

Functional Technical Standards

In accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act of 1973 (PL 93-112) and following careful review of the 1979 report by a Special Advisory panel on Technical Standards of the Association of American Medical Colleges, and incorporating the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA PL 101-336) enacted by Congress in 1990, the West Virginia University School of Medicine (WVUSoM) has adopted **minimal technical standards** for the assessment of all candidates to the School of Medicine. A candidate for the M.D. degree at the West Virginia University School of Medicine must be capable of acquiring and demonstrating all program objectives across the six core competencies, which include medical knowledge, patient care, interpersonal and communication skills, practice-based learning and improvement, professionalism, and systems-based practice. The M.D. degree is a broad undifferentiated degree attesting to general knowledge in medicine and the basic skills required for the practice of medicine. Candidates must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates who intend to practice only a narrow part of clinical medicine, or to pursue a non-clinical career, are still required to achieve competence across all six core competencies to earn an M.D. degree. Candidates must also demonstrate the highest ethical and moral behavior. Essential abilities and characteristics required for completion of the M.D. degree consist of 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 the medical education program.

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, retention, and graduation. The abilities and characteristics are defined below as technical standards, which are requirements for admission, retention, promotion, and graduation. Candidates for the M.D. degree must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. Candidates' diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, and smell. They must have sufficient exteroceptive senses such as touch, pain, and temperature. Sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibration) and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the sections that follow must also be present. They must be able to integrate all information, written and verbal, received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data consistently, quickly, and accurately.

A candidate for the M.D. degree must have abilities and skills including observation; communication; motor; conceptual, integrative, and quantitative; and behavioral and social as outlined below. Technological compensation and reasonable accommodations may be required by otherwise-qualified individual candidates to meet the functional technical standards below, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. Requests for university provided accommodations (see below) will be granted if the requests are reasonable, do not cause a fundamental alteration of the medical education program or its graduation requirements, are consistent with the standards of the medical profession, and are recommended by the West Virginia University Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) in consultation with the appropriate school of medicine leadership.

I. Observation:

The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must also be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand.

- Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell. In addition, a candidate must be able to acquire information quickly and accurately from patients and assess findings, including patients requiring urgent or emergent care.
- Observe a patient accurately and acquire relevant health and medical information, including written documents, digital images, images from the medical literature, slides, and/or video.
- Perform a complete physical examination independently, correctly observe and interpret diagnostic representation of patients' physiological data, and accurately evaluate patients' conditions and responses in order to integrate this information and develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan.
- Interpret radiographic, ultrasound, and other graphic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic data (e.g. EKGs).

The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation, which could be a barrier to accurate assessment and patient care. In any case where a candidate's ability to observe or acquire information through these sensory modalities is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate functionally equivalent means and/or abilities to acquire essential observational information efficiently and accurately.

II. Communication:

A candidate should be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. Candidates must possess the ability to speak and write English sufficiently to communicate with patients. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team. In any case where a candidate's ability to communicate is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to communicate with patients and teams.

III. Motor:

Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should be able to perform basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, CBC, etc.), carry out diagnostic procedures (lumbar puncture, proctoscopy, paracentesis, etc.), and read EKGs and radiographic images. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physicians are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision. In any case where a candidate's ability to complete and interpret physical findings because of motor skills is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to retrieve these physical findings.

IV. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:

Candidates must be able to assimilate and engage with detailed and complex information both written and verbal presented through both the didactic curriculum and clinical coursework. These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Candidates must also interpret and transmit information quickly and efficiently in both remote and in-person situations. Problem solving, the creative skills demanded of physicians, requires all these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Effective participation in learning activities such as individual, small group, and lecture formats, in both the classroom and the clinical setting, will be required. A candidate must be able to effectively learn, participate, collaborate, and contribute as a part of a team. A candidate will need to synthesize written and verbal information effectively and expeditiously both in person and via remote technology. A candidate must be able to interpret causal connections and make accurate, fact-based conclusions based on available data and information. A candidate must be able to formulate a hypothesis, investigate the potential answers and outcomes, and formulate appropriate and accurate conclusions.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes:

A candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that should be assessed during the admissions and education processes. A candidate must readily be willing and able to examine any patient regardless of the patient's age, color, disability, national origin, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, veteran status, or political beliefs.

VI. Ethical and Legal Standards:

Candidates who enroll as medical students are on the pathway toward medical licensure to practice medicine in the state of West Virginia or in another state. Accordingly, candidates must meet and maintain the legal standards to earn a medical license. Candidates for admission must acknowledge and provide written explanation to the SoM of any felony offense(s), misdemeanor offense(s), and institutional action(s) taken against them prior to matriculation or while enrolled at the WVUSoM. This disclosure is required of all, charges and convictions, including expunged and diverted offenses. This includes, but is not limited to, violent misdemeanors, and substance use violations. Institutional actions include, but are not limited to, Title IX or Title VII violations. After matriculation, students admitted to WVUSoM must immediately notify the Associate Dean of Student Services of any arrest, charge, conviction, or institutional investigation or action occurring thereafter. Felony conviction or failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action by the school that may include dismissal.

