

Essential Program Standards

Pitt Dental Medicine Universal Policies and Procedures

Essential Program Standards

The Essential Program Standards outlined in this document reflect the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to complete the requirements of the advanced dental education, predoctoral, or dental hygiene programs at the school, with or without a reasonable accommodation. These standards describe the nonacademic essential functions that are required for admission to, advancement through, and graduation from, the program. In some cases, failure to meet an essential program standard falls within the Professionalism and Ethics course or other School or University policies, with associated consequences.

A student who fails to meet the essential program standards, as determined by the Offices of Student Affairs, Clinical Affairs, Academic Affairs and/or the Student Progress Committee may be recommended for a leave of absence or suspension until essential standards can be met. A student who is unable to meet the essential standards, with or without a reasonable accommodation, may be recommended for dismissal.

The University fosters a culture of inclusiveness and is committed to providing an accessible environment for its faculty, staff, residents and students. Applicants or students who would like to request a reasonable accommodation needed to meet these standards should contact the [Office of Disability Resources and Services](#), (412) 648-7890.

1. Communication:

General: Residents/students must be able to communicate effectively, compassionately, respectfully, sensitively, and efficiently with patients, their families, faculty, residents, staff, and students (including verbal, non-verbal, and written forms of communication). A resident/student must have sufficient facility with English to elicit, retrieve, understand, and communicate information.

Examples of effective, compassionate, respectful, sensitive, and efficient communication include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Able to maintain effective and respectful communications with peers, faculty, staff and patients in order to provide care, discuss academic progress, and voice concerns, etc.
- Verbal and/or written communications are logical, linear, and coherent.
- Able to communicate verbally and non-verbally with a diverse population of peers, faculty, staff, and patients in ways that feel respectful, inclusive, non-threatening, and non-discriminatory.
- Able to effectively and accurately communicate instructions during treatment and post-treatment.
- Establish and maintain a professional and appropriate rapport with patients, staff, faculty, and peers.

2. Ethics/Professionalism:

General: Residents/students must uphold the standards of conduct for ethics and professionalism as set forth in the American Dental Association's Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct, Principles of Ethics of the American Dental Hygienists Association, the University's [Student Code of Conduct](#), as well as policies, procedures and protocols as outlined by the school.

Examples of ethical and professional behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Act in the best interest of the patient and society even when there is a conflict with the resident/student's personal self-interest.

- Conduct oneself as a trustworthy and responsible citizen and act with impeccable integrity in their actions with fellow students, residents, staff, faculty, and/or the public.
- Treat all individuals in a respectful and effective manner, regardless of race, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or any other protected status identified in the University of Pitt Dental Medicine Universal Policies and Procedures October 2024.

Pittsburgh's Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy CS07.

- Practice honesty and ethical behavior and be able to take responsibility for their behavior, which includes being open to feedback from their supervisors and academic instructors.
- Maintain appropriate credentialing requirements.

3. Behavioral/Social Demeanor:

General: Residents/students must have sufficient behavioral, social, and emotional skills to meet their own needs and the needs of others. This includes being able to interact effectively and appropriately with others including faculty, staff, residents, students, patients, families, caregivers, and other health care professionals.

Examples of the types of behavioral, social, and emotional skills required to meet this standard include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Demonstrate emotional maturity and maintain emotional stability in the learning and/or clinical environment.
- Effectively manage physical and/or emotional stress under heavy workloads.
- Tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity while being flexible and adaptable without showing undue signs of distress.
- Be organized, manage time, and meet deadlines and time limits.
- Demonstrate good judgment and insight as expected from a health care professional.
- Reflect and self-evaluate, including examining personal attitudes and stereotypes, to offer respect to the individual needs of faculty, staff, peers, as well as patients from diverse cultural and complex medical and psychological backgrounds.
- Accept criticism and take responsibility for behavior; make changes to own behavior as needed.
- Identify emotions and desires of others and demonstrate compassion, respect, concern and empathy for others.
- Balance own views with those of others.
- Collaborate with others as a member of a team.

4. Intellectual/Cognitive/Conceptual/Executive Functioning:

General: Residents/students must be able to develop and apply skills in reasoning, analysis, synthesis of information, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Examples of intellectual, cognitive, conceptual and executive function include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Critically interpret, analyze, assimilate, and apply scientific information from the didactic, preclinical, and clinical coursework presented throughout the curriculum to simulated cases or problems and to live patient care experiences.
- Participate in and learn from different teaching modalities, such as lecture, question-and-answer, small-group and team-based activities, and presentation of projects, including the use of technology to facilitate learning.
- Understand three-dimensional relationships to achieve competence as defined by the school in the preclinical, laboratory, and clinical procedures required.
- Be legally and mentally competent to make sound and beneficent decisions and/or to perform assigned educational and clinical tasks, duties, and/or responsibilities.

