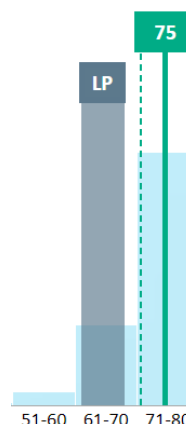
It is unclear whether your level of performance falls below or within the Step 1 low-pass range.

You may still be at risk of failing Step 1, and additional preparation is strongly recommended.



If your CBSSA/CBSE likely score range is partly within and partly above the Step 1 low-pass range, your level of performance is still close to the minimum performance level required to pass Step 1.

Additional preparation may be recommended.\*



If your CBSSA/CBSE likely score range is completely above the Step 1 low-pass range, you are likely ready to take Step 1.

Please remember that CBSSA/CBSE performance is not a guarantee of future Step 1 performance because many factors (e.g., changing levels of knowledge) may impact your performance on Step 1.

\*Additional preparation is typically recommended for students scoring within the Step 1 low-pass range. In a scenario like the one above, consider your CBSSA/CBSE trajectory and other indicators available. Performance that is partly within and partly above the Step 1 low-pass range on two or more CBSSAs/CBSEs may provide more reassurance of readiness than a single instance of performance in that portion of the score scale.

## IN SUMMARY

All results and information in the CBSSA and CBSE Examinee Performance Report are important and should be considered together when assessing readiness for Step 1.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources are available at <https://www.nbme.org/examinees/nbme-self-assessments/comprehensive-basic-science-self-assessment> (CBSSA) and <https://www.nbme.org/examinees/subject-exams> (CBSE).