



Essential Requirements of Medical Education  
at the University of Washington School of Medicine:  
Admission, Retention and Graduation Standards  
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## INTRODUCTION

The MD degree is recognized as a broad undifferentiated degree requiring the acquisition of general knowledge and basic skills in all fields of medicine. The education of a physician requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills and development of judgment through patient care experience in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in practice. The current practice of medicine emphasizes collaboration among physicians, allied health care professionals, and the patient.

## POLICY

The University of Washington School of Medicine endeavors to select applicants who have the ability to become highly competent physicians. As an accredited medical school, the University of Washington School of Medicine adheres to the guidelines promulgated by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education in "Functions and Structure of a Medical School." Within these guidelines, the University of Washington School of Medicine has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students, the design, implementation, evaluation of its curriculum, evaluation of students, and the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on prior satisfactory academic achievement but also on non-academic factors which serve to insure that the candidate can complete the essential functions of the academic program required for graduation.

The School has the responsibility to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent physicians, capable of fulfilling the Hippocratic duty "to benefit and do no harm." Thus, it is important that persons admitted possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice medicine.

The School of Medicine, as part of the University of Washington, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran status. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified students with disabilities.

## **PROGRAM**

Technical standards as distinguished from academic standards refer to those physical, cognitive and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, and the development of professional attributes required by the faculty of all students at graduation. The essential abilities required by the curriculum are in the following areas: motor, sensory, communication, intellectual (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis,) and the behavioral and social aspects of the performance of a physician.

The University of Washington School of Medicine curriculum requires essential abilities in information acquisition. The student must have the ability to master information presented in course work in the form of lectures, written material, and projected images.

The student must have the cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses at a level deemed appropriate by the faculty. These skills may be described as the ability to comprehend, memorize, analyze and synthesize material. He/she must be able to discern and comprehend dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, and be able to develop reasoning and decision making skills appropriate to the practice of medicine.

The student must have the ability to take a medical history and perform a physical examination. Such tasks require the ability to communicate with the patient. The student must also be capable of perceiving the signs of disease as manifested through the physical examination. Such information is derived from images of the body surfaces, palpable changes in various organs, and auditory information (patient voice, heart tones, bowel and lung sounds.)

The student must have the ability to discern skin, subcutaneous masses, muscles, joints, lymph nodes, and intra-abdominal organs (for example, liver and spleen.) The student must be able to perceive the presence or absence of densities in the chest and masses in the abdomen.

The student must be able to communicate effectively with patients and family, physicians and other members of the health care team. The communication skills require the ability to assess all information including the recognition of the significance of non-verbal responses and immediate assessment of information provided to allow for appropriate, well-focused follow-up inquiry. The student must be capable of responsive, empathetic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences.

**PROGRAM - CONTINUED**

The student must be able to process and communicate information on the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner to physician colleagues and other members of the health care team. This information then needs to be communicated in a succinct yet comprehensive manner and in settings in which time available is limited. Written or dictated patient assessments, prescriptions, etc., must be complete and accurate. The appropriate communication may also rely on the student's ability to make a correct judgment in seeking supervision and consultation in a timely manner.

The student must be able to understand the basis and content of medical ethics. He/she must possess attributes which include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility and tolerance. He/she must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment which may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.

These essential functions of medical education identify the requirements for admission, retention and graduation of applicants and students respectively at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Graduates are expected to be qualified to enter the field of medicine. It is the responsibility of the student with disabilities to request those accommodations that he/she feels are reasonable and are needed to execute the essential requirements described.