

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine's Health and Technical Standards

Introduction

The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) is committed to the admission and matriculation of all qualified students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, religion, genetic information, or other category that is protected under federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws. Minimal technical standards must be met by all applicants and students with or without accommodation as set forth herein. These standards reflect what has been determined to be reasonable expectations of osteopathic medical students and physicians in performing common and important functions, keeping in mind the safety and welfare of the patients for whom our graduates will care. This document also specifies technical standards for participation in osteopathic manipulative medicine laboratory and clinical encounters. Before matriculation at WVSOM and periodically thereafter, WVSOM students and their physicians may be asked to verify that students meet these Health and Technical Standards.

Health and Technical Standards

An osteopathic physician must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. In order to perform the activities described below, candidates for the D.O. degree must be able to quickly, accurately, and consistently learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

To facilitate the attainment of optimum care and safety, students at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine must:

1. Behave in a manner exhibiting high moral and behavioral standards reflecting the responsibility and trust placed in an osteopathic physician.
2. Demonstrate respect for individuals and groups with West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine with consideration to the diversity of age, gender, nationality, race, religion, disability, or other protected category.
3. Students of osteopathic medicine must meet minimal health and technical and ability standards. The practice of medicine in general and osteopathic medicine in particular, requires the ability to learn, process, and utilize a great deal of knowledge and experience. Students must have the ability to optimally assess the physical, mental, and emotional status of patients. Reasonable accommodations are those that will enable the osteopathic student to function independently and when necessary in a team-like fashion with other health professionals in an unimpaired manner.

WVSOM expects its applicants and students to meet the minimum health and technical standards outlined in this document. Every applicant and student of WVSOM is expected to possess those intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty.

The holder of a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. WVSOM has adopted these standards with due consideration for the safety and well-being of the patients for whom its graduates will eventually care.

The specific health and technical standards of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine are set forth below. Meeting these standards does not guarantee that graduates will meet the technical requirements of residency programs. If students do not meet one or more of the standards below, WVSOM may require medical evaluation to determine if they are otherwise qualified with or without reasonable accommodations.

Observation

Applicants and students must have sufficient visual capabilities to observe demonstrations, experiments, and laboratory exercises in the basic and clinical sciences, as well as proper evaluation and treatment integration in order to assess asymmetry, range of motion, and tissue color and texture changes.

They must be able to observe a patient accurately at varying distances with the ability to discern non- verbal communication.

Communication

Applicants and students must be able to effectively communicate with patients in order to elicit information, examine patients, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communication. They must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients in English.

Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. Applicants and students must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team in English.

Motor Function

Applicants and students must have sufficient motor function to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of movements reasonably required of physicians include, but are not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, the performance of obstetrical maneuvers and osteopathic manipulative medicine. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

Sensory Skills

Applicants and students of osteopathic medicine must possess an enhanced ability to use their tactile and proprioceptive sensory skills.

Strength and Mobility

Applicants and students must possess the necessary strength and mobility to properly provide medical treatments, such as osteopathic manipulative medicine and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, and stand long periods of time without a break in surgery. These often require upright posture with sufficient upper and lower extremity and overall body strength and mobility.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

Applicants and students must be able to concentrate, analyze and interpret data, and make decisions. Applicants and students must be able to accurately write prescriptions, accurately perform basic mathematical functions, and accurately and quickly read charts with minimal error. They must perform these functions under a time limitation and do so under a reasonable amount of stress, as physicians are expected to be able to perform such duties in diverse clinical settings in which there is a reasonable amount of visual and auditory distraction.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Applicants and students must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and the development of mature, sensitive, supportive and effective professional relationships with patients, staff and colleagues. Applicants and students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.

Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and educational processes.

Students must exhibit ethical and professional behavior, learn, and adhere to legal standards, complete all curriculum components, and be open to feedback. Students should demonstrate empathy, respect for others, and interpersonal skills. They should also maintain academic and professional integrity while meeting core competencies of medical knowledge, patient care, professionalism, and personal development.

Participation in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Laboratory and Clinical Care Encounters

Active participation in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Laboratories and Clinical Care Encounters is an admission, matriculation and graduation requirement. During Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Laboratory and Clinical Care Encounters, it is imperative to the educational process that the body region being examined and/or treated will need to be exposed for observation, palpation and treatment. The examination and treatment must be conducted in a respectful and professional manner.

The development of palpatory skills used for diagnosis and treatment is significant and required in osteopathic medical schools. Stedman's Medical Dictionary defines "palpation" as examination with the hands and fingers, touching, feeling or perceiving by the sense of touch. Palpation in the osteopathic educational context is the use of touch to examine the body. Palpatory skills are used in all areas of osteopathic medical practice and are especially important in the evaluation and treatment of the musculoskeletal system.

