

VCU Health System

Graduate Medical Education Policy

VCUHS GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Graduate Medical Education requires the acquisition and development of scientific knowledge along with specific skills and competencies. The VCUHS GME has a responsibility to society to educate the best possible physicians and dentists. The following concepts underlie our development of Technical Standards for admissions to GME:

- Applicants should present outstanding qualifications for the study and practice of medicine or dentistry.
- Successful completion of the entire residency curriculum is necessary for all trainees.
- All Residents should meet both academic standards and technical standards to progress through training and graduate.

Graduate Medical Education requires participants to acquire and demonstrate competence in scientific knowledge, procedural skills and professional attitudes. GME has structured its curriculum to produce physicians/dentists with broad general training enabling all graduates to choose from a variety of specialties. All graduates will have a strong foundation of clinical knowledge and skill upon which to draw in a variety of medical situations.

Qualified applicants with disabilities can be accommodated and some accommodations may involve an intermediary or an auxiliary aid. However, these accommodations may not provide cognitive support, substitute for essential clinical skills or supplement clinical or ethical judgment. In other words, accommodations may not eliminate essential program elements. An example of acceptable intermediaries would include a sign language interpreter (provided they offer only translation and do not perform selective, analytic or interpretive functions). A deaf resident would thus be able to listen, but would still be personally responsible for essential communication within the curriculum. An auxiliary aid might be that a paraplegic applicant would use a standing wheelchair or variable height table to examine a patient.

Technical Standards

I. Observation

The applicant must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states, observe x-rays, cadavers, live human case presentations and patient interview, physical exams, using a variety of medical instrumentation such as stethoscopes, otoscopes, etc., rectal and pelvic exams, live surgical procedures, childbirth, on-line computer searches. A candidate must 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.

II. Communication

An applicant 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. An applicant must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team. An applicant should be able to effectively communicate in settings when the time span available for communication is limited. Examples of areas where skillful communication is required might include (but are not limited to) answering written and oral exam questions, eliciting a complete history from a patient, presenting oral or written information to preceptors, attending and other members of the health care team, participating in fast-paced small and large group discussions, talking with patients and families about medical issues, interacting in a therapeutic manner with psychiatric patients, interacting effectively and compassionately in stressful situations with colleagues, other health care providers, clerkship administrators and patients.

III. Motor/Tactile Function

Applicants should have sufficient motor function to attend and participate in all class and small group functions which are part of the curriculum, read and write, elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers. An applicant should have the perceptual and motor skills to perform basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, CBC, etc), carry out diagnostic procedures (eg, proctoscopy, paracentesis, etc) and to interpret EKGs and x-rays as appropriate for their specialty. An applicant 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 wound 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.

IV. Intellectual - Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

These abilities include rational thought, measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, organization, memory, clinical and ethical reasoning, sound judgment and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physicians, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the applicant should be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Examples include being able to recall, understand and synthesize materials presented in class and in meetings with preceptors and faculty, successfully passing written and oral exams, understanding ethical issues, interpreting test results, analyzing complicated physical situations such as cardiac arrest and determining the appropriate sequence of events for successful treatment, understanding methods for various procedures, exhibiting sound judgment in clinical settings, making concise and cogent presentations on data collected on a patient, and understanding how to organize and present on service, understanding how to work effectively both alone and as a member of a team.

V. Behavioral, Social and Professional Attributes

An applicant 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, the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients, colleagues and other health care professionals. Applicants 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, empathy, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal

skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes. The School of Medicine has a set of professional standards that all applicants are expected to meet once enrolled. (www.medschool.vcu.edu/professionalism/) The evaluation of applicants seeks to assess their abilities to conform to the professionalism standards. Examples of professionalism standards are: showing up for required experiences on time and prepared, refraining from violation of the school's honor code, treating faculty, staff and others with respect, making an effort to understand prejudices and preconceptions that might affect patient and colleague interactions (especially in areas of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and religious differences), developing successful working relationship with faculty, colleagues, and staff and accepting constructive feedback, respectful speech, professional dress and demeanor, respecting patient confidentiality, developing empathic listening skills, advocating for patients when appropriate, and using clinical and hospital resources appropriately.

Any applicants who have questions about University accommodations, or wish further information about meeting these standards may review the website for the office at <http://www.specialservices.vcu.edu/index.html> or may contact the Office of Special Services for Students at (804) 828-9782.

Approved, Graduate Medical Education Committee, December 13, 2011