

## The Core Competencies and What They Mean

The 15 Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students, endorsed by the AAMC Group on Student Affairs (GSA) Committee on Admissions (COA), help communicate the standards expected of all applicants accepted to medical school. The competency list was developed after an extensive search of the medical education and employment literature and with the guidance of several blue-ribbon and advisory panels, including Scientific Foundations for Future Physicians (SFFP), Behavioral and Social Sciences Foundations for Future Physicians (BSSFFP), Institute of Medicine (IOM), 5th Comprehensive Review of the MCAT Review Committee (MR5), the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education \(ACGME\) Outcome Project](#), the MR5 Innovation Lab, and others.

### Preprofessional Competencies



**Service Orientation.** Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society—locally, nationally, and globally.



**Social Skills.** Demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect.



**Cultural Competence.** Demonstrates knowledge of sociocultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in oneself and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.



**Teamwork.** Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.



**Oral Communication.** Effectively conveys information to others by using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.



**Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others.** Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning.



**Reliability and Dependability.** Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.



**Resilience and Adaptability.** Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.



**Capacity for Improvement.** Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.

## Thinking and Reasoning Competencies



**Critical Thinking.** Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.



**Quantitative Reasoning.** Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.



**Scientific Inquiry.** Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems, and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.



**Written Communication.** Effectively conveys information to others by using written words and sentences.

## Science Competencies



**Living Systems.** Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems, including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.



**Human Behavior.** Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, sociocultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.