

**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER**  
**Paul L. Foster School of Medicine**  
**GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**  
**STANDARD POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE**

**TITLE:**           **DISABILITY POLICY: ESSENTIAL ABILITIES  
REQUIREMENTS AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

**APPROVED:**       10/05/2007

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**   10/05/2007

**PURPOSE:**       To comply with ACGME Institutional Requirements effective July 1, 2007. Sponsoring Institution must have a written policy which would apply to residents with disabilities.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

In the selection of residents and fellows and in their progress through the curriculum of a residency or fellowship program, the medical school faculty is guided by the institutional, common program requirements and specific program requirements stipulated by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Consequently, all candidates for any residency or fellowship program offered by the clinical departments of the Texas Tech HSC Paul L. Foster School of Medicine must meet the identified criteria necessary to successfully complete that respective program. Furthermore, the faculty is cognizant of its responsibilities to patients who will be a part of the education and training process and therefore consider carefully the scholastic achievement, personal and emotional characteristics, motivation, industry, maturity, resourcefulness, and personal health appropriate to the effective physician.

To achieve the optimal educational experience and to maintain patient safety, trainees are required to participate in all phases their residency or fellowship program. The study of medicine and its specialties and subspecialties is not pure intellectual exercise. Rather a specific minimum set of observation, communication, motor, intellectual/conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities, behavioral and social attributes, and ethical and legal standards are needed to be a successful resident or fellow. To be successful, the physician-in-training must progress with increasing independence throughout the residency or fellowship program and by the time of program completion must be capable of competent and independent practice in his/her medical specialty. Essential abilities and characteristics required for the completion of a residency or fellowship program consist of certain minimum physical and cognitive abilities and sufficient mental and emotional stability to complete the entire training program.

Candidates for any residency or fellowship program must be able to satisfy all of the technical standards listed below, which in conjunction with individual program qualification criteria,

constitute the residency or fellowship program. These technical standards serve to delineate the necessary physical, emotional and behavioral qualifications all candidates must meet but are not intended to deter any candidate for whom reasonable accommodation will allow for the completion of the residency or fellowship program. Individual residency or fellowship programs may require more stringent or more extensive abilities as appropriate to the specific requirements for training in that specialty. In certain specialties one or more of these technical standards may be more or less essential. Candidates are encouraged to contact the program of interest to ascertain if additional expectations apply. Overall, the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine recognizes that certain disabilities can be accommodated without compromising the requirements of the ACGME or the fundamental integrity of its residency and fellowship programs and is committed to the development of innovative and creative ways of opening its residency and fellowship programs to competitive and qualified disabled candidates.

**I. Observation:** A candidate must be able to

- 1) observe materials presented in the learning environment including, but not limited to, audiovisual presentations, written documents, tissues and gross organs in the normal and pathologic state and diagnostic images, and
- 2) accurately and completely observe patients both at a distance and directly and assess findings and perceive non-verbal communication (including facial expression, body language and affect).

**II. Communication:** A candidate must be able to

- 1) speak to and hear patients and their family members in a sensitive and respectful manner to elicit information in order to obtain a medical history and respond appropriately to emotions communicated verbally and non-verbally,
- 2) interact efficiently and effectively with all members of the health care team,
- 3) synthesize accurately and quickly large volumes of medical information from different types of written and electronic formats, and
- 4) record information accurately and clearly in English in a variety of handwritten and computerized record systems.

**III. Motor Function:** A candidate must be able to

- 1) elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers,

- 2) execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients,
- 3) carry out diagnostic maneuvers required by the specialty,
- 4) adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities, and
- 5) manipulate equipment and instruments to perform basic laboratory tests and procedures as required to attain specialty goals.

