UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL DEL CARIBE

School *of Medicine*

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The Universidad Central del Caribe-SOM believes that earning a Doctor of Medicine degree requires mastery of a coherent body of knowledge and skills. Because the MD 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 be prepared to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Therefore, there are certain minimum (TS) for physicians and medical students that must be met by applicants and students. A medical student must acquire substantial competence in the principles and facts of all of the curriculum's required basic science courses, must understand and appreciate the principles and practice of all of the basic fields of clinical medicine, and must be able to relate appropriately to patients and other health care professionals.

The following technical standards describe the non-academic qualifications, required in addition to appropriate academic achievements, that the UCCSoM considers essential for the successful completion of the educational objectives of its curriculum (this list of required skills and qualifications is not all-inclusive, but is meant to be representative) of the UCCSoM Policy on Technical Standards for admission, retention, promotion, and graduation.

As required by accrediting agencies and permitted by state and federal law, UCCSoM has adopted technical standards (TS) that are to be applied to the consideration of admission, matriculation, the pursuit of the educational program, retention, promotion, and graduation from UCCSoM.

Patient care activities are a *sine qua non* (essential and absolutely necessary) of clinical medical training. The obligation to render safe patient care is and must be the priority in medical education and medical care. TS are developed to align the disability needs of any individual student with that priority. Certain chronic or recurring illnesses and problems that interfere with patient care or safety may be incompatible with medical training or practice. Should a candidate have a condition that would place patients or others at significant risk, that condition may be the basis for denial of admission/matriculation or for dismissal from the medical education program. Students unable to consistently and reliably satisfy the UCCSoM TS, despite the opportunity for professional clinical assistance, are subject to reconsideration of their fitness to continue medical training and may be subject to proceedings and decisions as per the by-laws of the Committee on Student Evaluation and Promotions (CSEP).

Under the law, a school need not approve any proposed accommodation that may reasonably compromise patient health or safety. On this basis, reasonable accommodations, which

might be widely accepted in other types of educational programs, may not be approved by UCCSoM or within medical school program-affiliated sites. The dependence of patients on the skills and capacities of medical trainees and practitioners warrants that medical training institutions interpret and apply the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) differently than might other educational institutions. Accordingly, the UCCSoM TS do not allow for the ongoing use of intermediaries in the pursuit of medical education at our institution. (Technical Standards and Lawsuits Involving Accommodations for Health Professions Students | Journal of Ethics | American Medical Association (ama-assn.org)- https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/technical-standards-and-lawsuits-involving-accommodations-health-professions-students/2016-10)

SPECIAL NOTE FOR STUDENTS*: Full vaccination against SARS-COV2 (COVID-19) with an FDA-approved vaccine is required. A booster is also required for those who are eligible. Pursuant to the Department of Health of Puerto Rico mandate for healthcare workers is a requirement and is important to understand that sites used for clinical rotations may not accept medical exemptions.*

Attitudinal, Behavioral, Interpersonal, and Emotional Attributes

Because the medical profession is governed by ethical principles and by state and federal laws, a medical student must have the capacity to learn, and understand these values and laws and to perform within their guidelines. Medical students should be able to relate to patients, as well as staff and colleagues, with honesty, integrity, non-discrimination, self-sacrifice, and dedication. Medical students must be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with diverse patients. Medical students must be able to identify personal reactions and responses, recognize multiple points of view, and integrate these appropriately into clinical decision making. Medical students must be able to communicate and care for, in a non-judgmental way, persons whose culture, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs are different than their own. A medical student must be able to examine the entire patient, male or female, regardless of the medical student's social, cultural, or religious beliefs.

A medical student must be of sufficient emotional health to utilize fully his/her intellectual ability, to exercise good judgment, to complete patient care responsibilities promptly, and to relate to patients, families, and colleagues with courtesy, compassion, maturity, and respect for their dignity. The medical student must display this emotional health in spite of stressful work, changing environments, and clinical uncertainties. The medical student must be able to modify behavior in response to constructive criticism. He/she must be capable of being non-judgment when caring for a patient and not let his/her own personal attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes compromise care of the patient. An individual with a diagnosed psychiatric disorder may function as a medical student as long as the condition is under sufficient control to allow accomplishment of the above goals. In the event of deteriorating emotional/behavioral functioning, it is essential that a medical student be willing to acknowledge the disability and accept professional help.

The Universidad Central Del Caribe have an obligation to the University, the affiliated teaching hospitals, their employees, patients, and the community, to promote and nurture

a safe and productive work environment. Medical Students and Resident health and welfare are fundamental to the delivery of quality care to patients, indispensable to the education of trainees, and essential for a safe and constructive work environment. Medical Students and Resident behaviors that compromise this obligation, interfere with learning, and/or pose a danger to patient care violate generally accepted standards of medical care in this community, and define medical students and residents impairment. Such behaviors warrant immediate intervention and/or disciplinary action.

