

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR DENTAL SCHOOL ADMISSION AND GRADUATION**

Dental education requires the simultaneous acquisition of skills, professional attitudes, and behavior to accompany the accumulation of scientific knowledge. Dental school faculties have a responsibility to society to matriculate and graduate the best possible dentists. Thus, admission into dental school is offered to those who present the highest qualifications for the study and practice of dentistry. Technical standards presented in this document are prerequisites for admission to and graduation from Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry. All courses in the curriculum are required to develop the skills needed to become a competent dentist.

Graduates of dental schools must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of dental care. Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry acknowledges Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, PL 101-336 – the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1993, and the ADA Amendments Acts of 2008 – PL 110-325 but ascertains that certain minimum technical standards must be present in prospective candidates.

A candidate for the D.D.S. degree must have aptitude, abilities, and skills in five areas: (1) observation (2) communication (3) motor function (4) quantitative and intellectual conception (5) behavioral and social stability. Technological compensation can be made for some handicaps in these areas, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary would mean that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. Therefore, third parties cannot be used to assist students in accomplishing curricular requirements in the five skill areas specified above.

### **OBSERVATION**

The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments in the basic sciences including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The candidate should be able to speak, hear, and observe patients to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communication. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and with sensitivity toward patients, their family members, or guardians to establish a good rapport, convey or exchange information to develop a health history, identify problems presented, explain treatment procedures and alternative solutions, obtain informed consent, and give directions during treatment and post-treatment. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively in oral and written form using English with all members of the health care team.

### **MOTOR COORDINATION OR FUNCTION**

The candidate should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by performing palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests, dental preparations, and diagnostic procedures in a timely manner. A candidate must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general oral health care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of dentists are basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation, applying pressure to stop bleeding, opening obstructed airways, suturing simple wounds, and

uncomplicated oral and maxillofacial surgical procedures. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision. The candidate must have manual dexterity, including full functioning wrists, hands, fingers, and arms.

A student must be able to transfer and position patients with disabilities, physically restrain adults and children who lack motor control, and position and reposition himself or herself around the patient and chair in sitting and standing positions for prolonged periods. 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. All of these skills must be performed within reasonable timeframes, as determined by the faculty to simulate real-time professional dental care.

### **INTELLECTUAL-CONCEPTUAL, INTEGRATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ABILITIES**

These abilities include measurement, calculation, problem-reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem-solving and the critical skills demanded of dentists require all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relations of structures.

### **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES**

The candidate must possess the emotional health required for the full use of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the consistent and prompt completion of all responsibilities regarding the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. The candidate must be able to tolerate physically, mentally, and emotionally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress.

The candidate must also be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Empathy, integrity, concern for others, effective interpersonal skills, willingness, an ability to function as an effective team player, interest, and motivation to learn are all personal qualities that should be assessed during the admission and educational process.

The candidate for the D.D.S. degree must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. The candidate's diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell, and taste. Additionally, the candidate must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain, and temperature), sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory), and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the section above. The candidate must be able to consistently, quickly, and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) are employed and have the intellectual ability to learn, analyze, and synthesize data.

The Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry will consider for admission any applicant who demonstrates the ability to perform or to learn the skills listed in this document. Students will be judged not only on their scholastic accomplishments but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the school's curriculum to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners of dentistry.

The following technical requirements apply:

1. Is the candidate able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments in the basic sciences?
2. Is the candidate able to analyze, synthesize, extrapolate, solve problems, and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments?
3. Does the candidate have sufficient use of the senses of vision, hearing, and somatic sensation necessary to perform a physical examination?
4. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to relate to patients and establish sensitive, professional relationships with patients?
5. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to communicate the results of the examination to the patient and to colleagues with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency?
6. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to learn and perform routine laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures?
7. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to perform precise, quick, and appropriate actions in emergency situations?
8. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to display good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients?
9. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the Dental School curriculum and enter the independent practice of dentistry?
10. Can the candidate reasonably be expected to accept the criticism and respond with the appropriate modification of behavior?

Students must attest to their ability to meet technical requirements. Any student seeking accommodations must follow the established process for Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry. No accommodation is available for the preclinical and clinical courses.

**Please read the following statement and check the appropriate box.**

I have read the technical requirements of Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry. (Please check the appropriate box)

☐ I can comply with these functions

☐ I cannot comply with these functions

If you cannot comply, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that the information I am submitting directly to the School of Dentistry at Meharry Medical College and indirectly through the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service relating to my application for admission is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge, and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant (Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Applicant

Meharry Medical College does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, military service, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.