



**Policy Title:** Technical Standards

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**Accountable Dean(s) or Director(s):**

Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs

**Reviewed By:**

Goldman Center for Student Accessibility  
Office of the General Counsel

**Approval Body:**

Professionalism & Promotions Committee

**RELEVANT LCME STANDARD:**

10.5 Technical Standards

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

The LCME states: A medical school develops and publishes technical standards for the admission, retention, and graduation of applicants or medical students in accordance with legal requirements.

**DEFINITIONS:**

For purposes of this policy, the following definition applies:

- **Candidate:** candidates for admission to medical school as well as current medical students who are candidates for retention, promotion, or graduation.

**POLICY PURPOSE:**

The MD degree is a broad undifferentiated degree attesting to general knowledge in medicine and the basic skills required for the practice of medicine. Essential abilities and characteristics required for completion of the MD degree must be demonstrated by all candidates to ensure full participation in all aspects of medical training. Tulane School of Medicine intends for its graduates to become competent and compassionate physicians who are capable of entering residency training (graduate medical education) and meeting all requirements for medical licensure. The avowed intention of an individual student to practice only a narrow part of clinical medicine, or to pursue a non-clinical career, does not alter the requirement that all medical students participate and achieve competence in the full curriculum.

The School of Medicine has a societal responsibility to train competent healthcare providers and scientists who not only demonstrate robust medical knowledge and clinical skills but can appropriately apply their knowledge and skills to effectively interpret information and contribute to patient-centered decisions across a broad spectrum of medical situations and settings.

Although students learn and work under the supervision of the faculty, they interact with patients throughout their medical school education, and as such, patient safety and wellbeing are major factors in establishing technical requirements. These technical standards,<sup>1</sup> in conjunction with Tulane's academic standards, are requirements for admission, promotion, and graduation.

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

### **1. Observational skills**

Candidates must acquire information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the foundational sciences, including but not limited to dissection of cadavers, examination of specimens in anatomy, pathology, and neuroanatomy laboratories, and microscopic study of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. In addition, candidates must be able to evaluate patients accurately and assess their relevant health, behavioral, and medical information. Candidates must be able to obtain and interpret information through a comprehensive assessment of patients, correctly interpret diagnostic representations of patients' physiological data, and accurately evaluate patients' conditions and responses. This includes being able to observe a patient both directly and through indirect methods (at a distance and nearby) and detect and interpret non-verbal communication from the patient. Candidates must be able to perform a full and complete physical examination in order to integrate findings based on information and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan. These skills require the ability to observe and interpret patient information and may be achieved through assistive technology or reasonable accommodations that allow candidates to perform these essential tasks.

### **2. Communication skills**

Candidates must be able to read and write in standard format, communicate effectively and efficiently in English, and interact with computers when necessary, in rendering patient care. Candidates must exhibit interpersonal skills to enable effective caregiving of patients, including the ability to communicate effectively with all members of a multidisciplinary health care team, patients, and those supporting patients. Candidates must be able to obtain a medical history in a timely fashion, record information accurately and clearly in a written patient work-up and orally present the work-up in a focused manner to other healthcare professionals. Candidates must be able to listen carefully and develop rapport with patients and their families in order to elicit information and perform appropriate examinations; observe patients attentively; perceive changes in mood, activity, and posture; and interpret non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, affect, and body language. These skills may be achieved through assistive technology or reasonable accommodations that allow candidates to perform these essential tasks.

### **3. Motor function**

After a reasonable period of training, candidates must possess the capacity to perform routine physical examinations and diagnostic maneuvers, e.g., elicit information from inspection, palpation, auscultation, percussion, etc. Candidates must be able to respond to clinical situations in a timely manner and execute the movements reasonably required to provide both general and emergency care. These activities require some physical

mobility, coordination of both gross and fine motor neuromuscular function, balance, and equilibrium. Specifically, candidates must be able to manipulate equipment and instruments, perform basic laboratory tests and procedures, and possess the physical capacity to examine patients in order to identify both normal and abnormal clinical findings. Finally, candidates must meet applicable safety standards for the environment and follow universal precaution procedures. These skills may be achieved through assistive technology or reasonable accommodations that allow candidates to perform these essential tasks.

#### **4. Intellectual-conceptual, integrative, and quantitative skills**

Candidates must effectively interpret, assimilate, and understand the complex information required to function within the medical school curriculum, including, but not limited to, spatial processing (such as the advanced ability to mentally reconstruct and interpret three-dimensional anatomical structures and their spatial relationships based on two-dimensional imaging modalities), effectively participate in individual, small-group, and lecture learning modalities in the classroom, clinical, and community settings; learn, participate, collaborate, and contribute as a part of a team; synthesize information both in person and via remote technology; interpret causal connections and make accurate, fact-based conclusions based on available data and information; formulate a hypothesis and investigate potential answers and outcomes; and reach appropriate and accurate conclusions. These skills may be achieved through assistive technology or reasonable accommodations that allow candidates to perform these essential tasks.

