

Standards for Curricular Completion

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine

Approved by Educational Policy Committee, March 3, 2016

The School of Medicine faculty has developed minimum standards for entry into and progression through the medical curriculum. These standards provide guidance to achieve the Doctor of Medicine degree in preparation for licensure as a practicing physician and for postgraduate training. Throughout the medical education process, patient safety is of primary consideration.

Preparation of the Physician:

The education of a physician includes the following phases:

1. a preparatory phase with at least 90 hours of credit in an accredited U.S. or Canadian college;
2. a rigorous professional education leading to the M.D. degree;
3. postgraduate (residency) training; and
4. lifelong continuing education after completion of residency training.

Unlike most professions, Medicine awards its formal degree midway through the education process, and the awarding of the degree certifies that the student has acquired a broad base of general knowledge and skills requisite for further training in postgraduate work. The process whereby the degree is gained prepares an individual to be a physician rather than a surgeon, psychiatrist, or other specialist. A common body of knowledge, skills, and behaviors thus underlies and is necessary for entry into specialized postgraduate training programs.

Medical education requires that the accumulation of scientific knowledge must be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of skills and professional attitudes and behaviors. It is in the care of patients that the physician learns the application of scientific knowledge and skills.

It is impossible to consider changes in medical education without considering their impact on patients, who are an integral part of the educational process. Faculties of schools of medicine have immediate responsibility to society to graduate the best possible physician. Admissions standards for medical school must be rigorous and exacting, and admissions must be extended only to those who are qualified to meet the performance standards of the profession.

Development of Medical Curriculum:

The medical faculty is charged to devise a curriculum that allows the student to learn the fundamental principles of medicine, to acquire skills of critical judgment based on evidence and experience, and to develop an ability to use principles and skills wisely in solving problems of health and disease. In designing the curriculum, the faculty must introduce current advances in the basic and clinical sciences, including therapy and technology, changes in the understanding of disease, and the effect of social needs and demands on medical care. The faculty should foster in students the ability to learn through self-directed, independent study throughout their professional lives.

To ensure that students in the School of Medicine acquire the desired level of competence by the time that they graduate, the faculty of the School of Medicine established a set of program learning objectives expected of all graduates. These objectives can be accessed on the School of Medicine website at http://www.ttuhscc.edu/som/curriculum/documents/SoM_VGO_final_app_20100510_.pdf

Finally, the faculty of each discipline should set the standards of achievement by all students in the study of that discipline. Examination should measure cognitive learning, mastery of basic clinical skills, the ability to use data in realistic problem solving, and respect for the rights and dignity of patients. Institutions must develop a system of assessment which assures that students have acquired and can demonstrate on direct observation the core clinical skills and behaviors needed in subsequent medical training.

Abilities and Skills Requisite for Medical School Completion:

In the selection of students and in their progress through the curriculum, medical school faculty are guided by LCME standards. The faculty place strong emphasis on the academic achievements of applicants, including performance in the sciences relevant to medicine. This includes evidence of satisfactory scholastic achievement as indicated by grade point averages (GPA) and scores on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). Breadth of education and life experience are deemed important in the selection process.

The faculty is equally cognizant of its responsibilities to patients who will be a part of the educational process and to future patients who will entrust their welfare and lives to medical school graduates. They therefore consider carefully the personal and emotional characteristics, motivation, industry, maturity, resourcefulness, and personal health appropriate to the effective physician.

Because the M.D. degree signifies that the holder is a physician prepared for entry into the practice of medicine within postgraduate training programs, it follows that graduates must acquire a foundation of knowledge in the basic and in the clinical sciences that will permit the pursuit of any of the several careers that medicine offers.

Candidates for the M.D. degree must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. Candidates' diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell, and taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain, and temperature), sufficient proprioceptive senses (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis and vibratory) and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the sections which follow. They must be able consistently, quickly, and accurately to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data.

A candidate for the M.D. degree must have abilities and skills in six essential areas: (1) observation, (2) communication, (3) motor, (4) conceptual, integrative and quantitative, (5) behavioral and social, and (6) ethical. Technological compensation can be made for disabilities in certain of these areas; but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary to observe or interpret information or to perform procedures is deemed to compromise the essential function of the physician and may jeopardize the safety of the patient. The six areas of abilities/skills are detailed as follows:

1. **Observation:** The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences. 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.
2. **Communication:** A candidate should be able to speak; to hear; and to observe patients in order to elicit information, to describe changes in mood, activity and posture; and to perceive non-verbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with patients and with all members of the health care team.
3. **Motor:** Candidates should have sufficient motor functions to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate 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, administration of intravenous medication, application of pressure to stop bleeding, opening of obstructed airways, suturing of simple wounds, and 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.
4. **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the clinical skill demanded of physicians, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures
5. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** A candidate 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; and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Candidates 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 and ambiguities inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that should be assessed during the admissions and education process.
6. **Ethical Standards:** A candidate must demonstrate professional demeanor and behavior, and must perform in an ethical manner in all dealings with peers, faculty, staff and patients.

Procedure for Students with Disabilities

Without compromising the standards required by the School or the fundamental integrity of its curriculum, the School recognizes that persons with disabilities, as that term is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, may fulfill the standards with reasonable accommodation. The School of Medicine is committed to developing innovative and creative ways of opening its curriculum to competitive and qualified candidates with disabilities. Requests for accommodation under the Standards for Curricular Completion will be considered on an individual basis and reasonable accommodation will be arranged if appropriate. The use of a trained intermediary to observe or interpret information is considered to compromise the essential function of the physician.

When an applicant comes for an interview at the School of Medicine, a copy of the detailed Standards for Curricular Completion will be included in the Orientation Packet. Questions about the Standards are welcomed and interviewees will be informed that they must be qualified to meet all of the Standards, with or without accommodation.

If a student is offered and accepts an admissions offer from the School of Medicine, the student must then sign a form acknowledging that he/she has read and understands that the Standards for Curricular Completion must be met with or without accommodation. A request for accommodation along with supporting documentation about the disability from an appropriate specialist and the proposed accommodation(s) must be presented in writing to the TTUHSC ADA Compliance Officer in the HSC Office of Student Services. The procedure for requesting accommodation can be accessed on the website of the TTUHSC Office of Student Services at <http://www.ttuhs.edu/student-services/ada/default.aspx>.

STANDARDS FOR CURRICULAR COMPLETION

I certify that I have read and that I understand the **Standards of Curricular Completion**. I understand that I must meet the standards with or without accommodation.

I understand that I request in writing any desired accommodation in order to meet these standards, including accommodation for a learning disability, and must follow any specified procedures for evaluation in order to be considered for and receive accommodation.

I understand that the deadline for application for accommodation is normally 30 days prior to the beginning of the initial semester of enrollment to allow time to provide adequate coordination of accommodation services.