Academic Advancement and Graduation

The mission of the University of Maryland School of Medicine is to graduate the best future physicians. It is the responsibility of the faculty to society to select applicants who are best qualified to complete the required training and who are most likely to become skilled, effective physicians. Applicants and students will be judged not only on their scholastic achievement and abilities, but also on their intellectual, physical, emotional and behavioral capacities to meet the essential requirements of the school’s curriculum. The Committee on Admissions is instructed to exercise judgment on behalf of the faculty to select the entering class, and to consider character, extracurricular achievement, and overall suitability for the medical profession based upon information in the application, letters of recommendation and personal interviews.

Medical education requires that the accumulation of scientific knowledge be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of skills and professional attitudes and behavior. The essential requirements presented in this document are pre-requisite for admission, academic advancement and graduation from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. All courses in the curriculum, including ongoing self-directed learning, are required in order to develop essential knowledge, attitudes and skills required to become a competent physician.

Graduates of the medical school must have the attitudes, knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. The University of Maryland School of Medicine acknowledges Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act and PL 101-336, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), but maintains certain minimum technical standards that must be present in the prospective candidate for the M.D. degree.

The University of Maryland School of Medicine will consider for admission and continued academic advancement any individual who demonstrates the ability to perform, or to learn to perform, the skills referred to in this document. Deficiencies in knowledge base, judgment, integrity, character, or professional attitude or demeanor, which may
jeopardize patient care, or compromise the educational process, may be grounds for course or rotation failure and possible dismissal.

**Aptitudes, Abilities and Skills**

A candidate for the M.D. degree must have aptitude and abilities in five areas: (1) observation; (2) communication; (3) sensory and motor coordination and function; (4) conceptual, integrative abilities; and (5) behavioral and social attributes.

**Observation**

The student must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in those experiments in the basic and clinical sciences determined essential by the respective faculties. A student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and at close hand, noting non-verbal as well as verbal signals. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities.

**Communication**

A student must be able to speak intelligibly, to hear adequately, and to observe closely patients in order to elicit and transmit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive non-verbal communications. A student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing. In addition, the student must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written English with all members of the health care team. A student must possess reading skills at a level sufficient to accomplish curricular requirements and provide clinical care for patients. The student must be capable of completing appropriate medical records and documents and plans according to protocol and in a complete and timely manner.

**Sensory and Motor Coordination and Function**

A student must have sufficient sensory and motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers. A student must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Such actions require coordination of both gross and
fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

Candidates for the M.D. degree must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. The student’s diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell and taste. Additionally, a student 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 above. The student must be able to consistently, quickly, and accurately integrate all information received by whatever senses are employed; and the student must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data.

Clinical training and service learning activities during all four years of medical school may require the ability to transport oneself to a variety of off-site settings in a timely manner. Rounds and patient care may require prolonged and/or rapid ambulation or movement. Reasonable accommodations will be determined on an individual basis and at the discretion of the Committee on Admissions or the Advancement Committee, with faculty consultation.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physicians, requires all of these intellectual abilities and often must be performed quickly, especially in emergency situations. A student must be able to identify significant findings from history, physical examination and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, prescribe appropriate medications and therapy and retain and recall information in an efficient and timely manner. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the medical literature in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment and in diagnostic and therapeutic planning is essential; a student must be able to identify and communicate their knowledge to others when appropriate.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

The student must possess the emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment and the prompt
completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. The student must exhibit the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients, colleagues, clinical and administrative staff, and all others with whom the student interacts in the professional or academic setting, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age or other attributes or affiliations that may differ from those of the student. The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively when stressed. The student must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. A student is expected to accept appropriate suggestions and criticism and, if necessary, respond by modification of behavior. Empathy, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admission and educational processes.

The University of Maryland School of Medicine will consider for admission to medical school any applicant who demonstrates the ability to perform, or to learn to perform within a reasonable time, the skills listed in this document.

Other Requirements

A student must comply with University immunization requirements as outlined at http://www.umaryland.edu/heath/immunization_policy.doc.

The University of Maryland Baltimore policy regarding the evaluation and management of students with blood borne pathogens can be reviewed at http://cf.umaryland.edu/hrpolicies/section6/t61100Asa.html.

Applicants with Disabilities

State and federal law require that the University of Maryland School of Medicine provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities. In the context of the School of Medicine’s curriculum, some disabilities cannot be accommodated, while others can be accommodated.

