

CORE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND PROGRESS WITHIN THE DOCTOR OF DENTAL MEDICINE PROGRAM

The Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences School of Dental Medicine (SDM) is committed to the admission and matriculation of all qualified students. The university and school will not discriminate against individuals with disabilities who are otherwise qualified. Applicants and students must meet specific minimal technical standards (Core Performance Standards) as set forth herein, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences seeks to produce highly skilled and compassionate health care professionals. Students are expected to develop a robust knowledge base and the requisite skills, with the ability to appropriately apply their knowledge and skills, effectively interpret information, and contribute to individual centered decisions across a broad spectrum of situations and settings. The following technical standards, in conjunction with the academic standards, are requirements for admission, promotion, and graduation. Candidates are strongly encouraged to check the relevant program's handbook for any additional technical standards. The term "candidate" refers to candidates for admission to health profession schools as well as current health profession students who are candidates for retention, promotion, or graduation. These requirements may be achieved with or without reasonable accommodation. Candidates with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services early in the application process to begin a confidential conversation about what accommodations they may need to meet these standards. Fulfillment of the technical standards for graduation from health profession programs does not guarantee that a graduate will be able to fulfill the technical requirements of any specific job position.

In adopting these standards, the SDM believes it must keep in mind the ultimate safety of the patients its graduates will eventually serve and the efficacy and safety in the learning environment. The standards reflect what the university and school believe are reasonable expectations required of health professions students and personnel in performing common functions. The Student Academic Performance and Professional Standards Committee and the SDM Dean must address and facilitate accommodation based on appropriate circumstances.

Although applicable to all PNWU faculty and staff, Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) program students and candidates are directed to review the [PNWU Code of Conduct](#) policy to familiarize themselves with how PNWU promotes and maintains integrity at the university. In addition, all students and candidates are asked to review the [American Dental Association's Principles of Ethics and Code of Conduct](#) for dental professionals. As stated on the website:

The dental profession holds a special position of trust within society. As a consequence, society affords the profession certain privileges that are not available to members of the public at large. In return, the profession makes a commitment to society that its members will adhere to high ethical standards of conduct.

The holders of health care degrees must have the knowledge and skills to function in a wide variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. To conduct the activities described below, candidates and students for the DMD degree must be able to integrate consistently, quickly, and accurately all information received, and they must be able to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data. Honor and integrity of the health professions student and health care professional are essential and dependent upon the exemplary behavior of the individual health care provider in their relations with patients, faculty members, staff, and colleagues. This includes accountability to oneself and relationships with fellow students, future colleagues, staff, faculty, members of the public, and patients who come under the student's care or contribute to their training and growth. This applies to personal conduct reflecting the student's honesty and integrity in academic and non-academic settings, whether involving a PNWU-SDM-sponsored activity or not. Upon accepting admission to the SDM, each student subscribes to and pledges complete compliance with the SDM's Code of Conduct as described in the SDM Student Handbook. A violation of these standards is an abuse of the trust placed on every student and could lead to suspension or dismissal.

Candidates and students must have, with or without reasonable accommodation, multiple abilities, and skills, including intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities; interpersonal communication; mobility and strength; motor skills; and hearing, visual, tactile, behavioral, and social attributes. Candidates for admission and progression must be able to perform these abilities and skills in a reasonably independent manner, which are described below.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Qualitative Abilities

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem-solving—a critical skill—requires all these intellectual abilities. Candidates and students must have critical thinking ability sufficient for good clinical judgment. This is necessary to identify cause/effect relationships in clinical situations and develop treatment/care plans for patients. In addition, candidates and students should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures. An individual is expected to be able to perform multiple tasks in a diverse, dynamic, highly competitive, and challenging learning environment. Examples include and are not limited to identifying cause/effect relationships in clinical situations, developing treatment plans, transferring knowledge from one situation to

another, evaluating outcomes, problem-solving, prioritizing, and using short- and long-term memory. They must be able to think quickly and accurately in an organized manner, despite environmental distractions.

Observational skills

Candidates must acquire information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the foundational sciences. In addition, candidates must be able to evaluate individuals accurately and assess their relevant health, behavioral, and medical information. Candidates must be able to obtain and interpret information through a comprehensive assessment of individuals, correctly interpret diagnostic representations of individuals' physiologic data, and accurately evaluate individuals' conditions and responses.

Visual Skills

Candidates and students must have visual ability sufficient for observation, assessment, and rendering of treatment necessary in patient care. It must be consistent in many cases with assessing asymmetry, range of motion, and tissue texture changes. SDM students must have sufficient visual ability to use dental instruments, computers, related software, and other dental technology. It is necessary to have adequate visual capabilities for proper evaluation and treatment. Candidates and students must be able to observe the patient and the patient's responses, including body language and features of the examination and treatment. Students must be able to write, generate, or create prescriptions, consultation letters, patient information, and dental product information. SDM students must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance, and close up, interpreting nonverbal communications while performing dental procedures or administering medications. A student must be able to perform dental examinations and treatments that require sight. The student must be able to see fine detail, focus on various distances, and discern differences and variations in color, shape, and texture necessary to differentiate normal and abnormal soft and hard tissues. A student must also have the visual acuity to read charts, records, radiographs, diagnostic images, small print, and handwritten notes.

