



Essential Functions Policy Requirements for the MD Program for Admissions, Continuation, and Graduation, and Disability Accommodations

The medical profession is unique in that it engenders public trust and public responsibility. Because of the nature of the medical profession, from caring for the well to caring for the dying, the public has the right to expect the highest standards from those who join the ranks of the healthcare community. It is incumbent upon us, as medical school faculty, to ensure that all applicants and graduates are competent in the basic skills necessary to both continue their education and to practice medicine. UTMB recognizes that the MD degree is a broad, undifferentiated degree requiring the acquisition of general knowledge and basic skills performed in a reasonably independent and autonomous manner in all fields of medicine. The education of a physician requires the assimilation of knowledge, the discipline of life-long learning, the acquisition of skills, and the development of critical judgment in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in medical practice.

Essential Functions (Technical Standards) are different from academic standards for admissions to medical school and consist of the abilities and attributes a student must be able to perform to complete a generalist medical school curriculum. They consist of minimum physical, cognitive, ethical, and emotional requirements, which provide reasonable assurance that candidates can complete the entire curriculum and fully participate in all aspects of medical training. They include but are not necessarily limited to: observation, communication, psychomotor skills, intellectual and cognitive abilities, professional and social attributes, and application of legal and ethical standards. For detailed information regarding our Essential Functions, please visit the website below:

<http://www.utmb.edu/student services/uss/disabilities.html>

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) School of Medicine, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or status as a Vietnam-era veteran in any of its policies, practices, and procedures. Also, The University of Texas does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, employment, financial aid, educational services, access to facilities and services. The University, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, is committed to developing and implementing affirmative action strategies with respect to minority individuals, women, Vietnam-era veterans and persons with disabilities.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston complies with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. Under these laws, no otherwise qualified and competitive individual with a disability shall be denied access to our participation in services, programs, and activities of UTMB solely on the basis of the disability.

UTMB is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability or would like to obtain information regarding services for students with disabilities at UTMB, please contact the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, 2.118 Jamail Student Center, (409) 747-4820. This information will be confidential; only those individuals responsible for assuring reasonable accommodations will be given this information.

Guidelines for establishing a disability and requesting accommodations are contained in *Students with Disabilities: An Institutional Policy (1997)* which may be acquired at the following locations on campus:

- UTMB School of Medicine Office for Student Affairs, (409) 772-1442.
- UTMB Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (CSSD), (409) 747-4820.
- UTMB ADA Coordinator, (409) 747-2342.

It can also be accessed on the internet at the following address:

<http://www.utmb.edu/studentervices/uss/disabilities.html>

Essential functions for the School of Medicine have been identified and are enclosed.

Once accepted into the School of Medicine, any student who believes he or she requires an accommodation as the result of a disability is encouraged to contact any of the above listed offices and identify his or her needs as soon as possible to allow the university time to review and, if required, to provide a reasonable accommodation. A student or prospective student is not obligated to disclose a disability unless he or she requests an accommodation. Any information provided will be regarded as confidential and will be shared only on a "need to know" basis.

If a student chooses not to disclose this information, neither the academic nor the clinical sites are obligated to make accommodations. Whether or not a requested accommodation is reasonable is determined by the University and guided by applicable law.

My signature below indicates that I have read the above document, that I understand where I can obtain detailed information regarding UTMB's policy on students with disabilities, and that I understand that I may request an accommodation if I believe one is needed. Furthermore, my signature below verified that I have read and understand the School of Medicine's Essential Functions, and that I hereby affirm that I can perform all of them, either with or without reasonable accommodations.

Name
May 2007

Date

Policy on Essential Functions Required for the MD Program for Admissions, Continuation, and Graduation, and Disability Accommodation

Purpose: The medical profession is unique. It enjoys a unique public trust and public responsibility. Because of the nature of the medical profession, from caring for the well to caring for the dying, the public has the right to expect the highest standards from those who join the ranks of the healthcare community. It is incumbent upon us, as medical school faculty, to ensure that all applicants and graduates are competent in the basic skills necessary to both continue their education and to practice medicine. UTMB recognizes that the MD degree is a broad, undifferentiated degree requiring the acquisition of general knowledge and basic skills performed in a reasonably independent and autonomous manner in all fields of medicine. The education of a physician requires the assimilation of knowledge, the discipline of life-long learning, the acquisition of skills, and the development of critical judgment in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in medical practice. The abilities and attributes listed below reflect the critical activities a student must be able to perform to complete a generalist medical school curriculum. These include but are not necessarily limited to: observation, communication, psychomotor skills, intellectual and cognitive abilities, professional and social attributes, and application of legal and ethical standards.

Identification of Essential Functions:

Definition of Graduate Competencies: A graduating student should have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to continue training in a graduate medical program, with the understanding that, with further training, the School of Medicine faculty is comfortable with that student practicing medicine.

