Iowa State University  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Essential Functions and Technical Standards Policy

Purpose

The College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) recognizes the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) degree as a broad degree requiring that the holder has acquired general knowledge and skills and shows an ability to apply both in a reasonably independent and autonomous manner in all fields of veterinary medicine. To earn a D.V.M., a student must complete the clinical component which involves direct care of actual patients and communication with clients, colleagues and veterinary medical professionals.

The CVM has established these minimal essential functions and technical standards to provide a framework to balance several competing interests: (1) the rights of candidates (term used to identify applicants and/or currently enrolled students); (2) the safety of candidates, their colleagues, and veterinary patients; (3) the significant clinical training component of the CVM curricula; (4) the requirements imposed upon the ISU CVM for accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA); and (5) the conditions for licensure of ISU CVM graduates. These competing interests and the nature of veterinary educational activities may prevent some candidates from qualifying for enrollment or continued enrollment and may limit access to the academic programs of ISU CVM.

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of disability and will make reasonable academic accommodations to facilitate enrollment and participation of qualified individuals with disabilities so long as those accommodations do not fundamentally alter the educational program, pose a direct threat to the student, patients or others or otherwise create an undue hardship on the College. All candidates will be considered without regard to their disability status.

The academic and technical standards established by the faculty require that all candidates accepted by the CVM possess the physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities that ensure that they will be able to complete all required aspects of the curriculum. All candidates are held to the same academic and technical standards for admissions and training, with reasonable accommodations as needed for candidates with documented disabilities. It is the candidate’s responsibility to contact Student Disability Resources at 515-294-7220 to establish eligibility for accommodations, after which time the CVM will engage in an interactive process to identify those reasonable accommodations that may allow the candidate to complete all required aspects of the curriculum without constituting a direct threat to him/herself, patients or others or without fundamentally altering the nature of the course or program or otherwise creating an undue hardship.

Approved by ISU CVM faculty: January 25, 2008
Dissemination of policy – The Office of Student Affairs will maintain this policy in the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine Student Handbook which is available on line to all students and on the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine Admissions web site. All candidates receiving a letter of acceptance to the College of Veterinary Medicine will receive a copy of the policy. Candidates will be asked to sign and return an Acceptance and Notification of Essential Functions and Technical Standards Policy Form, acknowledging its receipt and their understanding of the policy. This form should be returned with the Acceptance of Admissions form and deposit. Admission is contingent upon the student signing and returning this form.

Technical Standards

Essential eligibility requirements for participation by candidates in the CVM program minimally include the following:

I. Observational Skills

Candidates must be able to observe and participate actively in lectures, demonstrations and experiments in both the basic and clinical sciences. This includes but is not limited to physiology and pharmacology demonstrations and examining microbiologic cultures, gross and microscopic anatomy and pathology specimens. In the clinical sciences, candidates must be able to assess, monitor and treat patients based on observation both close at hand and at a distance. Such observation requires the use of vision, hearing, and somatic sensation, including distinguishing the origin of sound from multiple patients in an area or observing signs of distress or aggression.

II. Communication Skills

Candidates must be able to speak understandably, hear and observe in order to obtain and disseminate information from and to clients, colleagues and veterinary medical professionals, including during surgery rotations when participants are wearing surgical masks. Communication might also include obtaining a medical history or describing a condition or change in condition. Candidates must be able to communicate effectively, efficiently and sensitively either naturally or through an assistive device utilizing verbal, non-verbal and written communication.

III. Motor

Candidates must possess fine motor skills needed to perform daily functions which include, but are not limited to patient restraint, palpation, auscultation, emergency and surgical procedures and basic laboratory procedures such as urinalysis and necropsy. In addition, candidates must be able to demonstrate
large/gross motor skills needed to perform various daily functions which include, but are not limited to movement from danger when handling a patient in a confined area. Candidates must possess adequate body strength for routine procedures such as animal restraint, lifting patients with or without help, and carrying equipment and supplies in the field. Guidelines for such activities include routinely lifting objects and/or animals weighing \(0.5\) pounds and \(5-20\) pounds, occasionally lifting objects and/or animals weighing \(20-50\) pounds to a height of one meter and carrying the object or animal for a distance of at least two meters.

