POLICY ON GW SMHS M.D. Program
Technical Standards

Policy Statement

It is essential for all medical graduates to have the knowledge and skill to function in a variety of clinical situations and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care as required by the curriculum. In order for students to be able to master a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, and procedures of the major required clinical specialty clerkships, it requires that each student independently demonstrate specific capabilities and abilities.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

To provide current GW SMHS M.D. applicants and students with expectations of sufficient capabilities and abilities required for the program.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

Current Students, Staff & Faculty
Prospective Applicants

Policy

The faculty of The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences consider it essential for all medical graduates to have the knowledge and skill to function in a variety of clinical situations and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care as required by the curriculum. Therefore, every medical student must master a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, and procedures of the core required disciplines. This requires that every student have sufficient capacities and abilities in:

- Communication
- Observation
- Motor/tactile function
- Emotions/Intellect
The M.D. degree is, thus, an undifferentiated degree requiring that each student independently demonstrate these capabilities. Surrogates cannot be used to accomplish the essential requirements. Students may not have undue dependence on technology or trained intermediaries.

**Communication** includes the ability to speak, hear, read, and write sufficiently to achieve adequate exchange of information with other healthcare professionals and patients and their support network.

**Observation** includes the ability to perceive, using senses and mental abilities, the presentation of information through lectures, small groups and one-to-one interactions, and written and audiovisual materials. Students must be able to directly observe a patient's medical condition. Other examples of use of perceptual abilities include, but are not limited to: gross and microscopic studies of organisms, cadaver dissections, and various diagnostic studies (including, but not limited to: interpreting electrocardiograms, chest x rays, mental status examinations, and auscultatory findings.)

**Motor function** includes the ability to perform physical examinations, basic laboratory, diagnostic, and therapeutic procedures. These procedures include, but are not limited to: urinalysis, airway management, insertion of nasogastric tubes and urinary catheters, pelvic and rectal examinations, obstetrical maneuvers, suturing, venipuncture, and arterial blood draws.

**Emotional and higher level-intellectual abilities** must be demonstrated. These include aptitude for rapid problem solving; rational thought; visual-spatial comprehension; understanding, synthesizing and recalling materials; interpreting results of patient interactions, examinations and procedures; and ability to formulate diagnostic and treatment plans. Students must have the ability for sound judgment and be able to function under physically taxing and stressful situations such as overnight call and lengthy working hours.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities who can meet the requirements noted above. These accommodations must be accomplished without altering the essential requirements of our medical education.

**Policy Contact**

W. Scott Schroth, M.D., M.P.H.
Associate Dean for Administration

Diane P. McQuail, M.A.
Assistant Dean, Admissions

Committee on Admissions, M.D. Program

**Who Approved This Policy**

Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Medical Center Faculty Senate

**History/Revision Dates**
November 21, 2006 – Approved by Faculty Senate Executive Committee
May 2, 2007 – Approved by Medical Center Faculty Senate
April 1, 2014 - review by Associate Dean and Asst. Dean of Admissions