Impaired Physician Definition: impairment is defined as any damage or decline in physical or cognitive function due to: (1) medical or psychiatric illness, or (2) abuse of alcohol, illegal prescription drugs, prescription drugs (including medical marihuana), illicit drugs or other substances.

The Medical School shall report relevant information to the Puerto Rico Medical Licensing board relating to the acts of a physician that poses a continuing threat to the public welfare through the practice of medicine."

Intellectual Skills

Medical students must possess a range of intellectual skills that allow them to master the broad and complex body of knowledge that comprises a medical education. They must be able to recall large amounts of information, perform scientific measurements and calculations, and understand and cognitively manipulate three-dimensional models. Medical students must be able to learn effectively through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to: classroom instruction, small group discussion, individual study of materials, preparation and presentation of written and oral reports, and use of computer based technology. The ultimate goal of the student will be to solve difficult problems and to make diagnostic and therapeutic decisions. Reasoning abilities must be sophisticated enough to analyze and synthesize information from a wide variety of sources.

Communication

Medical students must be able to communicate both in English and Spanish, in an appropriate fashion, with faculty members, administration and fellow medical students as well as with a patient in order to obtain a medical history. This communication with patients must, at times, involve hearing the patient and speaking with the patient because some patients do not read or write or at least they may not be able to do so under certain medical situations. Medical students must be able to read and write in patients' charts in standard format, and must be able to interact with a variety of standard computers networked to hospital information systems to obtain patient information, order tests, and document patient progress. Medical students must be able to prepare a legible, comprehensive patient work-up, and present a new patient's case orally in a focused manner to fellow classmates, resident physicians, and attending physicians as appropriate.

Ethics

Medicine students must adhere to the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and maintain and display ethical and moral behaviors commensurate with the role of a physician in all interactions with patients, those who support patients, faculty, staff, students, and the public. Interest and motivation throughout the educational processes are also expected of all candidates and students.

Observation

Medical students must be able to observe a patient, and detect and interpret non- verbal communication from the patient. Each student must be able to use a microscope to, as examples: view and interpret a blood smear, a bacterial stain, a urine sample, identify normal tissues, identify pathologic changes in tissues which are brought about by disease processes, as well as studying other microscopic specimens. Medical students must be capable of viewing and interpreting such diagnostic modalities as various radiological imaging techniques (X-ray films, angiograms, CT scans, etc.) and electrocardiograms, in order to assess the accuracy and importance of the examination. Medical students must be able to perform auscultation of the patient and do such things as describe normal and abnormal heart sounds, detect bruits (sound of abnormal bloodflow) and abnormal sounds. Medical students must be able to hear the history of a patient and respond appropriately to the patient verbally.

Motor Skills

Medical students must be able to position a patient properly for a physical examination. Medical students must be able to perform a physical examination on a patient, including the ability to inspect various physical signs and recognize normal versus abnormal findings, including fine visual differentiations such as the ability to see a non-palpable skin lesion to determine its malignant potential, and to perform a funduscopic examination to evaluate the retina of the eye for changes suggestive of diabetes mellitus or hypertension. They must be able to elicit information from patients using the techniques of palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. They must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of treatment reasonably required of physicians are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of an obstructed airway, the introduction of intravenous catheters, the drawing of arterial and venous blood samples, the suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Medical student must be able to utilize gross and fine manual palpation, touch, vibratory sensation, and temperature sensation to describe and evaluate lymph nodes, thyroid nodules, breast tissue, the pulse, joints, and other body parts.

General

Medical students must demonstrate the ability to tolerate physically challenging

workloads and to function effectively under stress. The unpredictable needs of patients are at the heart of becoming a physician. Academic and clinical responsibilities of medical students may require their presence during day and evening hours, any day of the week.

In evaluating candidates for admission and candidates for the M.D. degree, it is essential that the integrity of the curriculum be maintained, that those elements deemed necessary for the education of a physician be preserved, and that the health and safety of patients be maintained. While compensation, modification, and reasonable accommodation can be made for some disabilities on the part of the candidate for admission or for the MD degree, candidates must be able to perform the duties of a medical student or physician in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary would result in mediation of a candidate's judgment by another person's powers of selection and observation. Therefore, the use of trained intermediaries to assist students in meeting the technical standards for admission or graduation is not permitted.

The UCCSOM will consider for admission any candidate who demonstrates the ability to perform or to learn to perform the skills and abilities specified in these technical standards.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS POLICY

All applicants accepted to the UCC-SOM must be able to meet these technical standards. Students are asked to review the standards and to sign a form certifying they have read, understand, and are able to meet the standards.

Revised By: Harry E. Mercado-Ortiz, MD, December 17, 2025

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Dean of Medicine