University of Colorado
School of Medicine
Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion and Graduation

I. Introduction

In July 2011, the University of Colorado School of Medicine adopted the following technical standards for admission, promotion and graduation for its doctor of medicine program (MD). Medicine is an intellectually, physically, and psychologically demanding profession. Medical students must demonstrate the ability to tolerate physically challenging workloads and to function effectively under stress. Attending to the needs of patients is at the heart of becoming a physician. Academic and clinical responsibilities of medical students may require their presence during daytime and nighttime hours, any day of the year. Candidates for the M.D. degree must have a variety of abilities and skills including: observation; communication; motor; intellectual-conceptual, integrative and quantitative; and attitudinal-behavioral, interpersonal and emotional. The M.D. Program considers it essential for all M.D. graduates to have the ability to function in a variety of clinical situations and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care. Technological accommodation is available to assist in certain cases of disability and may be permitted in certain areas. However, under all circumstances, a candidate for the M.D. degree should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. For example, the use of a third party means that a candidate’s judgment must be mediated by another person’s (the third party) powers of selection and observation. Therefore the use of a third party to assist a candidate or student in meeting the technical standards for admissions or graduation is not permitted.

Those abilities that M.D.’s must possess to practice safely are reflected in the technical standards that follow.

Candidates for the degree of doctor of medicine must be able to meet these minimum standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, for successful completion of degree requirements (see Section III).

II. Standards

A. Observation

Observation requires the functional use of vision, hearing and somatic sensations. Students must be able to observe lectures, demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences including, but not limited to, anatomic, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations with cadavers and animals, microbiologic cultures and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues, and diagnostic images. Students must be able to observe a patient accurately and
B. Communication

Communication skills include: speech, language, reading, writing and computer literacy. Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients to elicit information regarding affect, mood, posture and functional activities, as well as perceive non-verbal communications. Students must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with other members of the health care community to convey information essential for safe and effective care.

C. Motor

Students must possess sufficient motor function to elicit information from the patient examination by palpation, auscultation, tapping, and other diagnostic maneuvers. Students must be able to perform basic laboratory tests (e.g. slide preparation), perform a complete physical exam, and perform diagnostic procedures (e.g., lumbar puncture, thoracentesis, paracentesis). Students must also be able to execute motor movements reasonably required for routine and emergency care and treatment of patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physicians are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administration of intravenous medication, application of pressure to stop bleeding and opening of obstructed airways. These skills require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movement, equilibrium and the integrated use of touch, vision and hearing.

D. Intellectual-conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities

Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize technically detailed and complex information in a timely fashion to effectively solve problems and make decisions. Information will be provided in a variety of educational settings, including lecture, small group discussions, and individual clinical settings. For example, students must be able to synthesize knowledge and integrate the relevant aspects of a patient’s history, physical findings and diagnostic studies to develop a diagnosis and to monitor an effective treatment program. In addition, students must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand spatial relationships of structures (e.g. macroscopic and microscopic structures).

E. Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must possess the psychological ability required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities, for the exercise of good judgment, for the prompt completion of all responsibilities inherent to diagnosis and care of patients, and for the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, colleagues and other health care providers. Students must be able to tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to a changing environment, display
flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Students must also be able work effectively as a member of a health-care team. As a component of their education, students must demonstrate ethical behavior consistent with professional values and standards.

F. Curriculum Requirements

In addition to the abilities specified above, students must be able to successfully complete, with or without reasonable accommodation, all required components of the curriculum. Academic and professional integrity are cornerstones of medicine. They require an ongoing commitment to honesty, integrity, respect, altruism, accountability, compassion, empathy and self-improvement. Students must be able to maintain a reasonable degree of academic and professional integrity as it pertains to meeting core competencies of knowledge, skills, communication, professionalism, practice-based improvement, and system-based practice.

G. Tests and Evaluations

In order to evaluate competence, the School of Medicine employs periodic examinations in varied formats, including oral, written and practical, as an essential component of the curriculum. Successful completion of these examinations is required of all students as a condition for continued progress through the curriculum. Reasonable accommodation may be made in the form of examination administration where necessary and when the request is documented and submitted in advance.

H. Clinical Performance

Demonstration of clinical competence is of fundamental importance to the program. The process of staff and clinical preceptor evaluation of the clinical performance of the student is an integral and essential component of the curriculum. Students must meet program expectations for each clinical experience.

III. Reasonable Accommodation

It is the policy of the University of Colorado School of Medicine to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified students with a disability who can perform the essential functions as outlined in the above technical standards. Reasonable accommodation may be made in the form of administration of the evaluation where necessary; documented and requested in advance in accord with standards and requirements of the ADAAA. Whether or not a requested accommodation is reasonable will be determined on an individual basis. Determining what is a reasonable accommodation is an interactive process which the candidate/student should initiate with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, in conjunction with the Office of Disability Resources and Services (www.ucdenver.edu/disabilityresources), prior to and/or during the doctor of medicine education program.
Candidates for the M.D. degree will be assessed on a regular basis according to the Academic Standards and the Technical Standards of the School of Medicine on their abilities to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion and Graduation for the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

______________________________  ________________________________
Signature                      Date

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Printed Name