



## **POLICY TITLE**

Technical Standards for Medical Students

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The University of North Carolina School of Medicine believes that earning a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree requires mastery of a coherent body of knowledge and skills. A medical student must acquire substantial competence in the principles and facts of all of the curriculum's required basic sciences, must understand and appreciate the principles and practice of all of the basic fields of clinical medicine and must be able to relate appropriately to patients and to other health care professionals. This Policy establishes the personal attributes and capabilities required for admission to, promotion within, and graduation from the UNC School of Medicine. Medical students are required to attest that they are in compliance with these technical standards on an annual basis.

## **RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

The Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education and the UNC School of Medicine Education Committee shall review this document within each even-numbered fiscal year, or more often as appropriate.

## **LCME REFERENCES(S):**

Standard 10.5: Technical Standards

## **HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES:**

Approved by Education Committee October 2022

Approved by Education Committee July 2018

Approved by Education Committee July 18, 2016 Approved by Education Committee February 15, 2016

Approved by Education Committee October 20, 2015

Approved by Education Committee February 20, 2012

## **POLICY**

The curriculum of the School of Medicine at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is designed to provide a general professional education leading to the M.D. degree and to prepare students to enter graduate medical training in a wide variety of medical specialties and sub-specialties. All UNC School of Medicine applicants and current students (herein after designated as "candidates for the M.D. degree") must possess the intellectual capacity, physical ability, emotional and psychological health, interpersonal sensitivity, and communication skills to acquire the scientific knowledge, interpersonal and technical competencies, professional disposition, and clinical abilities required to pursue any pathway of graduate medical education and to enter the independent practice of medicine. All candidates must be aware that the academic and clinical responsibilities of medical students will, at times, require their presence during day, evening and overnight hours, seven days per week. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress.

Therefore, the School of Medicine at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has established the following technical standards for admission to, retention in, and graduation from, the M.D. program:

**Introduction.** Because the medical profession is governed by ethical principles and by state and federal laws, a medical student must have the capacity to learn and understand these values and laws and to perform within their guidelines. A student should be able to relate to colleagues, staff and patients with honesty, integrity, nondiscrimination, self-sacrifice and dedication. They should be able to understand and use the power, special privileges, and trust inherent in the physician-patient relationship for the patient's benefit, and to know and avoid the behaviors that constitute misuse of this power. One should demonstrate the capacity to examine and deliberate effectively about the social and ethical questions that define medicine and physicians' roles and to reason critically about these questions. The student must be able to identify personal reactions and responses, recognize multiple points of view, and integrate these appropriately into clinical decision making.

**Attitudinal, Behavioral, Interpersonal, and Emotional Attributes.** A medical student must be of sufficient emotional health to utilize fully their intellectual ability, to exercise good judgment, to complete patient care responsibilities promptly, and to relate to patients, families, and colleagues with courtesy, compassion, maturity, and respect for their dignity. The ability to participate collaboratively and flexibly as a professional team member is essential. The medical student must display this emotional health in spite of stressful work, changing environments, and clinical uncertainties. The medical student must be able to modify behavior in response to constructive criticism. They must possess the emotional and psychological health required for the full use of their intellectual abilities; the exercise of good judgment; the prompt completion of all responsibilities associated with the diagnosis and care of patients; and the ability to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, patients' families, and professional colleagues. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to be flexible, and to function in the face of ambiguities inherent in any clinical situation. Each student must be open to examining personal attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes, which may negatively affect patient care and professional relationships. An individual with a diagnosed psychiatric disorder may function as a medical student as long as the condition is under sufficient control to allow accomplishment of the above principles with or without reasonable accommodation. In the event of deteriorating emotional health, it is essential that a medical student be willing to acknowledge the presenting challenges and accept professional help before the condition poses danger to self, patients, or colleagues.