Procedure for Attesting to the Technical Standards and Consideration of Accommodations

Admitted students attest to the Technical Standards prior to matriculation by signing the Functional Technical Standards page (below). Enrolled students must reaffirm and again sign the Functional Technical Standards signature page during the first week of medical school. During the transition to the clerkship phase of the curriculum, all students reaffirm they have read the standards and again sign the Functional Technical Standards signature page during orientation activities to the clerkship phase of the curriculum. Candidates for admission and students who have questions regarding their ability to meet the school's technical standards should contact the Associate Dean for Admissions (candidates) or Associate Dean for Students (enrolled students). Students who believe they may need to request reasonable accommodation(s) in order to meet the standards must contact the WVU OAS.

Recommendations for accommodations will be determined through collaboration between OAS and student services to assure compliance with these functional technical standards. Additionally, should the student have or acquire an infectious disease or other condition that could put patients or the public at risk through exposure to their blood or other bodily fluids (e.g. hepatitis, tuberculosis, HIV), the student must notify the Associate Dean of Student Services immediately. While student services works in consultation with OAS to determine and coordinate the implementation of reasonable accommodations, disability documentation remains confidential. Implementation of accommodations by the school may not be the same as granted by external licensing examination agencies.

Any candidate will be considered for admission to the WVUSoM M.D. degree program who demonstrates the ability to acquire and demonstrate the program objectives across all six core competencies, and who may become a competent and compassionate physician who is capable of entering residency training (graduate medical education) and meeting all requirements for medical licensure. The Committee on Admissions assesses each candidate to the WVU SoM with the following questions in mind, which are not designed to disqualify candidates and students but rather to give the Committee on Admissions or Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (CAPS) more complete information about a candidate's ability to meet the non-academic standards adopted by the SoM.

1. Is the individual able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences?
2. Is the individual able to read, analyze, synthesize, solve problems quickly and efficiently, and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments?
3. Does the individual have sufficient use of the senses of vision and hearing and the somatic sensation necessary to perform a physical examination? Can the individual perform palpation, auscultation, and percussion?
4. Can the individual reasonably be expected to relate to patients and establish sensitive, professional relationship with patients?
5. Can the individual reasonably be expected to communicate the results of the examination to the patient and to his/her colleagues with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency?

6. Can the individual reasonably be expected to learn and perform routine laboratory tests and the diagnostic procedures?
7. Can the individual reasonably be expected to display good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients?
8. Can the individual reasonably be expected to perform with precise, quick, and appropriate actions in emergency situations?
9. Can the individual reasonably be expected to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior?
10. Can the individual reasonably be expected to possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the medical school curriculum and enter the independent practice of medicine following completion of specialty residency training?

When a candidate does not meet a standard as defined above, student services in collaboration with OAS will determine whether reasonable accommodations can be provided, which do not cause a fundamental alteration of the medical education program, are consistent with the standards of the medical profession, and are recommended by the OAS office. Accommodations are not applied retroactively; therefore, timely requests are essential. Candidates who would like to initiate the accommodation process must complete an online application at <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/register>. The accommodation review process typically includes the candidate providing documentation of a disability, followed by an interactive process between the candidate, Students Services, and OAS to determine whether an individualized accommodation plan will not fundamentally alter the academic or professional standards. The OAS and student services will (a) review requests for accommodations for matriculating and enrolled medical students; (b) review, modify, and approve recommendations for these accommodations; and (c) coordinate the implementation of approved accommodations within the medical school curriculum. If a reasonable accommodation(s) is approved, it is the student's responsibility to alert the course director(s) in a timely manner (as defined by 7 working days prior to implementing the requested accommodation(s)). If it is determined that in the professional judgment of student services or OAS that accommodations may not be made to satisfy the SoM's program objectives across all six core competencies, such opinion will be documented in the minutes of CAPS as they review students' performance. If a student, with or without reasonable accommodation(s), cannot satisfy these Technical Standards or if the disability would interfere with patient or peer safety or otherwise impede the student's ability to complete the undifferentiated M.D. degree program and advance to graduation, residency training or licensure, then CAPS may suspend or dismiss the student from the MD degree program.

LCME Standard 10: Medical Student Selection, Assignment, and Progress

A medical school establishes and publishes admission requirements for potential applicants to the medical education program, and uses effective policies and procedures for medical student selection, enrollment, and assignment.

Applicable Element 10.5: Technical Standards

A medical school develops and publishes technical standards for the admission, retention, and graduation of applicants or medical students in accordance with legal requirements.

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**Functional Technical Standards
West Virginia University School of Medicine**

I acknowledge that as a part of my offer of a position in the MD degree program at the West Virginia University School of Medicine, I have been provided a copy of the current functional technical standards.

I have read these standards, and my signature below signifies that I can meet all these standards, having the abilities and skills of the six varieties outlined including observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative/quantitative, behavioral/social, and ethical/legal standards. I understand that while technological compensation can be made for some disabilities, I must be able to perform the expected tasks in a reasonably independent manner.

() Without accommodations

() With accommodations. The accommodations I am requesting will be submitted to Student Services at least two months prior to matriculation along with the necessary supporting documentation to justify these accommodations. I understand that the school collaborates with the Office of Accessibility Services to determine if these accommodations can be granted and are reasonable for someone pursuing the MD degree.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

() **I accept this offer of acceptance.** I understand that by accepting this offer I am also accepting my campus assignment.

() **I do not accept this offer of acceptance.**