**CWRU School of Dental Medicine Technical Standards Essential Abilities and Characteristics Required for the Completion of the DMD Degree**

**Introduction**

Candidates of Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine are selected on the basis of their academic, personal, and extracurricular dimensions. In addition, candidates must have the intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities to meet the requirements of the School’s curriculum and of a successful career in dental medicine.

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine’s DMD degree prepares graduates for the independent practice of general dentistry immediately following graduation or for residency programs in general dentistry or dental specialties. Graduates must attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the competent, independent practice of general dentistry prior to graduation.

Essential abilities and characteristics required for the completion of the DMD degree require certain minimum physical and cognitive abilities, as well as sufficient mental and emotional stability to assure that candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation are able to complete the program and participate fully in all aspects of training. The School of Dental Medicine intends for its graduates to become competent and compassionate dentists who are capable of entering general dental practice after graduation or entering residency training, and qualifying for dental licensure. The stated intention of a candidate to practice only specific areas of clinical dentistry, or to pursue a non-clinical career, does not alter the School of Dental Medicine’s requirement that all dental students achieve competence in the full curriculum.

The School of Dental Medicine has a responsibility to train competent dental professionals who demonstrate critical judgment, extensive knowledge, and technical skills. Although students learn under the supervision of faculty, students interact with and provide treatment for patients throughout their dental school education. Patient safety and well-being are therefore critical factors in establishing requirements involving the physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities of candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation. The necessary abilities and characteristics described below are also referred to as technical standards. They are defined in several broad categories including: observation, communication, motor-function, intellectual-conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities; and social and behavioral skills. All candidates must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to dental settings, and other professional activities. For the purpose of this document, impairment refers to any condition that interferes with an individual’s ability to function in the capacity of a dental student meeting all requirements of the program. Impairment may exist in one or multiple domains including: psychomotor activity and skills, conceptual or factual recall, integrative or synthetic thoughts, processes, judgment, attentiveness, demeanor, and attitudes as presented in speech or actions, as well as any addiction to and/or physical dependence upon any chemical substance(s).

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine will consider for admission any applicant who meets its academic and nonacademic criteria and who demonstrates the ability to perform the skills listed in this document, with or without reasonable accommodations, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. Candidates and current students who have questions regarding the technical standards, or who believe they may need to request reasonable accommodation(s) in order to meet the standards, are encouraged to contact ESS Disability Resources at disability@case.edu.

The following abilities and characteristics are defined as technical standards, and are requirements for admission, retention, promotion, and graduation.

**Technical Standards**

1. **Observation:** Candidates must be able to obtain information, and actively participate in, demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences. Such experiments include, but are not limited to the dissection of cadavers, examination of specimens in laboratory settings, and the microscopic examination of specimens. Candidates must be able to communicate effectively with patients when performing general dental treatment or administering medications. Candidates must be able to accurately attain information from patients and evaluate findings. They must be able to perform a complete head and neck examination, discern slight differences and variations in color, shape, and general appearance between normal and abnormal, soft and hard tissues, in order to assimilate findings based on this information and to cultivate an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan. These skills require the use of vision, hearing, and touch or the functional equivalent.
2. **Communication:** Candidates must be able to communicate effectively, sensitively, and efficiently with patients, their families, health care professionals, colleagues, faculty, and staff. Candidates must be able to acquire the patient’s medical history in a timely manner, interpret non-verbal information, and establish a therapeutic rapport with patients. Candidates are also required to record information accurately and clearly; and communicate efficiently in English with other health care professionals. Specifically, patients, faculty, students, and staff must be able to understand the candidates’ oral and written communication in order to effectively evaluate performance and to work collaboratively in the care of patients. Patients must be able to understand the candidate to help establish patient rapport, understand what information is requested and needed by the candidate and understand the explanation of treatment procedures, treatment options, informed consent, and follow up or home care.
3. **Motor-Function:** Candidates must have sufficient motor function to execute movements reasonably required to provide all aspects of patient care within a time frame that maintains safety and comfort for patient care. Such activities require functional physical mobility and coordination of both gross and fine motor skills. A candidate must be able to operate controls, move high-speed and/or low-speed dental drills with precision of less than 1 millimeter, be able to distinguish depth and width accurately, and use instrumentation including scalpels for surgical procedures. A candidate must be able to apply sufficient force/pressure over an appropriate duration to perform surgical procedures such as the extraction of teeth. Candidates must be able to direct or perform basic life support (including CPR), transfer and position disabled patients, and position and reposition self around patients in various treatment settings.
4. **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** Candidates must be able to assimilate detailed and complex information presented in both didactic and clinical coursework. The candidate must be able to learn through a variety of methods including, but not limited to, classroom instruction, small group, problem-based learning groups, team and collaborative activities, individual study, preparation and presentation of reports, simulations, and through the use of technology. Candidates are expected to possess the ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information.
5. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** Candidates must exhibit the emotional stability required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, which includes, but is not limited to, the exercise of good judgment, organizational skills, and the prompt completion of responsibilities associated with the diagnosis and care of patients. Candidates are expected to exhibit integrity, honesty, professionalism, compassion, and display a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. The candidate is expected to understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within the law and ethical standards of the medical profession. Candidates must interact with patients and their families, health care professionals, colleagues, faculty, and staff in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. The candidate accepts responsibility for learning and exercising good judgment. Candidates are expected to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept constructive feedback from others; and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. Candidates must possess the physical and emotional endurance to tolerate physically demanding workloads and function in a competent and professional manner in high stress, fast paced situations, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and manage the uncertainty intrinsic in the care of patients and the health care system.