**IV. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

Candidates must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize. Problem solving is a critical skill required of veterinary medical professionals and requires all of these intellectual abilities. Candidates must be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures. The capacity to independently access and interpret histories or files, identify significant findings from a history, physical examination or lab data, provide reasoning for a likely diagnosis and recall, retain information and incorporate new information in an efficient manner is essential.

**V. Behavior and Social Attributes**

Candidates must possess emotional health and maturity needed for full utilization of intellectual abilities and good judgment as it relates to patient diagnosis and care and interactions with clients, colleagues and veterinary medical professionals. Candidates must be capable of developing mature, sensitive and effective relationships with these individuals as well. Candidates must be able to tolerate strenuous workloads under stressful conditions and adapt to changing environments and situations which include, but are not limited to high case load requiring multitasking and emergency situations requiring immediate decisions. Candidates must behave in a collegial manner in all official academic, extracurricular and social functions of the College of Veterinary Medicine. Candidates are expected to contribute to a positive work and study atmosphere by reinforcing a non-threatening cultural environment.

**Application of Policy Standards**

Responsibility for notification and implementation of the essential functions and technical standards policy rests with Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs or Director of Student Programs. Any questions regarding the policy or its implementation should be directed to Associate Dean or Director of Student Programs.

The College of Veterinary Medicine Admissions Committee and the individual faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine are responsible for applying these standards with respect to applicants and students enrolled in the professional curriculum.

Approved by ISU CVM faculty: January 25, 2008
Candidates who have their admission rescinded or who receive notification of dismissal from the college for failure to meet these technical standards will be contacted by the Office of the Dean. Candidates who believe that an appeal of that decision is necessary must follow the procedure provided below:

1) A written appeal must be submitted to the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine within five (5) working days of the communication of the decision. The appeal must state the basis of the appeal, the technical standard in question and request of a hearing by an appeal board.

2) An appeal hearing will take place within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written appeal. The appellant may have an advocate of his/her choosing present to assist in the presentation of his/her position, but the appellant is the person who will be speaking and otherwise presenting the appeal.

3) The membership of the appeals board must be composed of individuals who are not involved in making the decision being appealed. The appeals board shall be chaired by either the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs or the Director of Student Programs. The remainder of the board will consist of a representative of the Admissions Committee or the Academic Standards Committee and a representative of Curriculum Committee, a department head where the technical standard would be essential, a university representative from the Dean of Students Office or Disabilities Resources Office and a veterinary student who is of equal or greater academic rank as the appellant.

4) During the appeal hearing, the faculty member most involved with the original decision will present his/her position and any evidence that he/she deems appropriate in support of his/her position. The appellant will be requested to demonstrate the physical and/or mental standards in question. A written record of the hearing which will be kept in a confidential file for a period of four (4) years. After this time the record will be destroyed.

5) The board chair will seek the advice and recommendation of the appeals board in a closed session. The board chair will render a decision as a recommendation to the Dean who will, within five (5) working days, render a written decision to the appellant and the involved faculty member.

6) Further appeal cannot be made within the administrative procedures of Iowa State University.

Identification/Assessment of and Accommodations for disabilities
If a candidate thinks that he/she has special needs and would like to pursue professional evaluation to obtain official verification, the student can notify their Academic Advisor, the College Program Coordinator, or the ISU Coordinator of Student Disability Resources (through the University Dean of Students Office) for further assistance. Candidates should be aware that they are responsible for the cost of the professional evaluation. If accommodations are desired, it is the responsibility of the candidate to contact Student Disability Resources to determine eligibility.
Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine would like to acknowledge the following institutions, whose technical standards policies were reviewed or considered in drafting this policy:

College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina State University
College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Colorado State University
College of Veterinary Medicine, Purdue University
College of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State University
University of Minnesota Medical School
Tufts University Medical School
University of Wisconsin Medical School
Mayo Medical School

All candidates are held to the same academic and technical standards for admissions and training, with reasonable accommodations as needed for candidates with documented disabilities. It is the candidate’s responsibility to contact Student Disability Resources at 515-294-7220 to determine eligibility for accommodations. New candidates who feel they may require accommodations are encouraged to contact Student Disability Resources promptly upon acceptance by the College of Veterinary Medicine.