

Factors to Consider When Selecting a Test Date for COMLEX Level 1 / USMLE Step 1

What are MSUCOM's requirements for taking COMLEX Level 1?

- Students *must* sit for COMLEX Level 1 prior to entering the Clerkship program (for specific policy language, please refer to the appropriate [College Retention Policy](#)). There is no MSUCOM requirement pertaining to USMLE Step 1—it can be taken at any time.
- Students *must* obtain a score of 450 or higher on COMSAE before being allowed to sit for COMLEX Level 1. If a student does not achieve the cut score of 450 on either the 1st or 2nd COMSAE provided by the College, authorization to sit for COMLEX Level 1 will be withdrawn by MSUCOM and the student will need to either cancel or reschedule their exam date ([NBOME Exam Fees](#)).

When should you *sign up* for your COMLEX Level 1 test date?

In November of Semester 5 each student will receive a unique ID number from NBOME, which is required for COMLEX registration and exam date selection. Though you will not actually sit for the exam until after Semester 6 is completed (timeframe discussed below), once you receive your ID number you should *register with NBOME and select your test date as soon as possible*. You can always reschedule at a later time if, for example, you feel underprepared as your test date approaches or a more optimal test date becomes available ([NBOME Exam Fees](#)). If you are at all uncertain about what to do, it is recommended that you meet with an [Academic Advisor](#) to evaluate your circumstances and determine your best course of action.

Reminder

Be sure to set aside enough money to pay for the exam so you're not caught having to wait for your next loan disbursement.

For procedural steps related to registering for the USMLE Step 1, please contact the [MSUCOM Office of the Registrar](#).

When are COMLEX Level 1 and USMLE Step 1 *usually* taken?

Once the 450 COMSAE cut score has been achieved, a student can take COMLEX Level 1 at any time during the period from about mid-May through mid-July, depending on the availability of test dates at [Prometric Testing Centers](#). Those who opt to sit for USMLE Step 1 usually schedule their exam within 7-10 days on either side of their COMLEX test date. *The majority of MSUCOM students have test dates that fall within the second half of June.*

Individual/personal factors to consider when selecting *your* COMLEX Level 1 test date

