

Technical Standards for Admission, Advancement, and Graduation

In accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act of 1973 (PL 93-112 and incorporating the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA PL 101-336) enacted by Congress in 1990, the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy has adopted minimal technical standards for the assessment of admission, scholastic advancement, and graduation for its professional degree (Doctor of Pharmacy) program. The West Virginia University does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities who apply for admission to the Pharm.D. degree program or who are enrolled as student pharmacists. Otherwise, qualified applicants shall not be excluded from admission or participation in the School of Pharmacy's educational programs and activities solely by reason of their disability or medical condition. The School of Pharmacy provides reasonable accommodation in its academic program to qualified individuals with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not require substantial program modification or lower academic standards. Learning disabilities are included under this policy.

Because the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree signifies that the holder is a pharmacist prepared for entry into the practice of pharmacy, it follows that graduates must have the knowledge, skills, and demeanor to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to conduct a wide spectrum of pharmaceutical care activities.

Within this document "candidate(s)" refers to candidates for admission, as well as students enrolled in the Pharm.D. program. Candidates must have the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. Candidates' pharmaceutical skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell, and taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the Sections that follow. They must be able to consistently, quickly, and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

A candidate for the Pharm.D. degree must have abilities and skills of five varieties including observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative and quantitative, and behavioral and social. Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain of these areas, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation.

- I. Observation: The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the translational, pharmaceutical and applied sciences. A candidate must also be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. These skills necessitate the functional use of the sense of vision, hearing, and somatic senses. This includes, but is not limited to, observing patient activity and behavior, noting non-verbal and verbal signals; visual confirmation of appropriate medications using relevant markings; being able to read, interpret, and review prescriptions and prescription labels; and reviewing patient charts and documentation.

- II. Communication: A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively, in oral and written form, with patients, caregivers, and other healthcare providers. A candidate is expected to communicate effectively and respectfully with all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, marital or family status, pregnancy, veteran status, service in the uniformed services, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or gender expression. A candidate must be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to exchange information and perceive nonverbal communications. Candidates must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional communications such as sadness, worry, agitation, and lack of comprehension. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing in English. Each candidate must be able to read and to record observations and plans legibly, efficiently, and accurately in documents. Candidates must be able to prepare and communicate concise but complete summaries of individual encounters and complex, prolonged encounters. Candidates must be able to complete all documentation, written or electronic, according to directions in a complete and timely fashion. Candidates must be able to follow verbal and written instructions in order to correctly and independently perform tasks.
- III. Motor: Candidates must have sufficient motor function to prepare and dispense all types of pharmaceuticals products, including compounded sterile and non-sterile medications. A candidate must be able to provide or direct all aspects of general patient care, including but not limited to medication reviews and immunizations, as well as operate essential technologies. A candidate must be able to perform basic patient assessment, including but not limited to blood pressure measurement and point-of-care testing. A candidate must be able to provide emergency patient care, including CPR and first-aid.
- IV. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities: A candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize. Problem-solving, critical thinking, and creative thinking, critical skills demanded of health practitioners, requires all of these intellectual abilities. A candidate must be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion. A candidate must be able to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data from written and electronic sources, within the classroom, practice lab, and clinical settings. This includes, but is not limited to, cognitive skills sufficient to calculate appropriate medication dosages given specific patient parameters; quantitative ability to collect data, prioritize patient problems, and anticipate reactions; and conceptual ability to analyze and synthesize data and develop an appropriate plan of care. A candidate must be able to recall and retain information in an efficient and timely manner. A candidate must be able to accurately and independently evaluate his or her own performance and formulate strategies for addressing deficiencies and improving professional skills.
- V. Behavioral and Social Attributes: A candidate must possess the emotional health required for the appropriate use of their intellectual and mental abilities, including logical thinking, good judgement, effective communication, timely decision making, and building effective relationships. It is important for the individual to possess compassion and empathy and respond to the needs and concerns of the patients and caregivers. Individuals must value diversity and should be able to effectively function in culturally and socially diverse educational and practice environments. Individuals must be able to maintain emotional health despite stress, uncertainty, and demanding workload. They must be motivated and ready to adapt to changing situations, while maintaining their professional and ethical responsibilities associated with pharmacy education and patient care. The candidate must be able to consistently complete all assignments, including examinations, in a timely manner.

In its evaluation of applicants to the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy, the Committee on Admissions will approach each applicant with the following questions in mind. When an applicant does not meet a nonacademic standard as defined above, and when this would in the professional judgment of the Committee not satisfy the School of Pharmacy's objectives for the candidate in pharmaceutical care, education, and research, such opinion will be documented in the minutes of the Committee on Admissions.

The questions are not designed to disqualify applicants, but rather to give the Committee on Admissions more complete information about an applicant's ability to meet the nonacademic standards adopted by the School of Pharmacy.

1. Is the individual able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the translational, pharmaceutical, and applied sciences?
2. Is the individual able to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and reach therapeutic judgments?
3. Does the individual have sufficient use of the senses of vision and hearing?
4. Can the individual reasonably be expected to relate to patients and establish sensitive, professional relationships with patients?
5. Can the individual reasonably be expected to communicate with the patient and to healthcare providers with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency?
6. Can the individual reasonably be expected to learn and prepare, compound and dispense pharmaceuticals, prepare sterile products, and perform selected aspects of patient assessment?
7. Can the individual reasonably be expected to display good judgment in the care of patients?
8. Can the individual reasonably be expected to perform with appropriate actions in emergency situations?
9. Can the individual reasonably be expected to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior?
10. Can the individual reasonably be expected to possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the pharmacy school curriculum and enter the practice of pharmacy?

It should be noted that Technical Standards are reassessed at the regular meetings of the Academic Standards Committee and as reported by the faculty to the Committee. Should a student be found deficient in one or more of Standards, every effort will be made to mitigate the impact of the deficiency and allow the student to progress. There may be exceptional circumstances when the Committee recommends separation from the program due to a deficiency. Should a recommendation of program separation be made, the student shall be allowed due process through the appeals process outlined in the WVU School of Pharmacy Policy on Academic and Professional Standards.