

Essential Functions

INTRODUCTION

The Washington State University (WSU) College of Pharmacy serves to effectively prepare student pharmacists to competently apply distributive and clinical pharmacy skills in a broad range of practice settings. Competency requires both academic achievement and development of professional attributes including intellectual, physical and social skills that represent the foundation of being able to provide contemporary pharmaceutical care. Requiring that students satisfactorily meet all of the essential functions described below is critical for the College of Pharmacy to ensure that its students are able to provide safe and effective healthcare for patients.

Student pharmacists will be assessed for both academic achievement and professional attributes during the program, and the College's Admissions Committee will consider a student pharmacist's ability to meet all of these requirements as part of the admissions process. By accepting admission and enrolling in the Pharm.D. program, the student pharmacist certifies that s/he has read these materials and understands the essential functions needed to be successful in the program.

These essential functions are attributes and skills the College of Pharmacy considers necessary for entrance, continuation, and graduation from WSU's Doctor of Pharmacy Program. By clearly delineating these essential functions, the College ensures that each graduate will develop the necessary technical, communication, interpersonal, professional relations, and clinical synthesis skills to subsequently enter any clinical practice, residency, or fellowship training.

Deficiencies in demonstrating these essential functions may be grounds for course/rotation failure and possible dismissal from the Pharm.D. program.

The College of Pharmacy is committed to providing appropriate assistance to help student pharmacists be successful in the curriculum. Reasonable accommodations are available for student pharmacists with a documented disability. Student pharmacists with identified disabilities should visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before the semester that they plan to attend to initiate the accommodations process. Accommodations are unique for each individual and some require a significant amount of time to prepare for, so it is essential that students notify the DRC as far in advance as possible. Student pharmacists with a disability that is identified during the semester should contact the DRC as soon as possible to arrange for an appointment and a review of their documentation by a disability specialist. All accommodations must be approved through the DRC located on each campus (Pullman: Administration Annex, Room 205 and Spokane: Student Affairs in the Student Academic Center, Room 130). All student pharmacists requesting reasonable accommodation must meet with the instructor prior to

or during the first week of the course to review all proposed accommodations in relation to course content and requirements. Exceptions to this time frame will be granted only upon a showing of good cause.

A student pharmacist must possess aptitude, abilities, and skills in five areas: 1) observation; 2) sensory and motor competencies; 3) conceptualization, integration and quantitative evaluation; 4) communication; and 5) ethical, interpersonal, and professional skills. These are described in greater detail below, and the syllabus for each course in the program describes the specific outcomes that must be met for each course related to these areas. The program faculty will monitor maintenance of these standards. Student pharmacists must be able to independently perform the described functions, with or without accommodation, to complete the program.

Observation, Sensory, and Motor Competencies

Student pharmacists must possess certain sensory and motor skills in order to competently perform as a pharmacist. Adequate vision is essential, and visual requirements include, but are not limited to, reading written and illustrated material including prescriptions and labels; observing demonstrations in the classroom or laboratory including projected material; observing anatomic structures; discriminating numbers and patterns associated with laboratory instruments and tests such as scales and other measuring devices; conducting a physical exam and observing both a patient's physical symptoms and nonverbal cues. Student pharmacists must have sufficient sensory and motor function to prepare and dispense pharmaceuticals, including the use of equipment for compounding prescriptions. Student pharmacists must possess sufficient skills to participate in the administration of a medication, including drawing up medication doses from a vial and being able to administer injections. Student pharmacists must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to participate in the general care and emergency treatment of patients. They must be able to respond promptly to emergencies, including arriving quickly when called, participating in the initiation of appropriate procedures, and rapidly and accurately preparing appropriate emergency medication.

Conceptualization, Integration, and Quantitative Evaluation

Student pharmacists must be able to learn through a variety of means, including individual study, large group didactic instruction, small group discussion, team projects, written and verbal presentations, patient care rounds, and utilization of computers and other technology. Student pharmacists must be able to recognize and accurately transcribe numbers, count and measure accurately, and be able to perform accurate and rapid calculations with or without a calculator or computer. Student pharmacists must be able to retain and recall information efficiently but also must possess appropriate judgment to know the limits of their knowledge in clinical situations. When knowledge is insufficient, student pharmacists must know where to obtain

additional information and be able to interpret this information to apply it to patient care. Student pharmacists must be able to obtain critical patient information from patient charts, other healthcare professionals, or other sources of information, and be able to use critical thinking skills to use this information along with calculation and other skills to determine a comprehensive patient care plan in an efficient manner. A patient care plan includes appropriate medications and doses, necessary monitoring, appropriate alternatives if a problem is identified and appropriate patient counseling.

Communication

Student pharmacists must be able to communicate effectively with patients and their caregivers and/ or partners (hereafter referred to as patients) as well as other healthcare professionals. Communication includes written, verbal, and nonverbal elements. Communication with patients (both questions and information provided) must use vocabulary that is understandable for the patient and shows compassion and empathy. Student pharmacists must possess listening skills and observe nonverbal cues to determine if communication has been effective and if other difficulties such as anxiety or mental illness exist that may complicate communication. Situations such as these must be addressed with care to meet the needs of the patient in a culturally-appropriate manner, and referrals to other healthcare providers must be made as appropriate. Any written information provided to patients must be understandable by the patient. Student pharmacists must be able to ask effective questions of patients in order to make informed decisions and must be able to document and communicate appropriate findings efficiently in oral and written forms with all members of the health care team. Written information must be legible and understandable by others (including avoidance of unapproved abbreviations), and all communication must be done in a professional manner.

Ethical, Interpersonal, and Professional Skills

A student pharmacist must be able to relate to colleagues, preceptors, staff, and patients with honesty, integrity, non-discrimination, self-sacrifice, and dedication. He/she should be able to understand and use the power, special privileges, and trust inherent in the patient relationship for the patient's benefit, and to know and avoid the behaviors that constitute misuse of this power. He/she should demonstrate the capacity to examine and reason critically about the social and ethical questions that define pharmacy and the pharmacist's role. He/she must be able to identify personal reactions and responses, recognize multiple points of view, and integrate these appropriately into clinical decision-making. When difficult situations or differences of opinions arise, a student pharmacist must be able to conduct himself/herself in a professional manner, regardless of the behavior of others.

The pharmacy profession requires flexibility that students must demonstrate via appropriate critical thinking, ethical, and emotional stability through adapting to various situations. A

student pharmacist must be able to utilize fully his/her intellectual ability, exercise good judgment, complete patient care responsibilities promptly and accurately, and relate to patients, families, and colleagues with courtesy, compassion, maturity, and respect for their dignity.

Stamina

The student pharmacist must display the attributes described above even during taxing workloads and stressful working conditions. A student pharmacist must have the physical and emotional stamina to maintain a high level of function in the face of such working conditions. Inherent in this requirement is the willingness to accept constructive criticism and to modify behavior in response to this feedback. To adequately achieve these requirements, the student pharmacist must demonstrate flexibility to be able to adapt to various situations. In the event of deteriorating emotional function, it is essential that a student pharmacist be willing to acknowledge the problem and/or accept professional help before it poses danger to self, patients, and/or colleagues.