



GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION POLICIES Accommodation for Disabilities

ACGME Policies

IV.I.4. Accommodation for Disabilities: The Sponsoring Institution must have a policy, not necessarily GME-specific, regarding accommodations for disabilities consistent with all applicable laws and regulations.

Background

In compliance with the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the University of Houston provides "reasonable academic accommodation" to any student with health impairments, physical limitations, psychiatric disorders and/or learning disabilities. Any students requiring such accommodations must contact the **Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD)**. Services offered through CSD include documentation review and establishment of what constitutes a "reasonable accommodation" for each student, disability related counseling, advocacy, a variety of accessible computers and software, textbooks on tape, sign-language interpreters, wheelchair repair, attendant care program, learning disability support services, and special testing accommodations as well as other services.

At the same time, graduate medical education requires the candidate possess certain intellectual, ethical, physical and emotional capabilities deemed essential for the completion of curriculum. The Tilman J. Fertitta College of Medicine (COM) bases these on the *AAMC Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admission (AAMC, Memorandum #79-4, approved by the AAMC Executive Council January 18, 1979)*.

Procedure

Resident/fellows with or without disabilities, applying to or continuing in a COM ACGME-accredited program will be expected to meet the same requirements and will be held to the same fundamental standards. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to assist in learning, performing, and satisfying the technical standards. Every reasonable attempt will be made to facilitate the progress of residents/fellows where it does not compromise training standards or interfere with the rights of other residents/fellows or the care of patients.

Technical compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain areas, but each resident/fellow must meet the essential technical standards in a such a way that he/she will be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner and progress to the point of independent practice in the resident's/fellow's GME specialty or sub-specialty training program. The use of a third party to fulfill these standards will not be considered reasonable or adequate.



The technical standards are:

- **Observation:** Residents/fellows must have the functional ability to utilize their physical senses needed to perform a physical examination and render appropriate patient care. This includes sight, hearing, smell, and dexterity.
- **Communication:** Residents/fellows must be able to communicate with and establish professional relationships with their patients and colleagues. This includes speaking, reading, writing, and nonverbal means of communicating. The trainee must be able to elicit needed information from others and be able to transmit information in a sensitive and culturally competent manner.
- **Motor:** Residents/fellows must have sufficient motor skills and dexterity to perform components of a physical exam appropriate for their chosen specialty, and the ability to render patient care in a standard or emergent situation.
- **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. The most critical skill in the practice of medicine is problem-solving, which requires all of these abilities, as well understanding three-dimensional relationships and spatial alignment.
- **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** Residents/fellows must have the mental, physical and emotional health to tolerate the heavy workload and high levels of stress. Trainees must be able to accept feedback and the ability to adapt to the changing needs of their patients. They must be able to maintain professional relationships with colleagues and patients and do so by demonstrating the highest levels of ethics, compassion, and integrity. Residents and fellows must appreciate it and willingly accept their esteemed role in society as a physician and behave accordingly.

The COM does not discriminate in access to its programs on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, race, disability, marital status, religion, color, national origin, veteran status, or pregnancy. It is the responsibility of the resident/fellow or applicant to disclose any disability to the appropriate Program Director, along with the accommodation sought. The Program Director will work with the UH CISD to determine needed information, which may include, but is not limited to; current documentation from the trainee's healthcare provider or an assessment by a qualified evaluating professional. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

The Program Director will review the disclosed information with the DIO, Dean, and appropriate UH CISD representatives to determine if the requested, or any, accommodation may be offered, and still enable the resident/fellow to perform the essential functions of the position and achieve the goals of the program.

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