

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Essential Abilities and Characteristics Required for Completion of the MD Degree

INTRODUCTION

The MD degree is a broad undifferentiated degree attesting to general knowledge in medicine and the basic skills required for the practice of medicine. Essential abilities and characteristics required for completion of the MD degree consist of certain minimum physical and cognitive abilities and sufficient mental and emotional stability to assure that candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation are able to complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of medical training. The School of Medicine intends for its graduates to become competent and compassionate physicians who are capable of entering residency training (graduate medical education) and meeting all requirements for medical licensure. The avowed intention of an individual student to practice only a narrow part of clinical medicine, or to pursue a non-clinical career, does not alter the requirement that all medical students take and achieve competence in the full curriculum required by the faculty. For purposes of this document and unless otherwise defined, the term "candidate" means candidates for admission to medical school as well as UTRGV medical students who are candidates for retention, promotion, or graduation.

The School of Medicine has a societal responsibility to train competent healthcare providers and scientists who demonstrate critical judgment, extensive knowledge, and well-honed technical skills. Although students learn and work under the supervision of the faculty, students interact with patients throughout their medical school education. Patient safety and wellbeing are therefore major factors in establishing requirements involving the physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities of candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation. The essential abilities and characteristics described herein are also referred to as technical standards. They are described below in several broad categories including *observation; communication; motor function; intellectual-conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities; and social and behavioral skills*. Candidates must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other professional activities. Individuals whose performance is impaired by use of alcohol or other substances are not suitable candidates for admission, retention, promotion or graduation.

Delineation of technical standards is required for the accreditation of U.S. medical schools by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). The following abilities and characteristics are defined as technical standards, are requirements for admission, retention, promotion, and graduation. Candidates and current students who have questions regarding the technical standards or who believe they may need to request reasonable accommodation(s) in order to meet the standards are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

- I. **OBSERVATION:** Candidates must be able to acquire information from demonstrations and participate in experiments of science, including but not limited to such things as dissection of cadavers; examination of specimens in anatomy, pathology, and neuroanatomy laboratories; and microscopic study of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. Candidates must be able to accurately acquire information from patients and assess findings. They must be able to perform a complete physical examination in order to integrate findings based on this information and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan. These skills require the use of vision, hearing, and touch **or** the functional equivalent.
- II. **COMMUNICATION:** Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with patients, their families, health care personnel, colleagues, faculty, staff, and all other individuals with whom they come in contact. Candidates must be able to obtain a medical history in a timely fashion, interpret non-verbal aspects of communication, and establish therapeutic relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to record information accurately and clearly; and communicate effectively and efficiently in English with other health care professionals in a variety of patient settings.
- III. **MOTOR FUNCTION:** Candidates must, after a reasonable period of training¹, possess the capacity to perform physical examinations and diagnostic maneuvers. They must be able to respond to clinical situations in a timely manner and provide general and emergency care. These activities require some physical mobility, coordination of both gross and fine motor neuromuscular function and balance and equilibrium.
- IV. **INTELLECTUAL-CONCEPTUAL, INTEGRATIVE, AND QUANTITATIVE ABILITIES:** Candidates must be able to assimilate the detailed and complex information presented in the medical student curriculum. Candidates must have sufficient cognitive abilities and effective learning techniques to assimilate the increasingly complex information presented in the medical school curriculum. They must be able to learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction; small group, team and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports; simulations and use of computer technology. Candidates must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information across modalities. They must recognize and draw conclusions about three- dimensional spatial relationships and logical sequential relationships among events. They must be able to formulate and test hypotheses that enable effective and timely problem-solving in research and diagnostic algorithms and in diagnosis and treatment of patients in a variety of clinical settings and health care systems. Required cognitive abilities include rational thought, the ability to make analyses, including measurements and calculations, to reach rational conclusions, comprehension of visual-spatial and three-dimensional relationships, as well as ethical and clinical reasoning.
- V. **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES:** Candidates must demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for full use of their intellectual abilities. Candidates must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of all intellectual abilities, exercising good judgment, prompt completion of responsibilities, and developing mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and their family members, staff, and colleagues. They must possess sufficient emotional health to withstand stress, the uncertainties inherent in patient care, and the rigors intrinsic to the study and practice of medicine. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads, to function effectively under stress, and to display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly

