

Policies and Procedures

Essential Abilities and Characteristics Required for Completion of the DVM Degree-Technical Standards Policy

Successful applicants to the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech are selected based on academic, personal, and extracurricular dimensions. The School admits qualified individuals who demonstrate professional skills, such as communication, critical thinking and problem solving, and the aptitude and ability to become excellent veterinarians.

Veterinarians are members of a profession and are governed by a code of ethics (termed professional behavior) that forms a social contract between the profession and society. Applicants, therefore, must possess the characteristics that will enable them to serve society and uphold this code of ethics.

The Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree has a strong foundation of core knowledge and skills in comparative veterinary medicine that is broad-based and requires knowledge and clinical competencies, at a minimum, for all major domesticated animal species. This foundation is accompanied by a tracking component which allows either emphasis on species-specific veterinary medicine or exploration of diverse, non-traditional areas of veterinary science. Essential, demonstrated abilities and characteristics required for completion of the DVM degree, consist of certain minimum physical and cognitive abilities and sufficient mental and emotional resiliency to assure that candidates for admission, academic advancement, and graduation are able to complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of veterinary training prescribed by the faculty. The College of Veterinary Medicine intends for its graduates to meet the requirements for veterinary licensure and to be competent and compassionate veterinarians. The intention of an individual student to practice only a narrow part of clinical medicine, or to pursue a non-clinical career, does not alter the requirement that all veterinary students take and achieve competence in the curriculum required by the university. For purposes of this information and unless otherwise

defined, the term “candidate” means candidates for admission to veterinary school as well as enrolled veterinary students who are candidates for academic advancement and graduation.

The College of Veterinary Medicine has an ethical responsibility for the safety of patients and clients with whom students and veterinarians interact and interrelate. Although students learn and work under the supervision of the faculty, students interact with patients and clients throughout their veterinary school education. Patient and client safety and well-being are therefore essential factors in establishing requirements involving the physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities of candidates for admission, academic advancement, and graduation. The essential abilities and characteristics described herein are also referred to as technical (or nonacademic) standards. They are described below in several broad categories including: observation; communication; motor function; intellectual-conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities; and behavioral and social skills. In addition to these characteristics, candidates must have the stamina and emotional resiliency to function in a competent manner in settings that may involve heavy workloads, long hours, and stressful situations.

Assessment and selection of candidates is done in an individualized, case-by-case basis taking into consideration the factors before described. In addition, the College of Veterinary Medicine considers applicable technical standards. The following abilities and characteristics are defined as technical standards, which in conjunction with academic standards, are minimal qualifications and requirements for admission, academic advancement, and graduation.

(A) Observation: Candidates must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in learning exercises in the basic sciences, including but not limited to such things as dissection of cadavers; examination of specimens in anatomy, pathology, and neuroanatomy laboratories; and microscopic study of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. Candidates must be able to accurately observe patients and assess findings. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination in order to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic plan. They must be able to interpret radiographic and other graphic and diagnostic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomenon (such as EKGs) with or without the use of assistive devices. They must be able to perceive and interpret signs of fear, aggression, and other potentially dangerous behaviors made by various animal species; and sense and interpret warning sounds and signs in the veterinary

health care environment. These skills require the functional use of vision, hearing, and touch, with or without adaptive technologies.

(B) Communication: Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with animal owners, their families, and members of the health care team. They must be able to obtain a medical history in a timely fashion, interpret non-verbal aspects of communication, and establish rapport with clients as part of the therapeutic management of the patient. Candidates must be able to record information accurately and clearly; and communicate effectively in English, both orally and in writing, with other health care professionals in a variety of patient settings in which decisions based upon these communications must be made rapidly.

(C) Motor Function: Candidates must possess sufficient motor skills and mental acuity to functionally elicit appropriate information from patients by palpation, auscultation percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers necessary for patient evaluation, treatment and care. They must possess the motor functions necessary to perform laboratory tests, carry out diagnostic procedures including imaging as well as therapeutic maneuvers including but not limited to anesthesia, surgery and obstetrics. They must be able to respond to emergency situations in a timely manner and provide general and emergency care, including but not limited to, airway management, placement of intravenous catheters, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, application of pressure to control bleeding, and suturing of wounds. Such activities require physical mobility, coordination of both gross and fine motor neuromuscular function, and balance and equilibrium. They must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities.

(D) Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities: Candidates must have sufficient cognitive (mental) abilities and effective learning techniques to assimilate the detailed and complex information presented in the veterinary curriculum. They must be able to learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction; small group, team and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports; and use of computer technology. Candidates must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information across modalities as well as communicate information in an appropriate manner to staff, colleagues and clients. They must recognize and draw conclusions about three-dimensional spatial relationships and logical sequential relationships among events. They must be able to formulate and test hypotheses that enable effective and timely problem-solving in diagnosis and treatment of patients in a variety of clinical modalities. In many cases, these decisions and the appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers are time-sensitive and thus

candidates must demonstrate the skills, knowledge and abilities to complete complex exercises in the allotted time determined by faculty and appropriate to the academic stage of training.

(5) Behavioral and Social Attributes: Candidates must demonstrate the maturity and emotional resiliency required for full use of their intellectual abilities, professional behavior, and the competencies specific to the practice of veterinary medicine. Candidates must be able to interact with patients, their owners, and health care personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. They must be able to tolerate physically and emotionally taxing workloads and long work hours, to function effectively under stress, to meet deadlines including examinations and to display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments. Candidates must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept constructive feedback from others; and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. They must understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of veterinary medicine and function within both the law and ethical standards of the veterinary profession. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate a high commitment to professional behavior, which includes, but is not limited to, demonstration of competence, integrity, ethics, compassion, empathy, respect, tolerance, altruism, lifelong learning, animal welfare, promotion of the profession, and promotion of the public good.

Ability to Meet the Technical Standards

The College of Veterinary Medicine intends for its students and graduates to become competent and compassionate veterinarians who meet all requirements for veterinary licensure and entering veterinary practice in traditional and non-traditional areas.

Equal Access to the School of Veterinary Medicine's Educational Program

Individuals shall not be excluded from admission or participation in the College of Veterinary Medicine's educational programs, services and activities solely by reason of their disability or medical condition. The College of Veterinary Medicine provides reasonable accommodation in its academic programs to qualified individuals with disabilities. It is the responsibility of a student with a disability, or a student who develops a disability, and who wants an accommodation, to notify and cooperate with the Virginia Tech's Services for Students with Disabilities Office. The Virginia Tech's Services for Students with Disabilities Office will in turn determine what accommodations are necessary to allow the student to access educational opportunities and recommend those accommodations to the College of Veterinary Medicine. It is the responsibility of the student to

present to the Associate Dean of Professional Programs, and instructors, completed paperwork from the Virginia Tech's Services for Students with Disabilities Office documenting suggested accommodations that will allow the student equal access to the program. A student who has or develops any chronic disease or condition that will impair their ability to meet the School's technical standards will be expected to seek and continue in the care of a qualified health care provider. All applicants are held to the same academic and technical standards of admission and training, with reasonable accommodations as needed for students with disabilities. Although the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Virginia Tech's Services for Students with Disabilities Office will engage in an interactive process with applicants with disabilities, the School of Veterinary Medicine reserves the right not to admit any applicant, who upon completion of the interactive process, cannot meet these technical standards described above with reasonable accommodations.

Adopted by the Executive Board on October 13, 2016

Approved: _____
Cyril R. Clarke, Dean