**IV. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** A candidate must be able to

- 1) comprehend factual knowledge from readings and didactic presentations,
- 2) apply knowledge and reasoning to solve problems,
- 3) recognize, comprehend and draw conclusions about three dimensional spatial relationships as well as logical, sequential relationships among events,
- 4) formulate and test hypotheses which enable timely and effective problem solving in diagnosis and treatment of patients in a variety of clinical modalities,
- 5) develop habits for life long learning,
- 6) collect, organize, prioritize, analyze, synthesize, and assimilate large amounts of technically detailed and complex information in a timely fashion and with progressive independence,
- 7) apply such information in problem solving and decision making in the clinical situation in a timely manner, and
- 8) perform calculations necessary to solve quantitative problems as required by patient care and testing needs.

**V. Behavioral and Social Attributes:** A candidate must be able to

- 1) demonstrate the possession of maturity and emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities,

- 2) exercise good judgment in the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients,
- 3) develop a mature, sensitive and effective relationship with patients and colleagues,
- 4) tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress,
- 5) display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments during training and patient care including call, sustained work up to thirty (30) hours at a time and up to eighty (80) hours a week of clinical work or the specialty-specific duty hours,
- 6) be punctual and present at all assignments,
- 7) remain awake and alert for assigned duty periods and teaching activities,
- 8) function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities inherent in the clinical problems of patients,
- 9) behave in an ethical and moral manner consistent with professional values and standards,
- 10) exhibit sufficient interpersonal skills to interact positively and sensitively with people from different racial, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds,
- 11) cooperate with others and work collaboratively as a healthcare team member,
- 12) seek the advice of others when appropriate,
- 13) complete work including documentation and dictations in a timely manner,
- 14) acknowledge conflicts of interest, mistakes and adverse outcomes and cooperate in the resolution of such, and
- 15) demonstrate insight into personal strengths and weaknesses.

**VI. Ethical Standards:** A candidate must be able to

- 1) demonstrate professional demeanor and behavior,
- 2) perform in an ethical manner in all dealings with peers, faculty, staff, and patients and their families, and
- 3) meet the legal standards to obtain a physician-in-training permit or license to practice medicine in the state of Texas from the Texas Medical Board.

Candidates with disabilities and with questions regarding technical standards are encouraged to contact the Office of Graduate Medical Education or the specific residency programs of interest to begin to address what types of reasonable accommodations may be considered for development to achieve the aforementioned standards.

A “qualified candidate with a disability” is an individual with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission and participation in graduate medical education programs, with or without reasonable accommodations. Admission to the Texas Tech HSC Paul L. Foster School of Medicine residency and fellowship programs is conditional on the candidate’s willingness and ability to satisfy the technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodations. An accommodation is considered not to be reasonable if it poses a direct threat to the health and safety of patients, the candidate and/or others, and if making it requires a substantial modification in a essential element of a residency or fellowship program, if it lowers graduate medical education standards, or imposes an undue administrative or financial burden by the program or institution.

Admitted candidates with a disability will be reviewed individually, on a case-by-case basis, with a complete and careful consideration of all the attributes of each candidate to determine whether he/she can satisfy the standards with or without any reasonable accommodations. It will be the responsibility of a candidate with a disability to provide sufficient and current information documenting the general nature and extent of his/her disability and the functional limitations proposed to be accommodated. If necessary, appropriate consultation with a specialist may be obtained as to help the candidate and or the residency program determine what kind of reasonable accommodations if any are necessary. The Office of Graduate Medical Education reserves the right to request new or additional information.

When a candidate with a disability is selected and admitted to a residency or fellowship program it is expected that all necessary accommodations will be detailed and agreed to by the program before he/she begins training.

Should a physician-in-training develop a documented disability subsequent to employment that would place patients, him/herself or others at risk or that may affect his/her need for accommodation, an evaluation by the Employee Assistance Program may be necessary. Subsequently, a complete and careful reconsideration of all attributes germane to program completion requirements will be performed and accommodations will be made to the extent possible for the completion of training, depending upon the nature and extent of the disability.