Essential Skills and Abilities Required for the Study of Pharmacy

The PharmD curriculum at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy requires that students meet and/or comply with all published academic, post-admission and behavioural criteria. This supplementary document details the essential skills and abilities that are required to apply knowledge effectively in various curricular components, most particularly in Pharmacy practice courses and experiential rotations, in order to successfully complete the degree requirements. It does not address the requisite substantive knowledge requirements attendant in this predominantly science-based curriculum.

Prospective applicants should be aware that cognitive, physical assessment, management and communication skills, as well as professional behaviours are all evaluated in time-restricted tasks and simulations of patient and health care professional encounters as part of the PharmD curriculum. These skills and behaviours are also assessed in the national board examinations, Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC), which may be taken after graduation. A PharmD degree and success in the PEBCs along with fulfillment of regulatory requirements make students eligible for licensure to practice Pharmacy.

As all students must possess the essential skills and abilities cited in this document in order to progress through the curriculum and to graduate applicants are expected to review this document to assess their potential to meet these requirements.

Technical Standards for Students in the Pharmacy Program

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

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2 This degree prepares students to be eligible for licensure as pharmacists in Ontario. Graduates must possess the requisite knowledge, (essential) skills/abilities and values to be effective medication therapy managers. This document addresses only the essential skills and abilities required.

3 Students in experiential rotations typically: Spend a minimum of 37.5 hours per week in the practice; 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.
Observation
A student must be able to participate in learning situations that require skills in observation. In particular, a student must be able to accurately and consistently observe a patient and acquire and interpret visual, auditory and tactile information.

Communication
A student must be able to speak, to hear and to observe patients in order to effectively and efficiently elicit information, describe mood, activity and posture and perceive non-verbal communication. A student must be able to communicate effectively, understandably, and sensitively with patients, families and any member of the health care team. A student must also be able to summarize coherently, and at an appropriate level for understanding, 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 may relate to their medication-related needs. The assessment must be done independently and in a timely fashion. A student must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency care to patients (Pharmacy students must attain First Aid/CPR certification) and must be able to manually perform technical acts such as injections and inhaler demonstrations, etcetera.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities
A student must demonstrate the cognitive skills and memory necessary to measure, calculate, and reason in order to analyze, integrate and synthesize information. Students must be able to identify and solve complex problems. All of these activities must be done under time-restricted conditions.

Behavioural and Social Attributes
A student must consistently demonstrate the emotional health and intelligence required for full utilization of her/his emotional and 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 relationships with patients, families and other members of the health care team is also required, and this is demonstrated through a commitment to teamwork, respect and tolerance for others, ethical conduct, professional behaviour, and dedication to interprofessional values. The student must be able to appreciate and accept the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the program and function effectively under stress. The ability to accept and receive feedback /assessment is considered essential. 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 students.

Students with Disabilities
Disability is defined by Section 10 (1) of the Ontario Human Rights
This guideline does not preclude individuals with disabilities from applying. The Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy is committed to facilitating the integration of students with disabilities into the University community. 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. Each student with a disability is entitled to reasonable accommodation that will assist her/him to meet the standards. This accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis based on 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 guideline acknowledges that central to the success of a student with a disability in completing the pharmacy program is her/his responsibility to demonstrate self-reliance and to identify needs requiring accommodation in a timely fashion.