Candidates must understand that as students, they must refrain from actions that detract from the professional atmosphere or orderly appearance of the School of Dental Medicine or University, including personal appearance or other actions. This expectation would also apply when attending any school-sponsored or related activities.

**Equal Access to the School of Case Western Reserve University’s School of Dental Medicine Educational Program**

Case Western Reserve University’s School of Dental Medicine is committed to providing all students with opportunities to take full advantage of the educational and academic programs. The School of Dental Medicine recognizes that students with documented disabilities may require reasonable accommodations in order to achieve this objective and/or meet the technical standards.

Should, despite reasonable accommodation (whether the candidate chooses to use the accommodation or not), a candidate or student’s existing or acquired disability interfere with patient or peer safety, or otherwise impede the ability to complete Case Western Reserve University’s School of Dental Medicine’s program and advance to graduation, residency, training, or licensure, the candidate may be denied admission or may be separated, discontinued, or dismissed from the program.

It is the responsibility of a candidate with a disability, or a candidate who develops a disability, who requires accommodations in order to meet these technical standards, to self-disclose to ESS Disability Resources and request accommodations. Candidates must provide documentation of the disability and the specific functional limitations to ESS Disability Resources. Candidates who fail to register with ESS Disability Resources or who fail to provide the necessary documentation to ESS Disability Resources shall not be considered to be claiming the need for, or receiving, accommodations under the federal or state disability laws. Students are held to their performance, with or without accommodation. No candidate will be assumed to have a disability based on inadequate performance alone. Accommodations are not applied retroactively, and a disability-related explanation will not negate an unsatisfactory performance.

**Requesting Disability Accommodations**

Candidates are not obligated to self-disclose their disability to ESS Disability Resources, other staff members, or faculty. However, students with disabilities who wish to obtain accommodations, auxiliary aids and/or services, must self-disclose their disability and direct their request(s) for accommodation(s) to the office of ESS Disability Resources.

ESS Disability Resources

Location: Sears Building, Room 470 Phone: 216.368.5230

Email: disability@case.edu

For more information: [ess.case.edu/disability](http://students.case.edu/academic/disability/)

In order to proceed with a determination of eligibility for services and the provision of applicable and reasonable accommodations, students must disclose their disability using the disclosure form available through the ESS Disability Resources webpage. Under separate cover, students must submit documentation of their disability to the office of ESS Disability Resources.

While students can disclose a disability and request an accommodation at any time during their enrollment, students are encouraged to disclose the need for accommodation(s) as soon as possible. Time for documentation review and arrangement of accommodation(s) is necessary, and may take four to six weeks. Accommodations are not retroactive.

While the School of Medicine works in conjunction with ESS Disability Resources to determine and coordinate reasonable accommodations, disability documentation and students individual diagnoses remain confidential.

**Temporary Disabilities (Illness & Injury)**

Students should be aware that the University is not obligated to provide accommodations for students with temporary disabilities, illnesses, or injuries, but will attempt to do so when feasible.

As a courtesy, ESS Disability Resources will attempt to provide services to students who experience acute illness or injury that will allow them to access the physical campus as well as the academic curriculum.

If the injury or illness necessitates handicapped parking accessibility, and/or campus transportation services, the student should contact ESS Disability Resources for assistance.

**Ability to Meet the School of Dental Medicine’s Technical Standards**

All candidates for the School of Dental Medicine will be required to complete a Technical Standards Attestation form on a yearly basis. If at any point an enrolled candidate ceases to meet the technical standards of the School of Medicine, they must notify ESS Disability Resources, who will determine what accommodations are reasonable.

If, after all reasonable accommodations are made, there is concern that the student remains unable to meet the technical standards, the student will be referred to the Committee on Student Standing and Promotion, who will review the student’s performance. It is the responsibility of the Committee to determine whether a student can or cannot meet the described standards after reasonable accommodations have been made. The Committee on Student Standing and Promotion will determine any necessary actions on a case-by-case basis.