**Stamina.** The study and ongoing practice of medicine often involves taxing workloads and stressful situations. A medical student must have the physical and emotional stamina to maintain a high level of function in the face of these likely working conditions. Candidates for the M.D. degree must be mobile and able to function independently within the clinical environment.

**Intellectual Skills.** A medical student must possess a range of intellectual skills that allows the student to master the broad and complex body of knowledge that constitutes a medical education. The student's learning style must be effective and efficient. The ultimate goal will be to solve difficult problems and to make diagnostic and therapeutic decisions. A medical student must be able to memorize biomedical information, perform scientific measurement and calculation, and understand and cognitively manipulate three dimensional models. Reasoning abilities must be sophisticated enough to analyze and synthesize information from a wide variety of sources.

Candidates for the M.D. degree must be able to observe demonstrations, collect data, and participate in experiments and dissections in the basic sciences, including, but not limited to, demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. They must be able to understand basic laboratory studies and interpret their results, draw arterial and venous blood, and carry out diagnostic procedures (e.g., proctoscopy, paracentesis). It is expected that a medical student be able to learn effectively through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction, small group discussion, individual study of materials, preparation and presentation of written and oral reports, and use of computer based technology such as electronic medical records and mobile devices.

**Communication Skills.** A medical student must be able to ask questions, to receive answers perceptively, to record information about patients and to educate patients. The student must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with patients, their families, and with other members of the health care team. This must include spoken communication, and non-verbal communication such as interpretation of facial expression, affect, and body language. Mastery of both written and spoken English is required. A medical student must also fulfil responsibilities essential to continued enrollment in a timely manner, such as completing and documenting immunizations, and professional communication, such as reading and responding to emails using an official university email address.

**Visual, Auditory, Tactile and Motor Competencies.** A medical student must possess sufficient visual, auditory, tactile and motor abilities to allow the student to gather data from written reference material, from oral presentations, by observing demonstrations and experiments, by studying various types of medical illustrations, by observing a patient and their environment, by observing clinical procedures performed by others, by reading digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomena. Candidates for the M.D. degree must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic operations. Candidates must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain, and temperature), proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory), and motor function to carry out the requirements of the physical examination. They must be able to use effectively and in a coordinated manner those standard instruments necessary for a physical examination (e.g., stethoscope, otoscope, sphygmomanometer, ophthalmoscope, reflex hammer). Candidates for the M.D. degree must be able to execute motor movements required to provide general and emergency treatment to patients, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administration of intravenous medication, application of pressure to stop bleeding, intubation, suturing of simple wounds, and performance of obstetrical maneuvers; all such actions require coordination of both fine and gross muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

**Professional demeanor and appearance.** A medical student must be willing and able to comply with the dress code of the UNC Hospitals and maintain appropriate professional hygiene and appearance while engaging in clinical work.

**Accommodations:** Students are encouraged to seek the guidance of Accessibility Resources and Services (ARS) in determining reasonable accommodations to assist them in meeting the academic and technical standards of the program.

**Commitment to Non-Discrimination:** The University is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. A candidate for the M.D. degree with a diagnosed psychiatric disorder or other physical, mental, or emotional disability may participate in the M.D. program so long as the condition is managed sufficiently with or without reasonable accommodation to permit the student to satisfy the requirements of the M.D. degree, including these Technical Standards. Students who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities must contact the University's Office of Accessibility Resources and Service. The Office will determine a student's eligibility for and recommend appropriate accommodations and services. In the event of deteriorating function, it is essential that a doctoral student be willing and able to acknowledge



**SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE**

Office of Medical Education  
4068 Bondurant Hall  
Campus Box 7321  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-7530  
Phone: (919) 843-3641 Fax: (919) 962-2027

the need for and to accept professional help before the condition poses a danger to the student, client/patients, other students, faculty and staff members, or research participants.

**PROCEDURE(S):**

Acknowledgement of Technical Standards: Students attest to understanding and complying with technical standards on an annual basis.