5. Motor Skills:

General: Residents/students must have sufficient motor skills, physical mobility, strength, equilibrium, endurance, and coordination required to perform tasks in didactic, preclinical, laboratory, and clinical settings.

Examples of sufficient motor skills include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Apply both gross and fine motor skills and demonstrate controlled instrumentation techniques, which includes equilibrium and touch, to patient care.
- Operate controls, move high speed and/or low speed dental drills with precision of less than a millimeter.
- Establish depth and width accurately.
- Provide all aspects of patient care within a time frame that maintains safety and comfort for patients.
- Reposition or direct the reposition of patients with disabilities to include physically restraining adults and children who lack motor control.
- Position and reposition oneself around the patient and chair and perform dental procedures for prolonged periods of time.

6. Sensory/Observational:

General: Residents/students must have sufficient ability to obtain information accurately in didactic, preclinical, laboratory, and clinical settings.

Examples of sensory and observational skills include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Examine and assess oral health conditions with acuity.
- Detect subtle changes in radiographic density and normal/abnormal variations in oral soft and hard tissues.
- Observe tissue conditions and changes over time.
- Distinguish depth and width accurately.

Notice to Student/Resident Applicants and Matriculants:

Serving as a patient:

An essential part of the training of students/residents at Pitt Dental Medicine is to learn and practice clinical concepts that involve administering anesthesia, dental hygiene and cleaning as well as other facets of dental examination and care. In order to facilitate this training, part of the educational experience at Pitt Dental requires students and residents to serve as patients for other students/residents.

It is essential to the effective relationship between a dental practitioner and their patient to have a complete and up-to-date health history. Students/residents will be called upon when acting as a patient to convey a complete and adequate health history to their dental practitioner and faculty who are overseeing their clinical training (for educational purposes and) in the event of a medical or other emergency arising during patient care and treatment.

Enrollment, Graduation and Licensure:

To complete the program in which students/residents are enrolled the student/resident may be required to complete clinical education placements at Pitt Dental and within facilities external to the University, which may require additional criminal background checks and/or drug screens prior to the start of the required experience. Failure of a background check, clearance and/or drug screen may render a student/resident ineligible to be placed in the University clinic or external facility in order to meet clinical education requirements for graduation and/or continue to be enrolled as a student at Pitt Dental.

Failure of a background check, clearance and/or drug screen may affect the future ability to graduate from Pitt Dental Medicine or to be licensed. To become licensed, many states will inquire as to whether the applicant has been convicted of a misdemeanor, a felony, or a felonious or illegal act associated with alcohol and/or substance abuse.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact dentaladmissions@pitt.edu.

Contact Information:

Director, Office of Disability Resources & Services
University of Pittsburgh
140 William Pitt Union Pittsburgh, PA 15260
(412) 648-7890
drsrecep@pitt.edu
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/disability-resources-services>

Assistant Dean for Residency Education University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine
3501 Terrace Street, 2183 Salk Annex
Pittsburgh, PA 15261
(412) 648-8633
dentalresidencyeducation@pitt.edu

Associate Dean for Student Affairs University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine
3501 Terrace Street, 6650 Salk Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15261
(412) 648-8410
dentalstudentaffairs@pitt.edu

Program Director, Oral and Craniofacial Sciences Graduate Program
University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine
3501 Terrace Street, 505 Salk Pavilion
Pittsburgh, PA 15261
(412) 648-0108
oralbiologygradprogram@pitt.edu

Adapted from the Following:

- [American Dental Association \(ADA\) Policies on Substance Use Disorders](#)
- Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) Current Accreditation Standards for Predoctoral Dental Education, Standard 5 – Patient Care Services.
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania State Board of Dentistry Dental Law, Act 216 of 1933. Revised April 2016. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- Lane Community College Health Professions Dental Hygiene. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- Technical Standards College of Dentistry the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Accessed on: August 9, 2020
- Technical Standards School of Dental Medicine Case Western Reserve University. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- Technical Standards Dugoni School of Dentistry University of the Pacific. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program Technical Standards. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.
- University of Michigan Medical School Technical Standards 2020. Accessed on: August 9, 2020.