

University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine Essential Program Standards

The Essential Program Standards outlined in this document reflect the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to complete the requirements of the advanced dental education, predoctoral, or dental hygiene programs at the school, with or without a reasonable accommodation. These standards describe the nonacademic essential functions that are required for admission to, advancement through, and graduation from, the program. Failure to meet an Essential Program Standard may fall within the Protocol for Grading and Promotion of Predoctoral Dental Students (Section VI.F), the Protocol for Grading and Promotion of Dental Hygiene Students (Section VII.I), the Advanced Education Program (Residency) policies (Section V), or other School or University policies, with associated consequences. Residents/students are referred to their programspecific areas of this manual for more information regarding policy and process regarding failure to meet Essential Program Standards.

A resident/student who is unable to meet the Essential Program Standards, with or without a reasonable accommodation, may be recommended for a leave of absence or suspension until Standards can be met. A student who is unable to meet the Essential Program Standards after a leave or suspension, with or without a reasonable accommodation, may be recommended for dismissal, as outlined in program-specific documents in this Manual.

The University fosters a culture of inclusiveness and is committed to providing an accessible environment for its faculty, staff, residents, and students. Applicants or students who would like to request reasonable accommodation needed to meet these standards should contact the [Office of Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), (412) 648-7890.

1. Communication:

General: Residents/students must be able to communicate compassionately, respectfully, sensitively, and coherently with patients, their families, faculty, residents, staff, and students (including verbal, non-verbal, and written forms of communication). A resident/student must have sufficient facility with English to elicit, retrieve, understand, and communicate information.

Examples of compassionate, respectful, sensitive, and coherent communication include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Able to maintain effective and respectful communications with peers, faculty, staff, and patients in order to provide care, discuss academic progress, voice concerns, etc.
- Verbal and/or written communications are logical, linear, and coherent.
- Able to communicate verbally and non-verbally with a diverse population of peers, faculty, staff, and patients in ways that feel respectful, inclusive, non-threatening, and non-discriminatory to the other person.
- Able to effectively and accurately communicate instructions during treatment and post-treatment.
- Establishes and maintains a professional and appropriate rapport with patients, staff, faculty, and peers.

2. Ethics/Professionalism:

General: Residents/students must uphold 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, Principles of Ethics of the American Dental Hygienists Association, the University's [Student Code of Conduct](#), as well as policies, procedures and protocols outlined by the school.

Examples of ethical and professional behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Acts ethically and in the best interest of the patient and society, even when there is a conflict with the resident/student's personal self-interest.
- Acts with integrity in actions and communications with fellow students, residents, staff, faculty, and/or the public.
- Treats all individuals in a respectful and effective manner, regardless of race, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or any other protected status identified in the University of Pittsburgh's [Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy CS 07](#).
- Is honest with others.
- Takes responsibility for behaviors and actions.
- Is open to feedback from instructors.
- Maintains appropriate credentialing requirements.

3. Behavioral/Social Demeanor:

General: Residents/students must have sufficient behavioral, social, and emotional skills to meet their own needs and the needs of others. This includes being able to interact effectively and appropriately with others including faculty, staff, residents, students, patients, families, caregivers, and other health care professionals.

Examples of the types of behavioral, social, and emotional skills required to meet this standard include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Demonstrates emotional maturity and maintains emotional stability in the learning and/or clinical environment.
- Effectively manages physical and/or emotional stress under heavy workloads.
- Tolerates uncertainty and ambiguity while being flexible and adaptable without showing undue signs of distress.
- Is organized, manages time, and meets deadlines and time limits.
- Demonstrates good judgment and insight as expected from a healthcare professional.
- Reflects and self-evaluates, including examining personal attitudes and stereotypes, to offer respect to the individual needs of faculty, staff, peers, as well as patients from diverse cultural and complex medical and psychological backgrounds.
- Accepts criticism and takes responsibility for behavior; makes changes to own behavior as needed.
- Demonstrates compassion, respect, concern and empathy for others.
- Balances own views with those of others.
- Collaborates with others as a member of a team.

4. Intellectual/Cognitive/Conceptual/Executive Functioning:

General: Residents/students must be able to develop and apply skills in reasoning, analysis, synthesis of information, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Examples of intellectual, cognitive, conceptual and executive function include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Critically interprets, analyzes, assimilates, and applies scientific information from the didactic, preclinical, and clinical coursework presented throughout the curriculum to simulated cases and to live patient care experiences.
- Participates in, and learns from, different teaching modalities, such as lecture, question-and-answer, small-group and team-based activities, and presentation of projects, including the use of technology to facilitate learning.
- Understands three-dimensional relationships to achieve competence as defined by the school in the preclinical, laboratory, and clinical procedures required.
- Is legally and mentally competent to make sound and beneficent decisions and/or to perform assigned educational and clinical tasks, duties, and/or responsibilities.

5. Motor Skills:

General: Residents/students must have sufficient motor skills, physical mobility, strength, equilibrium, endurance, and coordination required to perform tasks in didactic, preclinical, laboratory, and clinical settings.

Examples of sufficient motor skills include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Demonstrates controlled instrumentation techniques, which include equilibrium and touch, during patient care.
- Operates high speed and/or low speed dental drills with precision of less than a millimeter.
- Demonstrates appropriate gross motor skills to procedures that require instrumentation, manipulation, or force.
- Demonstrates good hand-eye coordination.
- Establishes depth and width accurately.
- Provides all aspects of patient care within a time frame that maintains safety and comfort for patients.

6. Sensory/Observational:

General: Residents/students must have sufficient ability to obtain information accurately in didactic, preclinical, laboratory, and clinical settings.

Examples of sensory and observational skills include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Examines and assesses oral health conditions with acuity.
- Detects subtle changes in radiographic density and normal/abnormal variations in oral soft and hard tissues.
- Observes tissue conditions and changes over time.
- Distinguishes depth and width accurately.

Contact Information:

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Adapted from the Following:

- [American Dental Association \(ADA\) Policies on Substance Use Disorders](#)
- Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) Current Accreditation Standards for [Predoctoral Dental Education, Standard 5 – Patient Care Services](#).
- [Commonwealth of Pennsylvania State Board of Dentistry Dental Law](#), Act 216 of 1933. Revised April 2016. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- [Lane Community College Health Professions Dental Hygiene](#). Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- Technical Standards [College of Dentistry the University of Tennessee Health Science Center](#). Accessed on: August 9, 2020
- Technical Standards [School of Dental Medicine Case Western Reserve University](#). Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- Technical Standards [Dugoni School of Dentistry University of the Pacific](#). Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- The [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program](#) Technical Standards. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- [University of Michigan Medical School](#) Technical Standards 2020. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.