

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE**

**TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION
AND RECEIPT OF DEGREE**

This document describes essential functions and non-academic skills which students must be able to demonstrate in order to be accepted into and receive a degree from the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine in the pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and residency settings. The following “technical standards” are consistent with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (PL93-112) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA PL101336, 1990). These are **minimal** technical standards which must be met by all students, with or without reasonable accommodations, who have been admitted to any of the programs of or associated with the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine. The College of Dental Medicine does not recognize an intermediary who may perform some or all of the technical standards as a reasonable accommodation.

Inherent in these standards is the concept that an oral health care professional who has obtained a degree from the College of Dental Medicine represents to all that he or she is completely prepared for and competent in the practice of clinical dentistry. The receipt of the degree implies that the technical skills, necessary knowledge, et.al. have been attained by the degree or the Certificate of Training, through caring for a broad variety of patients. Any person wishing to apply to any of the College’s programs, whether pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, or related residency, must be able to possess the motor skills, the intellectual skills, the observational and communication skills, the social and behavioral skills, and the ability to quantitate and integrate all of the preceding in order to attain the degree. The award of a degree or certificate of training in the post-baccalaureate or masters degree setting carries with it the full authority of Columbia University College of Dental Medicine and is intended to communicate to all who might seek the services of the degree recipient that said recipient is competent to practice all phases of general clinical dentistry or the specialty in which he or she has trained. In order to attain the skills, judgment, and professionalism inherent and implied by that degree, certain cognitive and technical skills must be exercised in order to master the entire didactic and clinical curriculum. Every student must pass every course in the curriculum in order to receive the degree.

All students must demonstrate the essential skills that are necessary to fulfill the degree requirements, which are embodied in the following technical standards. These standards include motor, communication, cognitive, sensory, observational, and behavioral skills. Acquisition of these skills is directly linked to the competencies of the curriculum, which in turn are intended to foster an individual’s ability to meet the degree’s requirements. The Class Committees of the College will monitor individual student progress in all of the knowledge and skill areas.

1. Motor Skills

GENERAL: A student must possess sufficient motor functioning to execute movements essential to providing oral health care to patients.

SPECIFIC: A student must possess the motor skills to perform palpation, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests, diagnostic and restorative procedures. Such actions require coordination of gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional uses of the senses of touch and vision.

SPECIFIC: A student must be able to perform basic life support including CPR, to transfer and position patients with disabilities, to physically restrain adults and children who lack motor control, and to position and reposition himself or herself around the patient and chair in a sitting or standing position. A student must promote and support the ability of coworkers to perform prompt care. A student must be able to operate controls, use high-speed or low-speed dental handpieces for tooth preparation procedures, and use hand instrumentation including scalpels for surgical procedures.

2. Sensory/Observation

GENERAL: A student must be able to acquire a predetermined level of required information through demonstrations and experiences in basic and dental sciences courses.

SPECIFIC: Such information includes, but is not limited to, information conveyed through: 1) physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations, 2) microscopic images of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states; and 3) demonstration of techniques using dental models. A student must be able to acquire information from written documents, and to evaluate information presented as images from paper, films, slides, or video. A student must be able to interpret x-ray and other graphic images. A student must be able to benefit from electronic and other instrumentation that enhances visual, auditory, and somatic sensations needed for examination or treatment.

GENERAL: A student must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close up, interpreting non-verbal communications while performing dental operations or administering medications.

SPECIFIC: A student must be able to perform dental examinations and treatments that require the use of sight and touch. He or she must be able to see fine detail, focus at a variety of distances, and discern differences and variations in color, shape, and texture that are necessary to differentiate normal and abnormal soft and hard tissues. He or she must be able to use tactile senses to diagnose directly by palpation and indirectly by sensations transmitted through instruments. A student must also possess the visual acuity to read charts, records, radiographs, small print and handwritten notation.

3. Communication

GENERAL: A student must be able to: communicate effectively and sensitively with patients; convey exchange information at a level allowing development of a health history; identify problems; explain alternative solutions; and give directions during treatment and post-treatment. A student must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with all members of the health care team.

SPECIFIC: A student must have sufficient facility with English to: retrieve information from texts and lectures and communicate concepts on written exams and patient charts; elicit patient backgrounds; describe patient changes in moods, activity, and posture; and coordinate patient

care with all members of the health care team. A student must be able to communicate in lay language so that patients and their families can understand the patient's conditions and, thereby, be more likely to comply with treatment and preventive regimes.

4. Cognitive

GENERAL: A student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize.

SPECIFIC: A student must be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem solving requires all of these intellectual abilities. A student must be able to perform these problem solving skills in a timely manner.

5. Behavioral

GENERAL: A student must possess the emotional health required for full use of his or her intellectual skills, 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.

SPECIFIC: A student must be able to endure physically-taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. He or she must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interests, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and educational processes. A student must be able to manage apprehensive patients with a range of moods and behaviors in a tactful, congenial, personal manner so as not to alienate or antagonize them. A student must be able to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior. A student must be able to interrelate among colleagues, staff, and patients with honesty, integrity, respect, and nondiscrimination.

6. Ethics and Professionalism

GENERAL: A student must maintain the standards of conduct for ethics and professionalism as set forth in the American Dental Association's Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct and the CUCDM Code of Conduct, which includes maintaining the confidentiality of patient information.

SPECIFIC: A student must always act in the best interest of the patient and society even when there is a conflict with the student's personal self-interest. The student must conduct oneself as a trustworthy and responsible citizen and act with impeccable integrity in their interactions with students, faculty, staff and the public. A student must refrain from actions that detract from the professional atmosphere or orderly appearance of the School of Dentistry or University, including personal appearance or other actions. This expectation would also apply when attending any school-sponsored or related activities, such as preceptorships and externships.