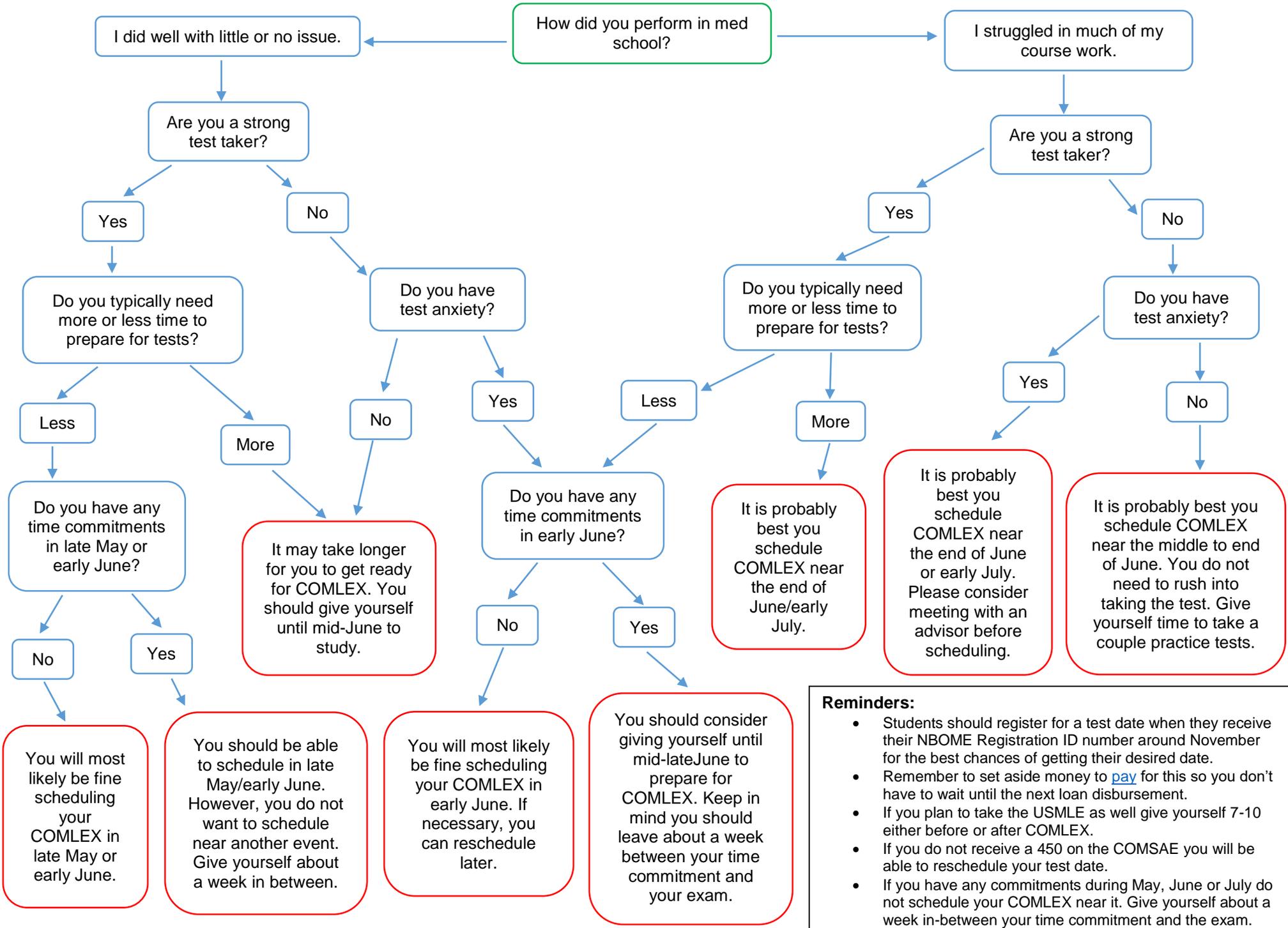
Academic risk factors are by far the most important consideration when selecting a test date. These include (1) low MSUCOM class rank (bottom quintiles) and/or [MSUCOM course percentages consistently below 85%](#) and/or multiple course failures, (2) below average first attempt scores on previous standardized exams, and/or (3) high anxiety and/or low confidence levels relating to standardized tests in general or COMLEX specifically.

Some students are able / ready to take COMLEX earlier than others; there is no “one size fits all” test date. *Any student who is at high risk for low performance based on their academic risk factors should leave an adequate amount of time for thorough preparation.* This generally means scheduling a later test date (latter half of June – mid-July). It is inadvisable to take the exam early (e.g., prior to mid-June) simply to get it over with and/or to allow time to go on vacation or attend to personal business prior to the start of rotations.

To avoid scheduling conflicts and to ensure a sufficiently focused preparation period, make sure to consider the following additional factors:

- Semester 7 (4/30-7/27)—OST 582 Transitions: Classroom to Bedside course
- Base hospital orientation date(s), which typically fall within a two-week period prior to the beginning of rotations
- MSUCOM Just-in-Time Clerkship Orientation
- Personal obligations, such as moving to base hospital location, required military training, or course remediations
- The timing of any other pre-planned personal events, such as weddings, graduations, family reunions, travel, etc.

When should I sit for COMLEX Level 1?



- Reminders:**
- Students should register for a test date when they receive their NBOME Registration ID number around November for the best chances of getting their desired date.
 - Remember to set aside money to [pay](#) for this so you don't have to wait until the next loan disbursement.
 - If you plan to take the USMLE as well give yourself 7-10 either before or after COMLEX.
 - If you do not receive a 450 on the COMSAE you will be able to reschedule your test date.
 - If you have any commitments during May, June or July do not schedule your COMLEX near it. Give yourself about a week in-between your time commitment and the exam.