

## Essential Skills and Abilities Required for the Study of Pharmacy<sup>1</sup> (March 2019)

The Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) Program at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy provides the educational degree necessary toward licensure as a practicing pharmacist in Canada. Graduates must possess the requisite knowledge, (essential) skills/abilities and values to be effective medication therapy experts. This document addresses only the essential skills and abilities required and does not address the substantive knowledge requirements attendant in this predominantly science-based curriculum.

Enrolled students need to meet and/or comply with all academic, post-admission and behavioural criteria published on the PharmD Admissions website. This document details the essential skills and abilities that are required to apply knowledge effectively in various curricular components, particularly in Pharmacy practice and experiential courses <sup>2</sup>.

Prospective applicants should be aware that PharmD students' cognitive, physical assessment, management and communication skills, as well as professional behaviours, are all evaluated in time-limited tasks, including simulations of, and actual patient and health care professional encounters. These skills and behaviours are also assessed by the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC), in the qualifying examinations normally taken after graduation. A PharmD degree and success on the PEBC exams, together with fulfillment of regulatory requirements, make graduates eligible for licensure to practice Pharmacy.

Since all students must possess the essential skills and abilities cited in this document to progress through the curriculum and to graduate, applicants are expected to review this document to assess their potential to meet these requirements. An offer of admission should not be interpreted as evidence that the Pharmacy program has independently verified an applicant's skills and attributes in the domains described below. Students interested in pursuing a Pharmacy degree should engage in some self-reflection before proceeding with an application or before accepting an offer of admission.

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<sup>1</sup> Some language and concepts in this document have been adapted with permission from the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM) Policy Document: Essential Skills and Abilities Required for the Study of Medicine (2003, 2016), and University of Saskatchewan, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition: Essential Skills and Attributes for the Study of Pharmacy at the University of Saskatchewan (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Students in experiential courses (rotations) typically: Spend a minimum of 40 hours per week in the practice site; May stand/walk for much of the day in community and/or institutional sites; Use computers extensively for accessing and providing patient data as well as literature searching; Hand-write notes in charts and on prescriptions; Are faced with time-sensitive actions which must be executed accurately; Manually perform technical acts such as injection and inhaler demonstrations, etc.; Are involved in physical assessment which requires mobility up, down and around patients and observing, listening to and touching patients; Engage in extensive verbal communications with patients and other care providers.

## **Technical Standards for Students in the Pharmacy Program**

A candidate for the pharmacy degree must demonstrate the following abilities:

### **Observation**

A student must be able to participate in learning situations that require skills of observation. In particular, a student must be able to accurately observe a patient and acquire all relevant sensory information.

### **Communication**

A student must be able to efficiently elicit verbal and non-verbal information pertinent to providing medication therapy management for patients. A student must be able to communicate effectively with patients, families and any member of the health care team. A student must also be able to summarize coherently a patient's medication-related needs and pharmaceutical care plan verbally and in writing.

### **Motor**

A student must demonstrate sufficient motor function to safely perform certain components of physical assessment on a patient, as relevant to their medication-related needs, such as [measure blood pressure](#), or [obtain a temperature reading](#). A student must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency care to patients (e.g. Pharmacy students must attain First Aid/CPR certification). A student must be able to manually perform technical acts such as injections and inhaler demonstrations.

### **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

A student must demonstrate the cognitive skills and memory necessary to engage in clinical problem-solving.

### **Behavioural and Social Attributes**

A student must consistently demonstrate the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities. The application of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the medication-related care of patients is necessary. The development of mature, sensitive and effective professional relationships with patients, families and other members of the health care team is also required. The student must be able to tolerate the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the program, and function effectively under stress. Adaptability to changing environments and the ability to function in the face of uncertainties that are inherent in the care of patients are both necessary. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that pharmacists must demonstrate and are expected qualities of pharmacy students.

### **Students with Disabilities**

This document does not preclude individuals with disabilities from applying. Disability is defined by Section 10 (1) of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/2-what->

[disability](#) ). The Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy is committed to facilitating the integration of students with disabilities into the University and pharmacy communities. Those who anticipate they will require disability-related accommodation must notify U of T's Accessibility Services (<http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>), provide appropriate documentation for review, and seek relevant recommendations. Where a student has a disability, the University will assess the needs of that student and whether those needs can be met short of undue hardship, including any cost and issues of patient care and safety. Each student with a disability is entitled to reasonable accommodation that will assist them to meet the standards. This accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis guided by the recommendations of Accessibility Services, who will act as the student's advocate, as well as recommendations of relevant individuals in the Faculty.

Although reasonable accommodation will be made to facilitate the student's progress, such accommodation cannot compromise patient safety and well-being. Reasonable accommodation may require members of the University community to exercise creativity and flexibility in responding to the needs of students with disabilities while maintaining the academic and technical standards. The student with a disability must be able to demonstrate the knowledge and perform the necessary skills independently and in time constrained situations. There are a few circumstances in which an intermediary may be appropriate. However, no disability can be accommodated if the intermediary has to provide cognitive support, substitute for cognitive skills, perform a physical assessment and/or in any way supplement clinical judgment. The appropriateness of an intermediary will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Note that all students are required to achieve passing standards in all course/program requirements.

This document acknowledges that central to the success of a student with a disability in completing the pharmacy program is their responsibility to demonstrate self-reliance and to identify needs requiring accommodation in a timely fashion.