

Technical Standards for Students in the MD program*

**These Technical Standards have been adapted from the Council of Ontario's Faculties of Medicine and University of Calgary's Cummings School of Medicine Technical Standards with their kind permission*

Overview

Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine is responsible to society to provide a program of study so that graduates have the knowledge, skills, professional behaviours and attitudes necessary to enter the supervised practice of medicine in Canada. Graduates must be able to diagnose and manage health problems and provide comprehensive, compassionate care to their patients. For this reason, students in the MD program must possess the cognitive, communication, sensory, motor, and social skills necessary to interview, examine, and counsel patients, and competently complete certain technical procedures in a reasonable time while ensuring patient safety.

In addition to obtaining an MD degree, and completing an accredited residency training program, an individual must pass the licensure examinations of the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) in order to practice medicine. Prospective candidates should be aware that, cognitive, physical examination, management skills, communication skills, and professional behaviours are all evaluated in timed simulations of patient encounters.

All students must have the required skills and abilities described below. All individuals are expected to review this document to assess their ability to meet these standards.

Please note that these standards do not preclude individuals with disabilities from applying to Dalhousie's undergraduate medical program. Students who require disability-related accommodation are responsible for notifying the medical school. Requests for disability-related accommodations in the study of medicine are considered on a case by case basis.

Technical Standards

The following standards were based on the recommendations of the AAMC Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admission, which was approved by the AAMC Executive Council on January 18, 1979, and on the Ontario Medical School Learning Policy. They are reviewed by the Undergraduate Medical Education Committee at regular intervals of not less than 5 years to ensure that they remain relevant to current curricular design.

These technical standards are essential to the completion of the educational program of the MD program at Dalhousie University. A candidate for the MD degree must demonstrate the following abilities:

Observation

A student must be able to participate in learning situations that require skills in observation. In particular, a student must be able to acquire visual, auditory and tactile information from patients.

Communication

A student must have good English language skills. Examples of areas in which skillful English communication are required in the first 2 years include, but are not limited to, answering oral and written exam questions, presenting information in oral and written form, and participating in small group discussions/interactions. A student must be able to communicate effectively with patients in order to elicit information, describe mood, activity, and posture and perceive non-verbal communication. A student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, families and any member of the health care team. A student must also be able to coherently summarize a patient's condition and management plan verbally and in writing.

Motor / Tactile

A student must demonstrate sufficient motor function and tactile ability to safely perform a physical examination on a patient, including palpation, auscultation and percussion. The examination must be done independently and in a timely fashion. A student must be able to use common diagnostic aids or instruments either directly or in an adaptive form. (e.g. sphygmomanometer, stethoscope, otoscope and ophthalmoscope). A student must be able to execute motor movements that are required to provide general and emergency medical care to patients.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

A student must demonstrate the cognitive skills and memory necessary to measure, calculate, and reason in order to analyze, integrate, organize and synthesize information. In addition, the student must be able to comprehend dimensional and spatial relationships. A student must be able to demonstrate these abilities in a manner consistent with the timely provision of general and emergency medical care to patients.

Behavioural and Social Attributes

A student must consistently demonstrate the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities. The application of good judgment and the prompt completion of all responsibilities related to the diagnosis and care of patients are necessary. The development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients, families and other members of the health care team are also required. The student must be able to tolerate the physical, emotional and mental demands of the program and function effectively under stress in order to maintain both physical and mental health. Adaptability to changing environments and the ability to function in the face of uncertainties that are inherent in the care of patients are both necessary. Finally, taking responsibility for themselves and their actions is expected.