

Clinical and Academic Policy	
	Policy Title
	Medical School Technical Standards
	Policy Number
	OME-900.26
	Department/Office
	Office of Medical Education
	Effective Date
	November 21, 2024
	Last Reviewed
	N/A
	Approved By
	Executive Medical Education Committee
	Approval Date
	November 21, 2024
	Endorsement
	Endorsed by the WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on November 18, 2025

Purpose

The Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC) faculty believes that our educational mission is to graduate physicians who are broadly capable and skilled in general medicine, and ready to start residency training. This principle applies irrespective of any future plans for specialization or non-clinical careers. To this end, graduates of WCMC must demonstrate certain essential abilities, attributes and characteristics in order to fulfill our overall program learning objectives. As medical education differs from many other forms of higher education, in that graduates must be able to practice medicine and care for patients, candidates for admission, retention, promotion and graduation must possess not only intellectual but also physical, emotional and interpersonal abilities.

Scope

This policy applies to WCMC Candidates who are under consideration for retention, promotion, or graduation. Specific to this policy, the term “Candidate” applies both to applicants to the medical school and to matriculated students.

Policy

WCMC has identified five essential domains in which candidates must demonstrate ability. A candidate may receive Reasonable Accommodation to demonstrate these abilities. However, the use of an intermediary, a person performing a task on the candidate’s behalf in a manner that compromises the candidate’s independent judgement, is not permitted.

1.01 Technical Standards

1. Observation
The candidate must be able to observe required demonstrations in the basic and clinical sciences. The candidate must also be able to observe patients accurately and to perform a complete medical interview and physical examination. These skills require the use or functional equivalent of vision, hearing, and touch.
2. Communication
The candidate must be able to communicate effectively with all persons, including faculty, staff, colleagues, patients, and families/support systems. The candidate must be able to speak, listen, read and write effectively in English, and to interpret non-verbal communication.
3. Motor Function

The candidate must be able, after appropriate training, to perform anatomic dissection, a complete physical examination, and basic clinical procedures. The candidate must be able to respond promptly to clinical situations. These skills require a degree of physical mobility and neuromuscular coordination.

4. Cognitive, Intellectual and Quantitative Abilities

The candidate must be able to assimilate the vast knowledge required of physicians, to solve complex problems, and to analyze and integrate information.

5. Behavioral and Social Attributes

The candidate must demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for scientific learning, capable and compassionate patient care, and interaction with the healthcare team. The candidate must be able to contribute to collaborative learning environments, to accept constructive feedback, and to take responsibility for learning and improvement. The candidate must also be able to tolerate demanding workloads, to function effectively under stress, to display flexibility, and to adapt to changing environments. The candidate must demonstrate core professional attributes which include the ability to demonstrate respect, courtesy and empathy for patients and their families, colleagues, faculty and staff across all backgrounds and belief structures.

The candidate must also possess the general physical and mental health necessary for performing the duties of a physician-in-training capably and safely.

All candidates must meet the goals and objectives of WCMC, with or without Reasonable Accommodations. See below for accommodation process.

1.01.1 Ability to Meet Technical Standards

All candidates are informed of WCMC's technical standards and policies. Before matriculation, every candidate must sign a document indicating that he or she has read the technical standards policy and meets WCMC's technical standards. WCMC students must continue to meet the Medical College's technical standards throughout their enrollment. All matriculated students must affirm at the beginning of each of the three phases of the curriculum that they continue to meet WCMC's technical standards, with or without accommodations.

1.01.2 Equal Access to the Educational Program

WCMC has a history of providing equal educational opportunities to qualified applicants and enrolled medical students with disabilities. WCMC is committed to complying with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and federal and state regulations, which require institutions such as WCMC to provide Reasonable Accommodations for students with diagnosed and documented disabilities. These acts cover applicants, students with disabilities, and students who develop disabilities throughout their education at WCMC.

(Candidates with disabilities are reviewed individually on a case-by-case basis and confidentially in order to determine whether they satisfy the technical standards with or without Reasonable Accommodation.)

Definitions

Candidate: Applicants to the medical school and matriculated students who are under consideration for retention, promotion, or graduation.

Reasonable Accommodation: Any reasonable modification or adjustment to the academic environment that allows a qualified Candidate with a disability to participate in the medical school application process or to meet the technical standards necessary to graduate.

Procedure

Accommodation Process

Admission and promotion at WCMC are conditional on the Candidate’s willingness and ability to satisfy the technical standards, either with or without Reasonable Accommodations. Candidates must contact the Disability Specialist and/or Associate Dean of Student Affairs to initiate a formal request for disability accommodations or services. Candidates are required to accept ongoing responsibilities for planning, managing, and expressing accommodation needs. It is also the responsibility of the Candidate to provide current documentation of the general nature and extent of the disability, and the specific functional limitations that are proposed to be accommodated. The Disability Specialist is responsible for determining the acceptability of documentation and reserves the right to require additional information. The Disability Specialist – consulting with the respective WCMC department or office, if necessary – will then determine whether the Candidate is able to meet WCMC’s technical standards. Documentation is treated as confidential and kept separate from the Candidate’s application and academic records.

Contact Information

Policy Questions: Associate Dean of Admissions: wcmc-admissions@med.cornell.edu

To begin a process of requesting disability services or accommodations, please contact: studentaffairs@med.cornell.edu, 646-962-4940.

References

N/A

Policy Approval

This policy was approved by the Executive Medical Education Committee on November 21, 2024.

This policy was approved by the WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on November 18, 2025.

Version History

Date	Author	Revisions
11/21/2024	Office of Medical Education	Original date of issue.

Appendix

N/A