

Technical Standards and Essential Functions for Admission, Continuance, and Graduation

The Health Sciences Programs at the George Washington University (GW Health Sciences) support the broad preparation of students for careers in health care, clinical and translational research, and leadership careers. Regardless of the specific discipline of study, students within GW Health Sciences must demonstrate competency in the intellectual, physical and social tasks that cumulatively represent the essential functions of professional practice within health science-related careers. GW Health Sciences also expects each graduate of its programs of study to demonstrate the capacity and commitment to address the challenge of eliminating health inequities and transforming health care to enrich and improve the lives of the people we serve.

Entry into GW Health Sciences

Applicants to GW Health Sciences are evaluated on the basis of their academic and non-academic attributes. Applicants must have the intellectual, physical and emotional capacities to meet the requirements of the respective program's curriculum and of a successful career in the respective career field.

GW Health Sciences will consider for admission any applicant who meets its academic and non-academic criteria and who demonstrates the ability to perform all essential functions and technical standards (e.g. those within this policy and any additional standards defined by the specific program of study in its handbook) with or without reasonable accommodations, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. GW Health Sciences is committed to considering all qualified applicants without discrimination or based on any protected characteristics such as race, sex, age, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status.

Technical Standards and Essential Functions

It is the expectation of GW Health Sciences that all students must possess the intellectual, physical and emotional capacities necessary to undertake the required curriculum in a reasonably independent manner without having to rely on intermediaries and that all students must be able to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty. All candidates for admission, those both with and without disabilities, are expected to be competitive with others in the applicant pool for the respective program of study across defined academic and nonacademic factors. The practice of GW Health Sciences is to make admissions decisions on a case-by-case basis, specifically on the basis of each applicant's qualifications to contribute to the educational missions of GW Health Sciences and the respective program of study.

All applicants must meet and all students must continuously maintain aptitudes, abilities and skills as defined below. Likewise, all enrolled students and degree candidates in GW Health Sciences must have (and maintain through the entirety of their training) the abilities and skills in the functional areas described below and must have the physical and emotional stamina and capacity to function in a competent manner, and consistent with these standards, in the learning environment. For health care professional careers, the learning environment may include settings that involve heavy workloads, long hours and potentially stressful situations. Select programs of study involving certified- and/or licensed professions (e.g. Medical Laboratory Sciences, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, etc.) must also comply with discipline-specific technical standards and essential functions, which are published by the respective programs of study on their program websites. The functional areas defined within these technical standards and essential functions follow:

1. Observation: The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the health sciences. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision, hearing and somatic sensation.
2. Communication: A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with diverse stakeholders and colleagues. 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 all members of a team.
3. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities: These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem-solving, the critical skill demanded of GW Health Sciences requires that all applicants and enrolled students be able to learn, retrieve, analyze, sequence, organize, synthesize and integrate information efficiently, and to reason effectively.
4. Behavioral and Social Attributes: Applicants and enrolled students must possess the emotional health required to fully utilize his or her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships. They must be able to work effectively, respectfully and professionally as part of a team, and interact with stakeholders and colleagues in a courteous, professional and respectful manner. They must be able to function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in diverse workplace settings. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are required. Impairment caused by excessive use of alcohol or use of other substances is inconsistent with our standards for admission, continuance and/or graduation from GW Health Sciences.

Technological compensation can be made in certain of these areas, but a student should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary, a person trained to perform essential skills on behalf of the

candidate, or a person used such that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation, is not permitted.

Assessing Compliance with Technical Standards and Essential Functions

Applicants are required to attest at the time they apply and accept an offer to matriculate that they meet these technical standards and thereafter must attest on an ongoing basis that they continue to meet these standards. These standards are not intended to deter any student who might be able to complete the requirements of the curriculum with reasonable accommodations. An accommodation is not reasonable if it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of self and/or others, if making it requires a substantial modification in an essential element of the curriculum, if it lowers academic standards, or if it poses an undue administrative or financial burden. Requests from applicants or enrolled students for reasonable accommodations in meeting the technical standards will be reviewed and considered by an officer appointed by the University to evaluate student requests for accommodations. Information required within a request for accommodations includes, at a minimum, the following, and these required elements must be provided at the applicant's expenses:

- Documentation of the disability from a licensed professional
- The diagnosis of the disability using standard nomenclature
- A description of the student's functional limitations due to the disability
- Copies of the evaluation report(s) on or accompanied by a letter on the evaluating professional's letterhead
- A description of the requested accommodation

Additional Information and Campus Resources

For additional information and resources about disability services and procedures for requesting accommodations, refer to [University Disability Support Services](#). Enrolled students may also seek guidance through the GW Health Sciences Office of Student Life and Academic Support.