

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE

POLICY ON TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR DENTAL STUDENTS

The following Technical Standards document was endorsed by the Dean's Staff of the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine on January 14th, 2009 and put into effect on academic year 2009-2010. Prospective students should read through the Standards. All candidates that are invited to interview will be expected to sign the Certification of Understanding, and all students who register are required to sign the Certification of Ability.

Admission to the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine is open to all qualified individuals and complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Moreover, the School is committed to provide equal opportunities for all students. The School endeavors to select applicants who have the ability to become highly competent general dentists who are well prepared to enter private practice, or enter graduate or residency training programs. As an accredited dental school, the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine adheres to the standards promulgated by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation. Within these standards, the School of Dental Medicine has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum; the evaluation of student progress; and the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on prior satisfactory academic achievement but also on non-academic factors that serve to insure that the candidate can complete the essential functions of the academic program required for graduation and beyond in professional life.

A candidate for the DMD degree must possess abilities and skills which include those that are observational, communicational, sensory/motor, intellectual/conceptual (integrative and quantitative), and behavioral/social. The use of trained intermediary may not be acceptable in some clinical situations if it implies that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. Reasonable accommodations for qualified persons with disabilities can be made so long as such accommodations do not require a change in fundamental program requirements for the curriculum, create a direct threat to the health and safety of others, including patients, or create an undue burden to the state's property. Candidates must be able to consistently, quickly and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

I. Observation:

The candidate must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic sciences, including but not limited to information conveyed through physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations in animals, microbiological cultures and microscopic images of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathological states. Furthermore, a candidate must be able to:

- Observe a patient accurately, at a distance, and close at hand, to acquire information from written documents, and to visualize information as presented in images from paper, films, slides, video, or computer monitors .
- Recognize and appreciate nonverbal communications when performing dental operations or administering medications.
- Interpret x-ray and other graphic images, and digital, or analog representations of physiologic phenomenon (such as EKG) with or without the use of assistive devices.
- Perform visual and tactile dental examinations and treatment including use of visual acuity, accommodation, and vision to discern differences and variation in color, shape, depth, and general appearance between normal and abnormal, soft and hard tissues including variations in shade along the black-grey white scale.

Such observation and information acquisition necessitates the functional use of visual, auditory and somatic sensation while being enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities. In any case where a candidate's ability to observe or acquire information through these sensory modalities is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to acquire and demonstrate the essential information conveyed in this fashion. If the alternatives are acceptable by the Admissions Committee, it is expected that obtaining and using such alternate means and/or abilities shall be the responsibility of the student. Cost of necessary accommodations should be reasonable and will properly borne by the University when not the responsibility of the student or otherwise funded.

II. Communication:

A candidate must be able to speak, to hear and to observe patients by sight in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients in both English and Spanish languages. Communication includes

speech 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. While working alone and with others, an applicant must be able to communicate orally and in writing, including settings where time available is brief, such as emergencies. In any case where a candidate's ability to communicate is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or ability to acquire and demonstrate the essential information conveyed in this fashion.

III. Sensory/Motor:

It is required that a candidate possess the motor skills necessary to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures. The candidate must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency medical care such as airway management, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, application of pressure to control bleeding, suturing of simple wounds, and uncomplicated oral and maxillofacial surgical procedures. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch, vision and audition. The candidate must also be able to operate controls utilizing fine movements, operate high or low speed hand pieces requiring controlled dental movements of less than 0.5 millimeter, and utilize hand instrumentation (including scalpels for surgical procedures).

Candidates and students should have sufficient auditory ability to monitor and assess health needs. They must be able to hear information given by the patient in answer to inquiries; to hear cries for help; to hear features in an examination, such as the auscultatory sounds; and to be able to monitor equipment.

Candidates and students must have visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in patient care, such as tissue changes and patient's reactions. The candidate must have visual and tactile ability to use dental instruments as dangerous as the dental drill and surgical instruments inside a patient's mouth.

IV. Intellectual-Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative) Abilities:

The candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize. In addition, the candidate must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of dentists, requires all of these intellectual abilities. The candidate must be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion so as not to undermine the patient's health.

Candidates must be able to learn effectively through a variety of modalities and scenarios, including but not limited to: classroom instruction, clinical instruction, hospital rotations, community service activities, small group discussion, individual study of

materials, preparation and presentation of written and oral reports, and use of computer-based technology.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes:

The candidate must be able to fully use his/her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Further, a candidate must be able to manage apprehensive patients who display a range of affects and behaviors. The candidate must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. He/she must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all requisite personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions process and developed and assessed in dental school.

Because the dental profession is governed by high ethical values and principles and by state and federal laws, candidates must have the capacity to learn, understand and perform in accordance with these values, principles and laws. They are expected to relate to colleagues, staff and patients honestly and respectfully and to not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, or national origin. Candidates must understand that a career in dentistry requires a high level of dedication and at times, self-sacrifice. They must be able to understand and use the power, special privileges, and trust inherent in the dentist-patient relationship for the patient's benefit, and to know of and avoid behaviors that constitute misuse of this power. They must demonstrate the capacity to examine and deliberate effectively about the social and ethical issues that impact dentistry and dentists' roles and to reason critically about these issues. Candidates must be able to identify their own personal reactions and responses, make judgments about them, recognize multiple points of view, and integrate these appropriately into decision-making in the patient care setting. Candidates must be able to respond to constructive feedback by making appropriate behavioral and/or performance changes.

VI. Accommodations:

The School of Dental Medicine does not inquire whether an applicant has a disability prior to making a decision on admission, nor does it inquire whether an applicant has a disability after the applicant is admitted. Upon admission, or at any time during the program, a student who desires an accommodation may request one and must provide documentation of his or her disability for the purpose of determining appropriate accommodations. The School will provide reasonable accommodations, but it is not required to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of the program or provide auxiliary aids that present an undue burden to the School. The student must be able to perform all of the technical standards with or without accommodation to register or continue in the curriculum.

Requests for accommodation should be initiated with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (see Reasonable Accommodation Handbook for Medical Sciences Campus).

VII. Other Requirements:

A student must comply with the University immunization requirements. The admission of a student who is chronically infected with a highly infectious disease, such as Hepatitis B virus, will be considered on a case-by-case basis after consultation with a panel of experts in Infectious Diseases. This panel will consider the disease status, the health of the student, and decide what, if any, restrictions and monitoring are necessary for the student during their training in dentistry.

Applicant's Certification of Understanding of the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine's Technical Standards

I have read and understand the above technical standards, and if I enroll as a student at the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine, I understand that I will be expected to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

Student's Certification of Ability to Meet the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine's Technical Standards

I have read and understand the above technical standards and I hereby certify that I am able to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE