

Harvard School of Dental Medicine
Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) Program and
Clinical Advanced Graduate Education Programs
TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The following Technical Standards document was reviewed and endorsed by the HSDM Promotions Committee and the Committee on Advanced Graduation Education in the Spring of 2020. All candidates that are accepted into HSDM will be expected to sign the Technical Standards Acknowledgement, and all students who matriculate are expected to sign the Certification of Ability.

Admission to the Harvard School of Dental Medicine is open to all qualified individuals and complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. In any case where a candidate's ability to observe or acquire information in keeping with these technical standards is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to acquire and demonstrate the essential information conveyed in this fashion. Reasonable accommodations for qualified persons with disabilities can be made so long as such accommodations do not require a change in fundamental program requirements of the curriculum, create a direct threat to the health or safety of patients, students, faculty, assistants or staff, create an undue burden, or compromise the academic integrity of the program. Students interested in initiating the accommodation process should contact the Office of Disability Services at 617-432-9198 or via e-mail at disabilityservices@hms.harvard.edu to schedule an appointment.

The School of Dental Medicine is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students and endeavors to select candidates who have the ability to become highly competent general dentists who are well prepared to enter advanced graduate residency training programs or private practice. As an accredited dental school, the Harvard School of Dental Medicine adheres to the standards promulgated by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation. Within these standards, the School of Dental Medicine has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum; the evaluation of student progress; and the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on prior satisfactory academic achievement but also on non-academic factors that serve to ensure that the candidate can complete the essential functions and technical standards of the academic program required for graduation. A candidate must possess abilities and skills which include those of observation, communication, sensory/motor, intellectual/conceptual (integrative and quantitative), and behavioral/social. Candidates must be able to consistently, quickly and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

The term "candidate" refers to candidates who have been admitted to one of HSDM's clinical programs as well as current students who are candidates for retention, promotion, or graduation. Fulfillment of the technical standards for graduation from HSDM does not guarantee that a graduate will be able to fulfill the technical requirements of any specific residency program.

I. Observation:

The candidate must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic sciences, including but not limited to information conveyed through physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations in animals, microbiological cultures and microscopic images of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. Furthermore, a candidate must be able to:

- Observe a patient accurately, at a distance, and close at hand, to acquire information from written documents, and to visualize information as presented in images from paper, films, slides or video.
- Recognize and appreciate nonverbal communications when performing dental procedures or administering medications.
- Interpret x-ray and other graphic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomenon (such as EKGs) with or without the use of assistive devices.
- Perform visual and tactile dental examinations and treatment including use of visual acuity and vision to discern differences and variation in color, shape, and general appearance between normal and abnormal, soft and hard tissues including variations in shade along the black-grey white scale.

Such observation and information acquisition necessitates the functional use of visual, auditory and somatic sensation while being enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities.

II. Communication:

A candidate must be able to communicate clearly and effectively 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 speech and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in English in both oral and written form, often utilizing computer-based technology, with all members of the health care team. While working alone and with others, a candidate must be able to communicate orally and in writing, including settings where time available is brief, such as emergencies. In any case where a candidate's ability to communicate is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or ability to acquire and demonstrate the essential information conveyed in this fashion.

III. Sensory/Motor:

It is required that a candidate possess the motor skills necessary to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures. The candidate must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency medical care such as airway management, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, application of pressure to control bleeding, suturing of simple wounds, and uncomplicated oral and maxillofacial surgical procedures. Candidates must meet applicable safety standards for the

environment and follow universal precaution procedures. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch, vision and audition. The candidate must also be able to operate controls utilizing fine movements, operate high or low speed hand pieces requiring controlled dental movements and utilize hand instrumentation (including scalpels for surgical procedures).

IV. Intellectual-Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative) Abilities:

Candidates must effectively interpret, assimilate, and understand the complex information required to function within the dental school curriculum, including, but not limited to, the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the special relationships of structures; effectively participate in individual, small-group, and lecture learning modalities in the classroom, clinical and community settings; learn, participate, collaborate, and contribute as a part of a team; synthesize information both in person and via remote technology; interpret causal connections and make accurate, fact-based conclusions based on available data and information; formulate a hypothesis and investigate potential answers and outcomes; and reach appropriate and accurate conclusions in a timely manner.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes:

In accordance with the HSDM Competency Statements for the General Dentist, the candidate must be able to fully use his/her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, colleagues, staff and faculty members. Further, a candidate must be able to manage apprehensive patients who display a range of affects and behaviors. The candidate must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. He/she must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all requisite personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions process and developed and assessed in dental school. Candidates must be able to respond to constructive feedback by making appropriate behavioral and/or performance changes.

Because the dental profession is governed by high ethical values and principles and by state and federal laws, candidates must have the capacity to learn, understand, and perform in accordance with these values, principles and laws. They must be able to comply fully with 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 as well as the policies for the School of Dental Medicine as found in the HSDM Student Handbook, including the policy on student attendance. They are expected to relate to colleagues, faculty, staff and patients honestly and respectfully and to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, creed, genetic information, military status, any other legally protected basis. See the Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Dental Medicine's anti-discrimination policy (<https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Sites/HR/files/Anti-Discrimination%20Policy%20Approved%2012.13.17.pdf>).

The above is considered by HSDM to be minimum abilities required in the educational process of a dentist. HSDM will provide reasonable accommodations to those candidates who have documented disabilities and seek such accommodation in keeping with the procedures as set forth by the dental school. However, HSDM will not undertake modifications or provide auxiliary aids or services that would fundamentally alter the nature and substance of the curriculum, present an undue burden for the institution, pose a direct threat to the safety of patients, students, faculty, assistants or staff, or compromise the academic integrity of the program. HSDM will also not provide services or equipment of a personal nature. The candidate must be able to meet the technical standards of the curriculum, including the functions described above, with or without reasonable accommodations, in order to begin the program or to continue in the program, or to graduate from the program.