

GMDEC Reviewed: September 2008

GMDEC Approved: September 2008

### **Essential Abilities Requirements for Appointment, Reappointment, Retention, and Certification for Graduate Medical Education**

Essential abilities are performance requirements that refer to those cognitive, behavioral and communication abilities required for satisfactory completion of a graduate medical curriculum; plus demonstration of personal attributes required by the faculty of all residents at certification. The essential abilities required by the curriculum include the following four aspects of physician performance:

- Cognitive abilities (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis)
- Behavioral/social/professionalism
- Communication
- Sensory/motor/physical.

These are abilities each resident physician must possess and exhibit. The use of a third party to fulfill these abilities is not acceptable. Following is a more detailed description of the four aspects of physician performance.

#### **Cognitive Abilities**

Residents 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. Residents must be able to develop habits of life-long learning. They must be able to develop sound clinical judgment and exhibit well-integrated knowledge about the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness within their scope of practice. They must be comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity in clinical situations, and seek the advice of others when appropriate.

#### **Behavioral, Social, and Professional Abilities**

Residents must possess the emotional maturity and stability to function effectively under stress that is inherent in medicine, and to adapt to circumstances that are unpredictable or that change rapidly. They must be able to interact productively, cooperatively, and in a collegial manner with individuals of differing personalities and backgrounds, and be an active contributor to the process of providing health care by demonstrating the ability to engage in teamwork and team building. They must demonstrate the ability to identify and set priorities in patient management and in all aspects of their professional work. They must be punctual and perform work in a timely manner.

Residents must be capable of empathetic response to individuals in many circumstances and be sensitive to social and cultural differences. They must exhibit an ethic of professionalism, including the ability to place others' needs ahead of their own. They must exhibit compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility, and tolerance, as well as demonstrate the ability to exercise the requisite judgment required in the practice of medicine.

**Communication Abilities**

The practice of medicine emphasizes collaboration among physicians, other health care professionals, and the patient. Residents 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. They must be able to communicate effectively and work cooperatively with supervisors, other residents, and all other health care team members.

**Sensory and Motor/Physical Abilities**

Residents should have sufficient sensory abilities of sight, hearing, smell, and touch in order to obtain a medical history, perform a physical examination, and to diagnose and deliver patient care. In certain medical specialties, one or more of these special senses may be less essential, and evaluation of those senses in the context of the program requirements is appropriate. Residents must have sufficient physical dexterity to master technical and procedural aspects of patient care. They must have sufficient strength to perform the essential duties of their specialty, and must have adequate physical stamina and energy to carry out taxing duties over long hours.

Residents who are infected with HIV, HBV, and HCV, must be reviewed by a UHS Review Panel according to the guidelines established in the University Health Systems HIV and/or HBV and HCV Department of Hospital Epidemiology policies.

Individual residency programs may require different specific abilities of their residents, and these may vary, as appropriate to the practice requirements of the specialty.

When a resident who requires assistance enters a residency program, it is expected that all necessary accommodations will be detailed and agreed to by the program, before he/she begins training in accordance with the University of Tennessee policy addressing accommodation of persons with disabilities.

Residents must be legally authorized to practice in all healthcare clinical training sites.

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GMDEC Reviewed/Approved: 9/11/2008