

Technical Standards for Medical Students Policy

Effective Date: 07/26/2021

Responsible Party: University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine Associate Dean for Students

Contacts: [Nicholas Van Wagoner, MD, PhD](#), Associate Dean for Students

POLICY ABSTRACT

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine seeks to produce highly skilled and compassionate doctors. Students are expected to develop broad-based medical knowledge and requisite clinical skills, with the ability to appropriately apply knowledge and skills, effectively interpret information, and contribute to patient-centered decisions across a broad spectrum of medical situations and settings. The technical standards, in conjunction with the academic standards, are requirements for admission, promotion, and graduation. The UAB Heersink School of Medicine Technical Standards include essential functions related to learning skills, communication skills, observational skills, examination and diagnostics skills, intellectual-conceptual skills, and behavioral attributes, social skills, and professional behaviors. The technical standards must be met by medical students with or without reasonable accommodations. The Heersink School of Medicine is committed to the full and meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may contact UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) to request reasonable accommodations.

REASON FOR POLICY

The Heersink School of Medicine is committed to the full and equitable inclusion of qualified learners with disabilities. We have a rich history of training and employing physicians and researchers with disabilities, developing and employing leaders with disabilities, and engaging in innovative technology that reduce clinical barriers to physicians with disabilities. These standards are consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

A candidate for the M.D. degree at the Heersink School of Medicine must demonstrate the ability to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to complete the core medical school educational requirements, including: meeting the Technical Standards in this document, achieving the Heersink School of Medicine competencies in the basic and clinical sciences and graduating as skilled and effective practitioners of medicine with or without reasonable accommodations. Critical skills needed for the successful navigation of core experiences are outlined below and include the ability to observe and communicate, as well as to integrate core knowledge and skills, and to behave appropriately in varied educational and professional situations.

This policy meets the requirements set forth by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) accreditation as follows:

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.”

SCOPE

This policy applies to all medical students and outlines the criteria (i.e. Technical Standards) essential for achieving the Heersink School of Medicine competencies in the basic and clinical sciences and graduating as skilled and effective practitioners of medicine with or without reasonable accommodations.

PREFACE

The Heersink School of Medicine is committed to the full and equitable inclusion of qualified learners with disabilities. We have a rich history of training and employing physicians and researchers with disabilities, developing and employing leaders with disabilities, and engaging in innovative technology that reduce clinical barriers to physicians with disabilities. As such this policy is consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

The Heersink School of Medicine supports students with a wide range of abilities. While there are certain technical standards that applicants must meet to attend the Heersink School of Medicine, people with disabilities who may think that they cannot pursue a career in medicine, often can successfully do so. We accomplish this through a combination of determination of individuals with disabilities and dedicated teamwork of members of the UAB community to develop creative, supportive solutions to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities.

Prospective and current students should be apprised that if they need disability support, outstanding resources and personnel are available to help navigate disability-related barriers encountered in medical school—whether that disability pre-existed, develops while in medical school, or is recognized for the first time in medical school. If students need disability support or would like to know more about disability support services and reasonable accommodations provided by the medical school, they are encouraged to reach out to the Associate Dean for Students or a member of the Medical Student Services (MSS) Team for a confidential conversation about their needs. The Associate Dean for Students, the Assistant Dean for Students, or members of the Academic Success team may encourage students to engage with Disability Support Services (DSS). Ultimately, it is the student’s decision to seek out support from UAB DSS. Students may also reach out directly to UAB DSS. A referral is not needed to contact DSS or apply for accommodations.

POLICY

The Heersink School of Medicine seeks to produce highly skilled and compassionate doctors. Students are expected to develop a broad-based medical knowledge and requisite clinical skills, with the ability to appropriately apply knowledge and skills, effectively interpret information, and contribute to patient-centered decisions across a broad spectrum of medical situations and settings. The following Technical Standards, in conjunction with the academic standards, are requirements for admission, promotion, and graduation.

These requirements must be present at matriculation or developed during medical school, and satisfied with or without reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made for qualified individuals with limitations due to a documented disability who are registered with UAB Disability Support Services. Accommodations are not applied retroactively.

Learning Skills

Students must be able to learn through a variety of modalities, including but not limited to

- classroom instruction
- laboratory instruction, including cadaver lab
- physical demonstration
- small group
- team and collaborative activities
- individual study
- preparation and presentation of reports
- computer-based technology, including online modules and remote education

Communication Skills

Students must be able to skillfully communicate verbally and in written form in English with faculty members, other members of the healthcare team, patients, families, and other students, in order to

- elicit information
- convey information
- clarify information
- create rapport
- develop therapeutic relationships

Observational Skills

Students must be able to obtain information from demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences

Students must be able to assess a patient and interpret findings accurately

Examination and Diagnostic Skills

Students must possess the capacity to perform a physical examination and diagnostic examination

Students must be able to provide or assist in general and emergency patient care

Intellectual-Conceptual Skills

Students must be able to

- adapt to different learning environments and modalities
- synthesize information effectively both in-person and via remote technology
- comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures
- measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information
- assimilate detailed and complex information presented in both didactic and clinical coursework and engage in problem solving
- interpret causal connections and make accurate, fact-based conclusions based on available data and information
- formulate and test hypotheses, assess and interpret outcomes and formulate appropriate and accurate conclusions
- effectively learn, participate, collaborate and contribute as a part of a team

Behavioral Attributes, Social Skills and Professional Expectations

Students must

- exhibit sufficient maturity and emotional stability required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, which includes, but is not limited to, the exercise of good judgment and the prompt completion of responsibilities associated with the diagnosis and care of patients.
- complete all responsibilities attendant to progression through medical school by established deadlines
- exhibit integrity, honesty, and compassion
- interact with patients and their families, health care professionals, colleagues, faculty, and staff in a courteous and respectful manner
- maintain appropriate boundaries with patients and other members of the healthcare team
- follow safety standards and universal precaution procedures
- possess the physical and emotional endurance to tolerate physically demanding workloads and function in a competent manner in high stress, fast-paced situations
- care for all individuals in a respectful manner regardless of gender identity, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, background, or any other protected status
- adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and manage the uncertainty intrinsic in the care of patients and the health care system

- understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within the law and ethical standards of the medical profession
- accept responsibility for learning and exercising good judgment

Students are expected to

- display a spirit of cooperation and teamwork
- demonstrate interest and motivation throughout the educational process
- contribute to collaborative constructive learning environments
- accept constructive feedback from others and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes

Procedure for Evaluation and Implementation of Reasonable Accommodations

The Heersink School of Medicine is committed to the full and meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should contact UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) to request accommodations. DSS will engage in a confidential, collaborative, and interactive process with the student, MSS, the Technical Standards Advisory Committee, and/or Heersink School of Medicine faculty members as needed to determine and implement reasonable accommodations. Given the clinical nature of medical education, additional time may be needed to implement accommodations. Timely disclosure and requests by students are essential and encouraged.

HISTORY

Policy Created: 04/13/1999

Approved: 07/26/2021 by the UA Systems Office

Revised: 7/23/2021

University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine policies shall be reviewed periodically to determine whether revisions are appropriate to address the needs of the medical school community.