

2016-2017 Technical Standards for Medical School Admission, Continuation, and Graduation

Introduction

Applicants to the Wake Forest School of Medicine are selected for admission on the basis of their academic, personal and extracurricular attributes. Applicants must also have the intellectual, physical and emotional capabilities to meet the requirements of the School's curriculum and of a successful medical career.

The following technical standards are based on standards suggested by the Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admissions convened by the AAMC (Memorandum #79-4) in January, 1979.* These guidelines were formally adopted by the Wake Forest School of Medicine Committee on Admissions in 1992 and are reviewed and updated periodically. These guidelines specify the attributes considered essential for completing medical school training and for enabling each graduate to enter residency and clinical practice. Moreover, 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 have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide array of patient care. As such, these standards, along with the academic standards established by the faculty, describe the essential functions that applicants must demonstrate to meet the requirements of a general medical education, and are pre-requisites for entrance, continuation, promotion and graduation.

Wake Forest School of Medicine will consider for admission and continuation any applicant who meets its academic and nonacademic criteria and who demonstrates the ability to perform skills and meet the standards listed in this document, with or without reasonable accommodations, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These standards also conform to the AAMC guidelines for medical schools. The Wake Forest School of Medicine believes that all applicants must possess the intellectual, physical and emotional capabilities necessary to undertake the required curriculum in a reasonably independent manner without having to rely on the assistance of others or intermediaries, and that all applicants must be able to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty. All applicants for admission, both those with and without disabilities, are expected to be competitive with others in the applicant pool in academic, personal and extracurricular attributes. The institutional policy is to make admissions decisions on a case-by-case basis and on the basis of each applicant's qualifications to contribute to Wake Forest School of Medicine's educational mission. For purposes of this document and unless otherwise defined, the term "applicant" or "candidate" means applicants for admission to medical school as well as enrolled medical students who are candidates for promotion and graduation.

*Recommendations of the AAMC Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admissions, approved by the AAMC Executive Council on January 18, 1979, are reproduced below.

Technical (Non-academic) Standards for Medical School Admission

A candidate for the MD degree must have abilities and skills in the five 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 classroom, clinical and laboratory settings, including settings that may involve heavy workloads, long hours and stressful situations.

1. **Observation:** The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to anatomic, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. 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, hearing and somatic sensation.
2. **Communication:** A candidate must be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively 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 all members of the health care team.

3. **Motor:** Candidates must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers that comprise a complete physical examination (including pelvic examination.) A candidate must be able to perform the basic and advanced clinical procedures that are requirements of the WFSM curriculum. A candidate must 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, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the 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, vision, and hearing.
4. **Intellectual: Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem-solving, the critical skill demanded of physicians, requires that a candidate be able to learn, retrieve, analyze, sequence, organize, synthesize and integrate information efficiently, and reason effectively. In addition, the candidate should be able to measure and calculate accurately, 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 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 work effectively, respectfully and professionally as part of the healthcare team, and to interact with patients, their families and healthcare personnel in a courteous, professional and respectful manner. 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 inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are required.

Technological compensation can be made in certain of these areas, but a candidate 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.

In addition to the abilities and skills set forth above, candidates must possess the general physical health necessary for performing the duties of a medical student and physician in training without endangering the lives of patients and/or colleagues with whom the student might have contact. Candidates whose performance is impaired by abuse of alcohol or other substances are not suitable candidates for admission, continuation, promotion or graduation.

Process for Assessing the Applicant's Compliance with the Technical Standards

Applicants are required to attest at the time they accept an offer to matriculate that they meet the School of Medicine's Technical Standards, and thereafter must attest on an annual basis that they continue to meet the Standards. These Standards are not intended to deter any student who might be able to complete the requirements of the curriculum with reasonable accommodations. Requests from applicants for reasonable accommodations in meeting the Technical Standards will be reviewed and considered by the School's committee that reviews requests for student accommodations. For additional information about the School's process for assessing an applicant's compliance with the Technical Standards, contact the Office of Student Affairs.