Essential Functions

- 1> **Observation/Sensory Modalities:** candidates must be able to master a defined level of information. This information will be presented in a variety of formats including but not limited to demonstrations in the basic sciences, computer demonstrations, observations of microbiology cultures, and gross studies of human tissues in normal and pathologic states. Candidates must also be able to accurately observe close at hand and at a distance, for the purpose of learning skills and gathering data. Candidates must possess functional use of the senses that permit such observations. *Examples include but are not limited to the ability to observe (see) an instructor's movements, a patient's gait or verbal responses, a chemical reaction, a microscopic image; feel vibrations, detect temperature, distinguish color and intensity, such as a red skin lesion or skin paleness, hear faint body sounds such as heart and lung sounds, smell odors such as alcohol breath.*
- 2> **Communication:** candidates must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently, both verbally and in writing, with patients and members of the health care team. This would include stressful or demanding situations. The candidate must be able to respond to questions, formulate problems and to

ask pertinent questions in a one-on-one, small group or large group format. Candidates must be able to read and comprehend written material in English. *Examples would include but not be limited to the ability to educate patients, convey important updates on a patient's status, both through written means (e.g., progress notes) and verbally (e.g., presentation to a consultant), and read information about a patient, such as a consultant's note or a radiology report.*

- 3> **Psychomotor Skills:** candidates must have sufficient motor capacities and mobility to attend class. They must have sufficient motor function to obtain data from patients using tactile, auditory and visual maneuvers. The candidate must possess adequate strength, mobility and dexterity to obtain all the important information and perform reasonable procedures in the care of patients. Candidates must have the motor skills to provide general care and emergency treatment that are reasonably required of physicians. Candidates must have adequate endurance to carry out activities reasonably required of physicians in clinical activities for extended periods of time. *Examples would include but are not limited to the ability to dress in protective clothing in the performance of clinical duties (e.g. tolerate a mask on the face), perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, perform chest compressions, manually ventilate a patient; take vital signs measurements, take blood pressure readings, take pulse rate; and perform catheter insertions, intravenous lines. The candidate should also be able to stand and maintain balance, move in confined spaces, pick up or grasp small objects, and complete assigned clinical practice within an acceptable time period and, on occasion, for extended periods of time, including night call.*
- 4> **Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities:** candidates must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and apply information. The candidate must possess adequate strength, mobility and dexterity. Candidates must be able to apply information from a variety of sources, such as knowledge obtained in classroom settings, interaction with other healthcare professionals, written materials such as textbooks or literature searches. Problem solving, a clinical skill required of physicians, requires all of these intellectual abilities. Candidates must be able to perform these functions not only during times of quiet reflection but must also during stressful situations and in a rapid manner, such as might occur in a medical emergency. In addition candidates must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. *Examples would include but not be limited to the ability to transfer knowledge from one situation to another; assimilate and apply knowledge acquired from multiple learning experiences; comprehend and apply abstract concepts; handle multiple tasks and problem-solve simultaneously; synthesize knowledge and skills; prioritize tasks; use long and short term memory; be able to process information and reach appropriate conclusion in urgent situations; gather and process patient information, in either verbal or written formats, in a timely manner.* Candidates should be aware that they will be subject to assessment exercises to evaluate these abilities, for example standardized patient exams, and direct observations of a candidate's performance between the candidate and a patient.

- 5> **Professional, Behavioral and Social Attributes:** candidates must possess the emotional health required to fully use their intellectual abilities. *Examples of these would include but not be limited to the ability to exercise good judgment, promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients.* Candidates must be able to tolerate physically, emotionally and mentally taxing workloads, and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to pay attention to detail and perform their learning activities, especially experiential activities, accurately and thoroughly, and assume responsibility and accountability for their actions. They must be able to adapt positively to stress and changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal competence and motivation are all personal qualities important to the educational process and the future care of patients. Students must have the emotional maturity to self-assess, know their limitations and seek advice or counseling in situations that might impair their learning or their performance in the care of patients. They must know their limits, recognize when they should seek consultation and/or supervision, and do so in a timely manner. The capacity of healthcare professionals to self-assess their ability to function at a high level for the best care and safety of their patients, regardless if this is secondary to a physical, emotional or mental impairment, and to proactively seek appropriate treatment, including leaves of absence, is an important ability for a physician to have. *Besides the examples listed above, other examples of attributes that candidates would be expected to exhibit would include but are not limited to the following: respect differences in patients and staff; establish rapport with patients; negotiate interpersonal conflict; participate in partnered and group efforts in classroom and clinical learning activities; practice in a manner that is non-judgmental and non-discriminatory; interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds; adapt effectively to changing environments and increasing tension levels in a variety of situations (e.g., emergencies); deal with the unexpected (e.g., death of a patient, patient whose condition is acutely worsening); focus attention on tasks; perform multiple responsibilities concurrently; and handle strong emotions.*
- 6> **Legal and Ethical Standards:** candidates must demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors, and must perform in an ethical manner in all dealings with peers, faculty, staff and patients. They must demonstrate honesty, integrity and reliability, and adhere to the standards that reflect the values and functions of the healthcare profession. This includes a responsibility to acquire and share data in an honest and timely manner, respect rights of privacy, apply an ethical decision-making process in their studies, (*e.g., in writing papers, taking examinations, collecting data*), avoid plagiarism and adhere to the other legal/ethical standards set forth by the University of Texas Medical Branch.