Tactile

Candidates and students must have sufficient tactile ability for physical assessment. SDM students must be able to deliver appropriate treatment using high-technology equipment, such as dental handpieces and surgical instruments. Students must be able to use tactile senses to diagnose directly by palpation and indirectly by sensations transmitted through instruments.

Examples include and are not limited to detecting dental hard and soft tissue conditions, using hand instruments, and performing palpation for intraoral and extraoral exams.

Sensory

Candidates and students must be able to acquire information through demonstrations and experiences in basic science and dental science courses. Such information includes but is not limited to, the information conveyed through a variety of mechanisms, including, and not limited to, microscopic images of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states and demonstration and skill exercises of techniques using dental models. A student must be able to acquire information from written documents and evaluate information presented as images from digital platforms, paper, films, slides, or videos. A student must be able to benefit from electronic and other instrumentation that enhances visual, auditory, and somatic sensations needed for examination or treatment.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Candidates and students must possess the emotional health required for the full use of their intellectual abilities; the ability to exercise sound judgment; the ability to take responsibility for their actions concerning policies, protocols, and processes with faculty, students, staff, patients, patient surrogates, and administration during the student's educational program; the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis, care, and treatment of patients; and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with the patients. Candidates and students must be able to tolerate challenging workloads physically, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, empathy, openness to diversity, trust, integrity, concern for others, people skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions process and the student's education process.

Students and candidates are expected to exhibit professionalism, and personal accountability, including the ability to accept and apply feedback and to respect boundaries and care for all individuals respectfully and effectively regardless of gender identity, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other protected status. Students and candidates should understand and function within the legal and ethical aspects of practice and maintain and display ethical and moral behaviors commensurate with the role of a healthcare professional in all interactions with care recipients, faculty, staff, students, and the public. Interest and motivation throughout the educational processes are expected of all candidates.

Interpersonal Communication

Candidates and students must be able to interact and communicate effectively concerning policies, protocols, and processes with faculty, students, staff, patients, patient surrogates, and administration during the student's educational program. They must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Candidates and students must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in all written forms with all healthcare team members. They must have interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from various social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.

A student must have sufficient proficiency with English to retrieve information from texts and lectures and to communicate concepts on written exams and patient charts; elicit patient backgrounds; describe patient changes in moods, activity, and posture; and coordinate patient care with all members of the health care team. A student must be able to communicate or provide communication in lay language so that patients and their families can understand the patient's conditions, treatment options, and instructions. According to the program's requirements, the student must accurately enter information in the patient's electronic health record.

Motor Skills

Candidates and students must have sufficient motor function to execute movements reasonably required to provide patients with general care and emergency treatment. Examples of emergency treatment required of predoctoral dental students are cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, and the ability to calibrate and use various pieces of equipment; delegation of physical tasks associated with resuscitative efforts may be reasonable as accommodation for learners with physical challenges. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision. SDM students must also possess gross and fine motor abilities sufficient for providing safe, effective dental care; the motor skills to perform palpation, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers; as well as be able to perform basic laboratory tests and diagnostic, restorative, and surgical procedures. Such actions require coordination of gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional uses of the senses of touch and vision. A student must be able to transfer and position patients and work sitting or standing. The student must promote and support the ability of coworkers to perform prompt care. A student must be able to operate controls, safely use sharp instruments, high-speed or low-speed dental handpieces, and use hand instrumentation, including scalpels, for surgical procedures. Examples include and are not limited to calibration and use of equipment,

grasping and manipulation of small objects/instruments, and using a computer keyboard. While accommodations will be supported, students will be expected to accomplish clinical competency assessments and clinical procedures in the same/expected amount of time as their classmates.

Strength and Mobility

Candidates and students must have sufficient mobility to attend to emergency needs and to perform such maneuvers as CPR when required. They must be physically able to move sufficiently from place to place and maneuver in limited spaces. SDM students must be able to maintain strength, posture, and balance and reach and manipulate equipment to varying positions to control the operating environment. The student must have the physical abilities sufficient for movement in a dental clinic setting, sitting or standing, and maintaining balance for extended periods; twisting, bending; moving quickly in response to possible emergencies; pushing, pulling, lifting, or supporting a dependent patient; squeezing with hands and fingers; and repetitive movements.

Hearing

Candidates and students must have sufficient ability to monitor and assess health needs. They must be able to process information given by the patient in answer to inquiries; to be alert to cries for help; to process auditory information during an examination, such as the auscultatory sounds; and to be able to monitor equipment through either direct auditory inputs or assistance devices if accommodations are required or requested.

If you feel you need an accommodation to meet any of the technical standards listed above, contact the PNWU Disability Services Office by email at ods@pnwu.edu or phone at 509-249-7844, or visit the Disability Services website at <https://www.pnwu.edu/about/offices-departments/student-affairs/disability-services/>.