



**Boston University** Henry M. Goldman  
School of Dental Medicine

# Technical Standards

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# Technical Standards

## Competencies for Advancement and Graduation

The Technical Standards for Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (GSDM) define the essential functions that an applicant and dental student must be able to perform in order to be admitted to GSDM, progress satisfactorily through our program of study, and graduate.

## Introduction

The Dental School's technical standards refer to non-didactic criteria that are necessary to participate in the educational program. In developing these criteria, the dental school and its faculty and administration affirm the following expectations of our students:

GSDM intends for its graduates to become competent and compassionate and ethical dentists who are capable of meeting all requirements for licensure. To participate in all required aspects of the dental education program, to successfully achieve the DMD degree, and to meet state licensing requirements, a student must possess certain minimum physical, cognitive and emotional abilities. That an individual student may intend to practice only a narrow aspect of clinical dentistry, or to pursue a non-clinical career, does not alter the requirement that all dental students must complete and demonstrate competency in the entire curriculum. The GSDM educational experience is grounded in curricular and experiential offerings that enable graduates to safely and effectively function in a variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. It is essential for a dentist to develop basic intellectual abilities, technical skills as well as ethical and professional attitudes and behaviors.

The Dental School has an ethical and professional responsibility for the safety of patients with whom dental students interact with throughout their dental school education and also with whom, as graduates, they will come in contact. Therefore, patient safety and well-being are major determinants for establishing requirements involving the physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities of candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation. The essential abilities and characteristics described here are referred to as technical standards. They are described below in several broad categories including observation, communication, motor function/sensory, social and behavioral skills, professional and ethical standards, and conceptual-integrative and quantitative abilities.

## **Standards**

### **I. Observation**

Candidates must be able to participate in lectures, demonstrations and laboratory exercises, e.g., examination and/or dissection of cadavers; examination of histological specimens and microscopic study of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. Candidates must be able to accurately observe patients and assess findings. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a physical evaluation and comprehensive oral evaluation in order to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan.

### **II. Communication**

Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, their families, caregivers, and all members of the health care team including faculty and staff. Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and written expression in English. The candidate must be able to record information accurately and clearly. They must be able to obtain a medical history in a culturally competent manner, interpret non-verbal aspects of communication, and establish therapeutic relationships with patients. They must be able to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, posture, status and perceive nonverbal communications.

### **III. Motor Function/Sensory**

Candidates must possess the capacity to perform procedures requiring the use of fine motor skills. They must be able to execute motor activities reasonably required to provide general care and safe restraint when performing all general dentistry procedures. The candidate must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers, requiring the use of vision, hearing, and touch. They must be able to respond to clinical situations in a timely manner and provide general and emergency dental care. Such activities require functional physical mobility and coordination of both gross and fine motor skills. They must adhere to universal infection protocols and meet established safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities.

### **IV. Social and Behavioral Skills**

Candidates must be able to demonstrate emotional intelligence (i.e. self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills). They must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads that accompany a rigorous dental education and clinical practice. They must function effectively under stress, displaying flexibility and adaptability to respond successfully to challenges inherent in dental education.

Candidates must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments, accept constructive feedback from faculty and others, and to take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients, faculty, staff and colleagues. They must be able to interact with a diverse community of patients, students, faculty and staff. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, cultural competency, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities necessary for success as a dental professional. Both dental education and clinical practice entail physical, mental and emotional stress such as long hours, close patient contact and managing complex patient situations, requiring the candidate to maintain composure.

## **V. Professional and Ethical Standards**

Candidates must have the ability to understand and maintain the ethics and professionalism standards of the dental profession, as set forth in the American Dental Association's Principle of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct, and must be able to conform their conduct to the requirements set forth in the Boston University Code of Student Responsibilities, the Boston University Academic Conduct Code, and the GSDM Academic Conduct Code. The candidate must be able to conduct oneself as a trustworthy and responsible member of the GSDM community and maintain integrity and professionalism in their interactions with all students, faculty, staff, patients and the public. These behavioral expectations also apply to any school-sponsored or related activities, such as externships and rotations, as well as outside public activities engaged in as a representative of GSDM.

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

Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of dentists, requires the ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize. In addition, the candidate must be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. They must be able to learn and manage the clinical problems of many patients simultaneously and must have the capacity to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, patients, teachers and the medical/dental literature in formulating diagnoses and treatment plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic planning is crucial; students must be able to identify and communicate their knowledge to others when appropriate.

## **Reasonable Accommodation of Disabilities**

The above represent GSDM minimum abilities/competencies required in the educational process of a dentist. GSDM will provide reasonable accommodations to those candidates/students who have documented disabilities. Students may apply for disability accommodations by contacting Boston University Disability & Access Services ([www.bu.edu/disability](http://www.bu.edu/disability)). However, GSDM will not undertake modifications or provide auxiliary aids or services that would fundamentally alter the nature and substance of the D.M.D. curriculum, lower academic standards, present an undue burden for the institution, or pose a direct threat to the safety of the candidate, patients, students, faculty, or staff. GSDM will also not provide services or equipment of a personal nature. Candidates should understand that they are required to demonstrate competency of the essential technical standards without personal assistance, such as the use of an intermediary. The candidate must be able to meet the technical standards of the D.M.D. curriculum, including the functions described above, with or without reasonable accommodations, in order to begin the program, to continue in the program, and to graduate from the program.