

Technical Standards for The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Applicants to The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University are selected on the basis of their academic, personal, and extracurricular attributes. In addition, all students must possess the intellectual, physical and emotional capabilities necessary to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty.

The required abilities and characteristics for completion of the MD degree consist of certain minimum physical and cognitive abilities and sufficient mental and emotional stability to assure that candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation are able to complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of medical training. In addition, students must demonstrate the ability to work as a member of a healthcare team. Medical education focuses largely on the care of patients, and differs markedly from postsecondary education in fields outside of the health sciences.

Technological accommodation is available to assist in certain cases of disability and may be permitted in certain areas. However, under all circumstances, a candidate for the MD degree should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. For example, the use of a third party means that a candidate's judgment is mediated by another person's (the third party) powers of selection and observation. Therefore, the use of a third party to assist a candidate or student in meeting the technical standards for admission, promotion or graduation is not permitted.

An accommodation is not reasonable if it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of self and/or others, if making it requires a substantial modification in an essential element of the curriculum, if it lowers academic standards, or poses an undue administrative or financial burden.

The following abilities and characteristics are defined as technical standards, which, in conjunction with academic standards established by the faculty, are requirements for admission, promotion, and graduation.

Technical Standards for Medical School Admission, Continuation, and Graduation¹

A candidate for the MD degree must have abilities and skills in five varieties, including observation; communication; motor; conceptual, integrative, and quantitative; and behavioral and social.

I. Observation: The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to the observation of radiologic images, 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 somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

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¹ Recommendations modelled on the AAMC Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admission, approved by the AAMC Executive Council on January 18, 1979. Reviewed, updated, and most recently updated and approved by the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University in 2024.

II. Communication: A candidate should be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the healthcare team.

III. Motor: Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should possess the abilities necessary to perform basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, CBC, etc.), carry out diagnostic procedures (digital rectal exam, paracentesis, etc.), and read EKGs and x-rays. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physicians are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

IV. 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. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes: A candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They 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. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS ASSESSMENT

Students applying to the medical degree-granting program at Brown University are selected based on academic achievement, faculty evaluations, evidence of maturity, motivation, leadership, integrity, and compassion. They must be capable of meeting the competency requirements expected of all graduates described in the *Medical Student Handbook*, page 70. Technological compensation can be made for some, but not all, disabilities in certain areas of these competency requirements.

Candidates accepted for admission who may need special accommodations cannot be fully admitted and matriculate unless those supportive services are available, as determined by the Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences. The process for assessing whether applicants will be able to meet the competency requirements for the medical degree (MD), with reasonable accommodation, is described below.

IMPORTANT: A student requesting accommodation is responsible for providing the school with documentation supporting the need for the accommodation. The documentation must be sufficient to establish that (1) the student is disabled as defined by the ADA and Section 504 regulations, and (2) the requested accommodation is appropriate for the student's condition. The documentation must provide enough information for school administrators to understand the nature of the disability and determine what accommodations, if any, are necessary. The student is responsible for any costs or fees associated with obtaining the necessary documentation to support his/her claim.

Process for Assessing Whether Applicants Meet Technical Standards for Medicine

1. No inquiry will be made on the application forms concerning disability. Brown's policies regarding the technical abilities and skills necessary to meet the competency requirements are included with the letter of admission. Admitted candidates who believe they will require accommodation to meet the technical standards are asked to contact the medical school's Office of Academic Support (ams-office-of-academic-support@brown.edu) prior to matriculation.
2. Applicants who are identified as having a disability through volunteered information, supporting credentials, or interviews will have an assessment of their ability to meet the competency requirements only after a determination is made of their admissibility to the medical program.
3. Those applicants with disabilities deemed admissible to Alpert Medical School will be requested to have submitted on their behalf appropriate documentation in regard to the disability from a qualified health professional. The health professional will be asked to provide an opinion on the candidate's ability to meet the competency requirements for the MD degree. The applicant may also be requested to respond to that question.
4. The responses will be submitted to a committee appointed by the Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences. This committee may ask for a review of the supporting documentation by appropriate members of the faculty in regard to the applicant's ability to meet the competency requirements. The committee will ascertain what accommodations, if any, the medical program would need to make in order that the applicant might be able to meet the competency requirements and assess the feasibility of any needed accommodations.
5. The committee will review the information received to determine if the applicant will be able to meet the competency requirements, with reasonable accommodations on the part of the medical program, if necessary.
6. The committee will recommend to the Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences acceptance of applicants who can meet the competency requirements or will recommend rejection of those applicants who cannot meet the competency requirements.