should not be ignored, as some states consider a file closed if it has not been fully completed within a certain period of time. You should provide all documentation requested in a timely manner.

- **Failing to report a change of address to the medical board.** Most states will not forward licenses in the mail. Thus, if you have recently moved, be sure to notify your medical board of your new address in writing at the earliest possible time.

- **Failing to keep copies of documents that are submitted to the medical board.** It is always a good idea to keep extra copies of all forms and their addresses. This will help you track lost documents and will also help resolve questions the board might have on a particular document.

- **Exhibiting abusive behavior toward medical board personnel.** Medical board personnel typically have a very large workload. Thus, working cooperatively with them is clearly in your best interests. Remember, board personnel don’t make the licensing laws; they’re just chartered to uphold them.

- **Starting the application process too late.** If you are not licensed by the deadline set by your state medical board, you may be unable to continue your training program.

The following potential obstacles to licensure apply to IMGs only:

- **Getting forms completed by a foreign medical school.** Documents sent to foreign medical schools often require additional processing time. It can thus be highly advantageous to have someone living near your medical school oversee the process of document completion, mailing, and the like.

- **Failure to complete sufficient hours in required clinical rotations.** IMGs should carefully review licensing requirements for the state from which they are requesting licensure.

- **Inadequate documentation of individual clinical rotations.** Some states have their own individual forms to be used for documenting each rotation. Again, contact your medical board for details.

- **Failure to use medical-board-approved translators for documents written in other languages.** Some state medical boards have a list of translators whom they have deemed acceptable for translating application documents. Contact your medical board for more information.

**First Aid for the USMLE Step 3**

To apply for Step 3, you must meet the following requirements before submitting an application:

1. Meet the Step 3 requirements set by the medical licensing authority to which you are applying.
2. Obtain your MD degree (or the equivalent) or DO degree.
3. Receive a passing score on Step 1 and Step 2.
4. If you are an IMG, obtain certification by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) or complete a “fifth pathway” program.

Most states will also require that you have completed or have almost completed one year of postgraduate training in a residency program accredited by the ACGME.