#### **5. Ethical, legal, attitudinal, behavioral, interpersonal, professional, and emotional attributes**

Because the medical profession is governed by generally accepted ethical principles and by state and federal laws, candidates must have the capacity to learn and understand these values and laws and perform within their guidelines. Candidates must demonstrate maturity and emotional stability; exercise good judgment; promptly complete all requirements and responsibilities whether administrative, curricular, or attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients; and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with colleagues and patients. These skills include the ability to effectively handle and manage heavy workloads, function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of the uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Candidates are expected to exhibit professionalism, personal accountability, compassion, integrity, concern for others, the ability to self-reflect and apply feedback, respect boundaries, and care for all individuals in a respectful and effective manner regardless of gender identity, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other protected status. Candidates must not let their own personal attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes compromise the care of the patient. Candidates should understand and function within the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and maintain and display ethical and moral behaviors commensurate with the role of a physician in all interactions with patients, faculty, staff, students, and the public. Interest and motivation throughout the educational processes are expected of all candidates.

## OTHER GUIDELINES:

- Candidates must meet the legal standards to be licensed to practice medicine. As such, candidates for admission must acknowledge and provide a written explanation of any felony offense or disciplinary action taken against them prior to matriculation in the program. In addition, should the candidate be convicted of any felony offense while enrolled in the MD program, they agree to immediately notify the Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs as to the nature of the conviction. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal. Note that criminal background checks may be conducted as part of the process of admission, participation, promotion, and/or graduation.
- Failure to meet technical standards requires a candidate to appear before the School of Medicine's Professionalism and Promotion Committee (PPC). The PPC will determine whether a plan exists that will allow the candidate to fully participate in all aspects of medical training and achieve the competencies outlined in the [institutional program objectives](#). In addition, Tulane will consider the Candidate's willingness, desire, and ability to complete the medical curriculum and fulfill all requirements for medical licensure.
- Fulfillment of the technical standards for graduation from medical school does not guarantee that a graduate will be able to fulfill the technical requirements of any specific residency program.

## ACCOMMODATION OF DISABILITY

- Tulane recognizes that candidates with varied types of disabilities can successfully practice medicine and provides reasonable accommodations for all individuals who qualify for such accommodations and who apply for admission and are enrolled in the MD program.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq., as amended) mandates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all public facilities, programs, activities, services, and benefits derived from them. Title V, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq.), as amended, mandates equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities in all programs, activities, and services of recipients of federal financial assistance. Both ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are civil rights statutes that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, and, if applicable, obligate colleges and universities to make certain adjustments and accommodations and offer to persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in all institutional programs and activities. Tulane SOM adheres to these laws and regulations. Candidates with disabilities work with Tulane University's Goldman Center for Student Accessibility to explore reasonable accommodations necessary to participate fully in the MD program.
- Candidates with disabilities are encouraged to contact The Goldman Center for Student Accessibility early in the application process to begin a confidential conversation about what accommodations they may need to meet technical standards. The process typically involves the individual providing documentation of their disability, followed by an interactive process between the individual and the Goldman Center staff to determine an

individualized accommodation plan that will not fundamentally alter SOM's academic or professional standards.

- If a candidate with a disability requires accommodations to meet technical standards, it is their responsibility to disclose to the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility their specific functional limitations and request accommodations.
  - While Tulane SOM administration works in consultation with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility to determine and coordinate approved accommodations, disability documentation shall be maintained in a confidential manner.
  - Candidates who fail to register with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility or who do not provide necessary documentation, or otherwise fail to participate in the interactive process, may not receive accommodations.
  - Candidates are encouraged to request accommodations as early as possible. Accommodations provide equitable access but do not modify competency expectations. Therefore, candidates must meet all academic and clinical requirements, and accommodations cannot be applied retroactively to adjust prior performance.
- Candidates must attest annually that they meet the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations, as they progress through the curriculum.
- Should a candidate have or develop a health condition that may impact the health or safety of patients or others, an individualized assessment with Tulane School of Medicine in consultation with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility may be necessary. As in initial assessments, a complete and careful reconsideration of the objective requirements to participate in the program, as well as the qualifications of the candidate to meet such requirements, with or without accommodation, will be evaluated.

#### **LAST REVIEW DATE/APPROVAL:**

Professionalism & Promotions Committee: 06/02/25

#### **REVIEW CYCLE:**

Every 3 years

#### **REFERENCES:**

1. Acad Med. 2019;94:520–527. First published online November 5, 2018 doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000002517 Copyright © 2018 by the Association of American Medical Colleges.