

Technical Standards Policy

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

Overview

It is understood that the authority for policy is derived from the Alberta *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.

Purpose

The School of Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta is responsible to society to provide a program of study so that graduates have the knowledge, skills, professional behaviours and attitudes necessary to enter the practice of dentistry in Canada.

Graduates must be able to diagnose and manage oral health problems and provide comprehensive compassionate care to their patients. For this reason, students in the DDS Program must possess the skills necessary to interview, examine, and counsel patients, and competently complete certain technical procedures in a reasonable time, all the while ensuring patient safety. Graduates are expected to be qualified to enter the practice of dentistry and meet all currently identified competencies for a beginning dental practitioner in Canada.

POLICY

1. SKILLS & ABILITIES

A DDS Program applicant and a candidate for the DDS degree must demonstrate the following skills and abilities independently or with reasonable accommodation. The use of a trained intermediary is not acceptable in clinical situations. A student's judgment and skill may not be mediated by reliance upon someone else's power of selection and observation, or clinical ability.

a. Observation

A student must be able to participate in learning situations that require skills to acquire information through observation and perception by the use of senses and mental abilities. In particular, a student must be able to accurately observe a patient and acquire information through visual, auditory and somatic sensation. A student must be able to see fine detail, focus at a variety of distances, discern differences and variations in contrast, shape and texture that are necessary to differentiate normal and abnormal soft and hard tissues.

b. Communication

A student must be able to speak, to hear and to observe individuals or groups of individuals in order to effectively and efficiently elicit and clarify information. A student must be able to observe patients by sight in order to elicit information, describe changes in appearance, and perceive changes in non-verbal communication. In the course of study for the DDS degree the student must be able to progressively create rapport and develop therapeutic relationships with patients and their families in an inclusive, culturally competent manner, and establish effective communication with all members of the dental school community and healthcare teams. A student must also be able to progressively acquire the ability to coherently summarize and effectively communicate a patient's condition and management plan verbally, and in written and electronic forms.

c. Motor and Tactile Function

A student must possess sufficient motor function to develop the skills required to safely perform a

physical examination on a patient, including palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers. The examination must be done independently and competently in a timely fashion. A student must possess sufficient motor function and sensory function in order to be able to use common instruments (e.g., high or low speed hand pieces, scalpels, intra-oral mirrors, surgical and restorative instruments), either directly or in an adaptive form. A student must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and safe restraint when performing all general dentistry procedures. Such movements require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch, hearing, and vision.

d. Cognition, Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Qualitative Abilities

A student must demonstrate higher-level cognitive abilities and memory necessary to measure, calculate, and reason in order to conceptualize, analyze, integrate and synthesize information. In addition, the student must be able to comprehend dimensional and visual-spatial relationships. All of these problem-solving activities must be achieved progressively in a timely fashion. These skills must contribute to sound judgment based upon clinical and ethical reasoning.

e. Behavioural and Social Attributes

A student must consistently demonstrate the emotional health required for full utilization of her/his intellectual abilities. A student must take responsibility for herself/himself and their behaviours. The student must promptly complete all assignments and responsibilities attendant not only to the study of dentistry, but also to the diagnosis and care of patients. It is essential that a student progressively develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients and their families, all members of the dental school community and healthcare teams. The student must be able to accept and function under the physical, emotional and mental demands of the educational program, including didactic, laboratory and clinical environments, and function effectively under stress. It is necessary to adapt to changing environments and function in the face of uncertainties that are inherent in the care of patients. A student must be able to accept suggestions and constructive criticism, and if necessary, respond by appropriate modification in behaviour. A student must adhere to the appropriate standards of professional conduct and ethical behaviour.

f. Ethics/Professionalism

A student must maintain the standards of conduct for ethics and professionalism set forth in the Alberta Dental Association and College Code of Ethics and the University of Alberta Student Code of Behaviour. A student must always act in the best interest of the patient and society even when there is a conflict with the student's personal self-interest. The student must conduct oneself as a trustworthy and responsible citizen and act with impeccable integrity in their interactions with students, faculty, staff, and the public both during the admissions process and throughout the DDS program,. A student must refrain from actions that detract from the professional atmosphere or orderly appearance of the School of Dentistry or University, including personal appearance or other actions. This expectation would also apply when attending any school-sponsored or related activities, such as rotations, as well as outside public activities.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [▲ Top](#)

Technical standard	An established norm or required ability or skill.

Accommodation

Accommodation is the process of making reasonable adjustments to the delivery of services and the conditions of employment in order to reduce or eliminate the impact of discriminatory rules, policies, practices, standards, terms of employment, or decisions, which have an adverse impact on an individual or group of individuals based on a characteristic or perceived characteristic referenced in the Protected Grounds. Accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the individual in need of accommodation, and is assessed on the unique circumstances of each individual. The process requires reasonable accommodation, not instant or perfect accommodation. The recipients of accommodation (e.g. students and staff) may be required to try different accommodation options. The University is required to provide reasonable accommodation up to the point of undue hardship.

All students are bound by the Code of Student Behaviour. Accommodation of students neither requires nor implies that the University lower its academic standards. Nor does accommodation relieve the student of that student's responsibility to develop the essential skills and competencies required by programs.

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APPROVER	STATUS	DATE
DDS Curriculum Committee	Approved	24 JANUARY 2013 Revised FEBRUARY 2015