complete all responsibilities attendant to their curriculum and to the diagnosis and care of patients. Candidates must display characteristics of integrity, honesty, attendance and conscientiousness, empathy, a sense of altruism, and a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. They must understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within both the law and ethical standards of the medical profession. Candidates must be able to interact with patients and their families, health care personnel, colleagues, faculty, staff, and all other individuals with whom they come in contact in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. The candidate for the MD degree must accept responsibility for learning, and exercise good judgment. Candidates must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept constructive feedback from others; and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. Candidates must have the physical and emotional stamina and resilience to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function in a competent and professional manner under highly stressful situations, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and manage the uncertainty inherent in the care of patients and the health care.

VI. PROFESSIONALISM: Candidates must exercise good judgment, communicate in a clear and timely way with others, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the study of medicine and to the care of patients. They must be capable of regular, reliable and punctual attendance at learning activities and perform their clinical responsibilities in an equally dependable fashion. They must understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within the law and adhere to the ethical standards of the medical profession. Core attributes of professionalism defined by the faculty of UTRGV School of Medicine include altruism, honesty and integrity, respect for others, empathy and compassion, responsibility, and dependability.

At the time an applicant accepts an offer to matriculate, s/he is required to attest that s/he can meet the UTRGV School of Medicine Technical Standards either with, or without, reasonable accommodations. Additionally, enrolled students must attest, annually, that they continue to meet the UTRGV School of Medicine Technical Standards either with, or without, reasonable accommodation.

ABILITY TO MEET THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The School of Medicine intends for its students and graduates to become competent and compassionate physicians through an undifferentiated medical degree and who are capable of entering residency training (graduate medical education) while meeting all requirements for medical licensure. Criminal background checks may be conducted as part of the process of admission, participation, promotion, and/or graduation.

EQUAL ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine has a proud history of training physicians with disabilities and provides reasonable accommodations² for all qualified individuals with disabilities who apply for admission to the MD degree program and who are enrolled as medical students. Otherwise, qualified individuals will not be excluded from admission or participation in the School of Medicine's educational programs and activities based solely on their status as a person with a disability.

Should, despite reasonable accommodation (whether the candidate chooses to use the accommodation or not), a candidate or student's existing or acquired disability interfere with patient or peer safety, or otherwise impede the ability to complete UTRGV SOM's undifferentiated MD program and advance to graduation, residency, training, or licensure, the candidate may be denied admission or may be separated, discontinued, or dismissed from the program.

It is the responsibility of a candidate with a disability, or a candidate who develops a disability, who requires accommodations in order to meet these technical standards, to self-disclose to Student Accessibility Services³ and request accommodations. Candidates must provide documentation of the disability and the specific functional limitations during the registration process with the Student Accessibility Services. Candidates who fail to register with Student Accessibility Services or who fail to provide necessary documentation shall not be considered to be claiming or receiving accommodations under the federal or state disability laws. Students are held to their performance, with or without accommodation. No candidate will be assumed to have a disability based on poor performance alone. Accommodations are not applied retroactively, and a disability-related explanation will not negate poor performance.

While the Dean's Office works in consultation with Student Accessibility Services to determine and coordinate approved accommodations, disability documentation remains confidential.

For Completion by all Candidates

(Please upload the signed document to your CastleBranch account annually. This form is required for the admission, retention, and graduation of students.)

I certify that I have read and understand the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine Technical Standards: Essential Abilities and Characteristics Required for Completion of the MD Degree.

Print Name

Signature

Date

¹Reasonable period of training is defined as an introductory period of exposure to these skills in order to acclimate in the clinical environment. This period of time is usually met before clinical immersion.

²A reasonable accommodation is one that does not fundamentally alter a program's structure or lower academic standards.

³Questions regarding accommodations should be directed to the office of Student Accessibility Services at: ability@utrgv.edu.