The development of palpatory skills and ability to perform osteopathic treatments are initiated in the first- and second-year labs. This learning requires active participation in all laboratory sessions where students palpate and will experience palpation by their peers and instructors of both genders to enhance the development of their own palpatory skills. Each student will palpate a variety of people with different body types to simulate the diversity of patients expected in a practice setting. These skills are used by students to perform physical examination on one another. Some of these examinations are performed on bare skin, such as those of the extremities, back, abdomen and heart. Examinations of the genitals and breasts are never done on students in clinical skills laboratory settings.

The osteopathic medical profession uses a variety of treatment models through which the student will learn the art, science and skills of osteopathic manipulative treatment. Psychomotor skills are developed by repetition and reinforcement. Reading and observation, while helpful in understanding the didactic concepts, do not develop the skills required to perform palpatory diagnosis and manipulative treatment. Each student is required to actively participate in all skill development sessions.

Health Problems That May Preclude Examination/Treatment

Any student with a permanent health problem that may preclude examination and/or treatment in Osteopathic Principles and Practices and clinical skills laboratories is required to submit an accommodations request per policy ST-06. Instructions for requesting an accommodation due to a temporary contraindication are listed in the relevant course syllabi.

Hospitals often have employment requirements which apply to students working in their facilities. Students must comply with their requirements in order to train in these hospitals. These requirements may be for the safety of the student or the patients and staff. An example would be a requirement to be able to wear a fitted protection mask. Facial deformities or a beard may prevent obtaining a tight seal on the mask. Students who could not be fitted would not be allowed to participate at that facility. Other requirements almost universally required by training hospitals are proof of current immunization, which often includes blood titer level, testing for tuberculosis and current CPR training. Students who do not meet immunization requirements, or are unable to perform CPR would be excluded from further training and would not be able to graduate.

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine is committed to providing equal access to students with disabilities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and other applicable laws, WVSOM provides reasonable accommodations for otherwise qualified students with verified physical, psychological and/or learning disabilities. Accommodations are implemented using institutional policy ST-06 (Academic Accommodations)

The intent of this policy is to provide each student with the opportunity to excel academically, while creating an equitable environment conducive to learning. In doing so, however, WVSOM must maintain the integrity of its curriculum and preserve those elements deemed essential to the acquisition of knowledge in all areas of osteopathic medicine, including the demonstration of basic skills required for the practice of osteopathic medicine. For example, technology-related accommodations may be made for disabled students in some of these areas, but a candidate must be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. One or more trained intermediaries may

be provided to assist the student during the educational program, but not under circumstances where the student's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. This policy will be administered consistently, fairly, and in a non-discriminatory manner in compliance with the ADA and all other applicable laws. All applicants receiving supplementary application material for admission will be asked to certify they have reviewed WVSOM's Health and Technical Standards and the Participation in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Laboratories requirements.

Procedures for Requesting Accommodations

Students who believe they may need accommodation for any disability are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs (accommodations@osteو.wvsom.edu) as soon as possible after acceptance to begin the process.

IMPORTANT

An application for accommodation is incomplete if it does not contain the required documentation listed in the application forms. It is the responsibility of the student or applicant to have an evaluation and tests administered and interpreted. WVSOM can refer the student or applicant to a local provider for evaluation. Any charges for an evaluation or forwarding of documentation are the student's or applicant's responsibility.

Authorization to Release Applicant Information

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) specifies that only the applicant may have access to the application material and the status of his or her application. If the applicant wants another party or multiple parties (i.e., parent, spouse, advisor, physician, friend) to check the status of his or her application, the applicant is required to submit in writing a signed waiver giving personnel of WVSOM permission to discuss all details of the application with each said individual.

Applicant's Certification of Ability to Meet Health and Technical Standards

I have read and understand the above health and technical standards, and I hereby certify that I am able to meet these standards if I become a medical student at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and that I must continue to meet these standards as long as I remain a medical student at WVSOM.

Furthermore, I have reviewed and agree with my physician's statement on my ability to meet the above health and technical standards.

NAME, printed

SIGNATURE (Accepted student)

WITNESS

DATE

PHYSICIAN STATEMENT

I have reviewed the attached WVSOM Health and Technical Standards document. I understand a candidate for the D.O. degree must have the ability and skills as discussed in the document which include:

- Observation
- Communication, including the ability to speak, read and write
- Motor function, including being able to perform CPR, respond to emergencies and stand long periods of time without a break in surgery
- Sensory skills, both tactile and proprioceptive
- Strength and mobility
- Intellectual, conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities to analyze and interpret data
- Behavioral and social attributes to utilize intellectual abilities and demonstrate good judgment and effective professional relationships

I have performed a physical examination on _____

I find he/she:

_____ Meets the health and technical standards as described in the attached WVSOM Health and Technical Standards document.

_____ Does not meet the health and technical standards as described in the attached WVSOM Health and Technical Standards document.

What prevents the student from meeting these standards?

What reasonable accommodations do you suggest (please provide justification)?

Are there any other issues or findings that you feel we should be aware of that might affect this individual's ability to perform as a medical student? _____

PHYSICIAN Signature: _____ **Circle One:** M.D. or D.O.

Print Name: _____ **Date** _____

Address: _____

Physicians: Questions filling out this form, please call 304-356-7836, ext. 6205