



Policy	Technical Standards and Essential Abilities
Approved by the Graduate Medical Education Council (GMEC)	Approved 11/20/2008; Revised 06/15/2023; Revised 08/2026

Purpose

Define the technical skills and essential abilities needed to effectively take part in the residency/fellowship training program.

Definition

Essential abilities (technical standards) as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of graduate medical education training. They are necessary for the practice of medicine in an autonomous fashion.

Description

Each program is responsible for the development of technical standards necessary to complete their specific graduate medical education program. Applicants should request those standards from the individual training program.

The essential abilities required for all residents are in the five following areas: Observation Skills; Communication Skills; Motor Skills; Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities; and Behavioral and Social Attributes. These are attributes every resident and fellow must possess. Additionally, resident physicians must be legally authorized to practice medicine in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Observation Skills:

- Must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Must be able to obtain all the necessary information from seeing and observing your patients and surroundings.
- Must have a good sense of hearing, good eyesight, and tactile senses.
- Must be able to comprehend multiple sensory stimuli accurately, consistently and rapidly.

Communication Skills

- Must be able to communicate effectively with patients, including gathering information appropriately, explaining medical information in a patient-centered manner, listening effectively, recognizing, acknowledging and responding to emotions, and exhibiting sensitivity to social and cultural differences.
- Must be able to communicate effectively and work cooperatively with supervisors, other residents, and all other health care team members
- Must possess excellent non-verbal skills to obtain information from patients and to judge changes in their moods, body language and posture.
- Must be well-adept in the English language to read and write medical reports, documents and transcripts.

Motor Skills

- Must have excellent motor skills and hand-eye coordination to be able to perform procedures like palpation, percussion and auscultation.

- Must have adequate physical stamina and energy to carry out taxing duties over long hours.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

- Must be able to comprehend and learn factual knowledge from readings and didactic presentations, gather information independently, analyze and synthesize learned material and apply information to clinical situations. Must have the ability to think on their feet and continuously analyze and process data received. - Must be able to develop the habit of life-long learning.
- Must be able to develop sound clinical judgement and exhibit well-integrated knowledge about the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of illness within their scope of practice.
- Must be comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity in clinical situations, and seek the advice of others when appropriate.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

- Must possess the emotional maturity and stability to function under stress and adapt to circumstances which are unpredictable or that change rapidly.
- Must be able to interact productively, cooperatively and in a collegial manner with individuals of differing personalities and backgrounds.
- Must be able to engage in teamwork and team building.
- Must be punctual and perform work in a timely manner.
- Must be capable of empathetic response to individuals in various situations, and be sensitive to social and cultural differences.
- Must exhibit an ethic of professionalism, including the ability to place others needs ahead of their own. - Must exhibit compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility and tolerance.

Essential Physical Requirements

Demand		Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Not Applicable
Talking				✓	
Standing				✓	
Walking				✓	
Hearing				✓	
Climbing		✓			
Bending			✓		
Crouching		✓			
Pushing/Pulling				✓	
Carrying			✓		
Lifting / Lowering	1-15 lbs.		✓		
	15-30 lbs.	✓			
	Over 30 lbs.	✓			

Work Conditions: specific vision abilities required by this job include at least 20/40 vision and the ability to focus.

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