An applicant is not disqualified from consideration due to a disability. Applicants are not required to disclose the nature of a disability to the Committee on Admissions. Applicants with questions about the School’s Essential Requirements for Admission, Academic Advancement and Graduation in relation to their disability are encouraged to discuss the issue of accommodation with the Committee on Admissions prior to the interview.
process. Upon the request of a medical school applicant or student, academic adjustments and/or reasonable accommodations may be provided, if appropriate. For applicants, the Committee on Admissions will work with the Advancement Committee and course directors to determine whether requested accommodations are feasible and reasonable.

Some of the aptitudes, abilities, and skills described in the Essential Requirements can be attained by some applicants with technological compensation or other reasonable accommodation. However, applicants using technological supports or other accommodations must be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of trained intermediaries to carry out functions described in the Essential Requirements will not be permitted by the School of Medicine. Intermediaries, no matter how well trained, are applying their own powers of selection and observation, which could affect the student’s judgment and performance. Therefore, the School will not permit third parties to be used to assist a student in the clinical training area in accomplishing curriculum requirements in the five skill areas identified in the Essential Requirements. Other accommodations will be given due consideration, and reasonable accommodations will be made where consistent with curriculum objectives and legal requirements applicable to the School.

REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATION

An applicant who has not been offered admission to the School of Medicine may disclose a disability and request accommodation during the admission process. THIS IS NOT REQUIRED. However, an applicant may want to determine the School’s response to a specific accommodation request early in the admissions process. An applicant who chooses voluntarily to disclose a disability should write, call or visit the Associate Dean for Admissions to disclose the disability and discuss accommodation requests.

After admission, students (including admittees who have not yet accepted a place in a class at the School of Medicine, admittees who have accepted a place, and matriculating students) can disclose a disability and request accommodation by writing, calling or visiting the Associate Dean for Students Affairs, or their designee.

The Associate Dean, or designee, to whom a disability is disclosed will interview the applicant or student and gather all relevant information. The applicant or student will be required to submit in writing the requested accommodation and pertinent supporting information. The
pertinent information will include a history of accommodations granted previously in other educational programs and references who can discuss with the Associate Dean, or their designee, the experience of the applicant or student in other educational settings. Documentation must be current. In most cases this means within three years of the request for accommodation, depending upon the circumstances. Older documentation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The School may require medical or other verification of disability and proof of information presented concerning accommodation. Such proof may include demonstration of assisted physical abilities. The School may require independent medical examination or testing to verify claimed disabilities, determine the extent and effects of disabilities, and assess the utility of accommodations. Medical or psychological consultations from resources within the University and external to the University may be obtained.

After gathering all relevant and necessary information, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or their designee, will present the request for accommodation to the Advancement Committee. The Advancement Committee will make a determination as to whether the applicant or student can perform, with the requested accommodation, the essential functions of the educational program. The School of Medicine is not required to make, nor will it make, modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of the educational program. Alternative reasonable accommodation may be offered by the Advancement Committee.

The Dean of the School of Medicine, or their designee, will be made aware of the Advancement Committee’s recommendations. For incoming students, the Office of Admissions will be responsible for sharing the final decision with the student. For matriculated students, the medical school's Office of Student Affairs will handle that responsibility.

The following deadlines and goals will be observed:

Any student who is not yet a matriculant must make request for accommodation of disability within three weeks after accepting admission to the medical school. A matriculating student who becomes aware of a disability requiring accommodation, or of the need for accommodation of a previously known disability, must request the accommodation as soon as the need for accommodation has been identified. A student can expect a response from the School of Medicine within 30 days of submitting all required documentation, as described above. The time to notification may
be extended if the School requests additional information which cannot reasonably be gathered within the defined period.

Summary Questions

1. Is the student able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments in the basic and clinical sciences?

2. Is the student able to analyze, synthesize, extrapolate, solve problems, and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments?

3. Does the student have sufficient use of the senses of vision and hearing and the somatic sensation necessary to perform a physical examination? Can the candidate perform palpation, auscultation, and percussion?

4. Can the student reasonably be expected to relate well to others and to establish sensitive, professional relationships with patients, colleagues and clinical and administrative staff?

5. Can the student reasonably be expected to communicate the results of the examination to the patient and to their colleagues with accuracy, clarity and efficiency?

6. Can the student reasonably be expected to learn and perform routine laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures?

7. Can the student reasonably be expected to perform with precise, quick and appropriate actions in emergency situations?

8. Can the student reasonably be expected to display good judgment and assume responsibility in the assessment and treatment of patients?

9. Can the student reasonably be expected to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modifications of behavior?

10. Can the student reasonably be expected to possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the medical school curriculum and enter the independent practice of medicine?