

Last Approved 20 August, 2026 | Review every 3 years

Required Functional Abilities (Core Competencies) for Students Entering the University of Alberta MD Program

Office of Accountability:	Dean, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	MD Program
Approver:	MD Curriculum & Program Committee
Scope:	Compliance with this policy extends to all members of the MD Program.

Purpose

The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) Accreditation Element 10.5 - *Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students* - states that:

A medical school develops and publishes core competencies for the admission of applicants. These entrance core competencies support the retention, promotion, and graduation of medical students.

This policy incorporates the core competencies framework of abilities set out in the Association of Faculties of Medicine in Canada (AFMC)'s statement "Re-envisioning Technical Standards in Undergraduate Medical Education in Canada", approved by the AFMC Board in April 2024.

The purpose of this policy is to

- describe the core competencies that students are required to possess, with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to enter and complete the MD Program at the University of Alberta ("**Functional Abilities**");
- provide information to applicants who are offered and accept admission to the MD Program ("**Learners**") about obtaining reasonable accommodations in order to meet the required Functional Abilities; and
- explain the requirement for Learners to confirm and attest to their ability to fulfill these Functional Abilities prior to entering the MD Program.

POLICY

Functional Abilities for Students Entering the MD Program at the University of Alberta

The following Functional Abilities set out the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and professional behaviours that Learners must possess in order to

- enter and successfully complete the MD Program,
- ensure the safety and well-being of patients, clinicians, colleagues, themselves and others in learning and health care environments, and
- later, to enter the supervised practice of medicine in Canada as resident physicians.

Functional Ability	Description of Ability (with or without reasonable accommodations)
Learning and Assessment of Learning	Learners acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviours through a variety of modalities, including, but not limited to, • classroom instruction; • laboratory instruction, including cadaver lab; • physical demonstrations, small-group, team, and collaborative activities; • participation in the provision of patient care in clinical settings; • individual study; • preparation and presentation of reports; and • use of technology. Learners demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and behaviours through a variety of assessment modalities including, but not limited to, • written or computer-based examinations, • workplace-based assessments, • reflective activities (written and oral), and, • Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), as required by the Program for advancement, promotion, and graduation.
Communication	Learners actively communicate and convey information

	effectively in person and virtually • with peers, administrative staff, multidisciplinary team members, and preceptors to enable learning and effective and timely participation in the program, and • with patients and their supporters, building rapport, eliciting their perspectives, and collaborating in management; and record elicited information clearly and accurately.
Knowledge Integration	Learners interpret information obtained through interview, observation, examination, and medical research to formulate a hypothesis, recommend, and pursue interventions, as appropriate.
Patient Safety and Quality Care	Learners practice within their level of competence to recruit or deliver patient-centred care. This includes: • participating as a team member in responding to patient safety situations, • recognizing that team roles are not limited to performing procedures or directing emergency responses, • complying with safety standards in the learning and clinical environment, and • following universal precaution procedures.
Professional Behaviours	Learners • engage in self-reflection to identify personal and professional learning needs to maintain competence, • respect boundaries, confidentiality, and privacy for patients and colleagues in all settings as required by law and as guided by University and AHS policies, • limit their actions to the ethical and legal norms of the medical profession, and • maintain the professional standards expected of the profession.

In addition to these Functional Abilities, Learners must also demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional behaviours described in the [MD Program Level Objectives](#) in order to successfully complete the MD Program and graduate.

Accommodations

The MD Program at the University of Alberta is an inclusive learning environment. The University provides eligible Learners with reasonable accommodations, up to the point of undue hardship, in order to meet the Functional Abilities required for the MD Program and to successfully achieve the MD Program Level Objectives required to complete the program.

In accordance with the University's [Accommodation Procedure for Students](#), Learners can apply and register for accommodations through the Academic Success Centre, Accessibility and Accommodations Services unit.

As noted in the *Accommodation Procedure for Students*, students and Learners needing accommodations have certain responsibilities, including the responsibility to

- disclose their need for accommodation as soon as possible, before experiencing adverse impacts and before the start of the academic year, and
- provide all required information to support their request for reasonable accommodations.

Attestation

Applicants are expected to review and understand this policy, and attest to their ability to fulfill these competencies prior to entering the MD Program. Applicants to the MD Program will attest to their ability to fulfill these Functional Abilities via a signed statement at the time they accept an offer of admission to the Program.

Students in the MD Program will be asked to attest to their ability to meet these Functional Abilities periodically throughout the duration of the Program.

RELATED LINKS

[Re-envisioning Technical Standards in Undergraduate Medical Education in Canada](#)

[MD Program Level Objectives](#)

University of Alberta [Accommodation Policy](#)

University of Alberta [Accommodation Procedure for Students](#)

APPROVAL HISTORY

APPROVER	STATUS	DATE
MD Program Committee	Approved	24 January 2013
Karen Pirie, Executive Secretary, MD Program	Updated CACMS standard: MS-9 to 10.5	02 February 2017
Dr. Tracey Hillier, Associate Dean	Changed name of Program Committee to MD Curriculum & Program Committee and updated CACMS Standard 10.5 wording	01 June 2020
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved	16 September 2021
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved New Required Functional Abilities Policy and rescinded the original Technical Standards Policy.	20 August 2026