

UTHSCSA Graduate Medical Education Policies

Section 2	General Policies & Procedures	Effective:  Revised:	December 2000  October 2004, November 2006, November 2007, August 2011
Policy 2.1.2.	Essential Abilities Requirements for Appointment, Reappointment, Retention, and Certification For Graduate Medical Education	Responsibility:	Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education

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

Policy

Essential abilities are performance requirements that refer to those cognitive, behavioral, sensory/motor/physical, 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 are in 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. The paragraphs below explain the four aspects of physician performance in greater detail.

**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, honesty, integrity, responsibility, and tolerance, as well as demonstrate the ability to exercise the requisite judgment required in the practice of medicine. They must be able to tell the truth, even when it may reflect negatively on their performance.

**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 blood borne pathogens, including but not limited to HIV, HBV, and HCV, must be reviewed by the Expert Peer Panel according to the guidelines established in the Texas Health & Safety Code.

Individual residency programs may require different specific abilities of their residents, as appropriate to the practice requirements of the specialty. Further, active duty military residents in joint programs must meet and continuously maintain those standards required by SAUSHEC as well as all requirements of the UTHSCSA program. When a resident who requires assistance enters a residency program, it is expected that all necessary accommodations will be detailed and reviewed; and all agreed-to exams are implemented by the program, before the resident

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begins training, in accordance with the policy addressing accommodation of residents with disabilities.

Residents must be legally authorized to work professionally in all required healthcare clinical training sites.

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