

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TECHNICAL,  
NON-ACADEMIC, STANDARDS**

**Essential Abilities and Characteristics Required for Completion of the MD Degree**

**Reviewed and approved February 2019**

**Endorsed by the Faculty Executive Committee**

## 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 enrolled medical students who are candidates for promotion and graduation.

The School of Medicine has an ethical responsibility for the safety of patients with whom students and graduates will come in contact. Although students learn and work under the supervision of the faculty, students interact with patients throughout their medical school education. Patient safety and well-being 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 (or non-academic) 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. In addition to these, candidates must have the physical and emotional stamina to function in a competent manner in settings that may involve heavy workloads and stressful situations.

Delineation of technical standards is required for the accreditation of U.S. medical schools by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. The following abilities and characteristics are defined as technical standards, which in conjunction with academic standards established by the faculty, are requirements for admission, promotion, and graduation. Individuals who are currently impaired by alcohol or other substances are not suitable candidates for admission, promotion, or graduation.

## TECHNICAL (NON-ACADEMIC) STANDARDS

I. **OBSERVATION:** Candidates must be able to observe 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 observe patients and assess findings. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination in order to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan. These skills require the functional use of vision, hearing, and touch.

II. **COMMUNICATION:** Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with patients, their families, and members of the health care team. They 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 in English with other health care professionals in a variety of patient settings.

III. **MOTOR FUNCTION:** Candidates must possess the capacity to perform physical examinations and diagnostic maneuvers. They must be able to respond to emergency situations in a timely manner and provide general and emergency care. Such activities require physical mobility, coordination of both gross and fine motor neuromuscular function, and balance and equilibrium. They must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities.

IV. **INTELLECTUAL-CONCEPTUAL, INTEGRATIVE, AND QUANTITATIVE ABILITIES:** Candidates must have sufficient cognitive (mental) abilities and effective learning techniques to assimilate the detailed and complex information presented in the medical student 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; 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 diagnosis and treatment of patients in a variety of clinical modalities.

V. **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES:** Candidates must demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for full use of their intellectual abilities. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. 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, their families, and health care personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. They must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and long work hours, to function effectively under stress, and to display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments. 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.

VI. ETHICAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS: Candidates must meet the legal standards to be licensed to practice medicine in the State of California. As such, candidates for admission must acknowledge and provide written explanation of any felony offense or disciplinary action taken against them prior to matriculation at the School of Medicine. In addition, should the student be convicted of any felony offense while in medical school, they agree to immediately notify the Dean of Students as to the nature of the conviction. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action by the school that may include dismissal.

#### 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 who are capable of entering residency training (graduate medical education) and meeting all requirements for medical licensure.

#### Equal Access to the School of Medicine's Educational Program

The University of California does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities who apply for admission to the MD degree program or who are enrolled as medical students. Otherwise qualified individuals shall not be excluded from admission or participation in the School of Medicine's educational programs and activities solely by reason of their disability or medical condition. The School of Medicine provides reasonable accommodation in its academic programs to qualified individuals with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not require substantial program modification or lower academic standards. Learning disabilities are included under this policy.

Should a candidate have or develop a condition that would place patients or others at risk or that would jeopardize his or her ability to complete medical student education and pursue residency training and licensure, the candidate may be denied admission or may be dismissed from school. Should a candidate have or develop a disability that poses a significant risk to health and safety of patients, self, or others that cannot be eliminated with a reasonable accommodation, the candidate may be denied admission or may be dismissed from school.

It is the responsibility of a student with a disability, or a student who develops a disability, and who wants an accommodation to notify the Dean of Students of the disability, preferably in writing, and to provide adequate documentation of the general nature and extent of the disability and the functional limitations to be accommodated. A student who has or develops any chronic disease or condition will be expected to seek and continue in the care of a qualified health care provider.

The Dean's Office will work in conjunction with the School's disability coordinator in evaluating and responding to all requests. In the event that additional documentation is required regarding the nature and extent of a disability, the School of Medicine may require that a student undergo an evaluation by experts for purposes of determining whether the candidate, with or without accommodation, is able to meet these technical standards.

**For Completion by All Candidates:**

Are you capable of meeting the School of Medicine's Technical Standards?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

**Reminder to All Candidates:**

If at any time you require a reasonable accommodation to obtain equal access to the School of Medicine's educational program, as stated above, it is your responsibility to notify the School of Medicine of the disability, preferably in writing, and to provide adequate documentation of the nature and extent of the disability and the functional limitations to be accommodated. All requests are to be directed to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs).

By signing below you certify that you have read and understand these standards and have answered the question above correctly.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Please print full name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Please sign and date)

**Acknowledgement**

This document was adopted by the University of California, Davis School of Medicine and approved by the Faculty Executive Committee on May 20, 2005. It was developed and based upon consultation with experienced medical educators throughout the state and careful review and discussion of the technical standards and guidelines in effect at California's public and private medical schools in 2003-04.