

**The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry  
Minimum Technical Standards for Admission and Matriculation**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry (UAB SOD) is committed to the principle that all persons shall have equal access to its educational programs. The School of Dentistry encourages qualified individuals to apply for admission to the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) program.

The UAB SOD recognizes that the award of the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree carries with it the full authority of the institution and communicates to those who might seek the services of the bearer that he or she is competent to practice dentistry. The DMD degree is a broad degree, unique in that the graduate is prepared and, upon licensure, may practice all disciplines of the dental profession. Dental students must acquire the didactic knowledge, hand skills, and responsibilities identified by the faculty as essential to the practice of dentistry. Cognitive, technical, and interpersonal skills are required to be successful.

The UAB SOD is mindful of the unique nature of the dental curriculum. Applicants for admission must possess the skills and abilities that will allow them to successfully complete the course of study and, thus, receive the full benefit of the professional program. Students are required to direct or perform treatment on patients of the UAB SOD dental clinics and its affiliates safely and within the time allowed. With this in mind, all students must be able to meet the following technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation.

1. Motor Skills

GENERAL: Candidates and students should have sufficient motor functions such that they are able to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and treatment to patients within an acceptable amount of time.

SPECIFIC: It is required that a candidate and student possess the motor skills necessary to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests, and diagnostic procedures. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional uses of the touch and vision senses.

SPECIFIC: A candidate and student must be able to perform basic life support (including CPR), transfer and position disabled patients, physically restrain adults who lack motor control, and position and reposition one's self relative to the patient. The candidate must be able to operate controls utilizing fine movements, operate high and low speed dental instruments within a space of less than one millimeter, and utilize hand instrumentation (including scalpels for surgical procedures).

2. Sensory / Observation

GENERAL: A candidate and student must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the biomedical, clinical, and behavioral sciences.

SPECIFIC: This includes, but is not limited to, information conveyed through physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations in animals and microbiological cultures and microscopic images of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to acquire information from written documents and to visualize information presented via paper, films, slides, video, and digital images. A candidate must be able to interpret radiographs (x-rays) and other graphic images, with or without the use of assistive devices. A candidate must have functional use of visual, auditory, and somatic sensation while being enhanced by the functional use of sensory modalities.

GENERAL: A candidate and student must be able to observe a patient accurately, both at a distance and close at hand, and observe and appreciate non-verbal communications when performing dental operations or administering medications.

SPECIFIC: A candidate and student must be able to perform visual and tactile dental examinations and treatment including use of visual acuity, accommodation, and vision to discern differences and variations in color, shape, and general appearance between normal and abnormal, soft and hard tissues. Use of tactile senses may be either direct palpation or indirect through instrumentation. A candidate must also possess the visual acuity to read charts, records, small print and handwritten notation, and distinguish variations in colors intra and extra orally.

### 3. Communication

GENERAL: A candidate and student must be able to communicate effectively and appropriately with patients and/or guardian(s), convey or exchange information at a level allowing development of a health history, identify problems presented, explain alternative solutions, and give directions during treatment and post-treatment. For effective patient treatment, the candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with all members of the health care team. Communication includes oral, nonverbal, and written modalities.

SPECIFIC: A candidate and student must have the following skills: sufficient facility with the English language; capability to retrieve and synthesize information from literature, computerized data bases, and lectures; ability to effectively communicate concepts on written exams and patient charts; account for various patient backgrounds and life experiences; describe patient changes in moods, activity, and posture; coordinate patient care with all members of the health care team.

### 4. Cognitive

GENERAL: A candidate and student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize.

SPECIFIC: A candidate and student must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of a dentist, requires all of these intellectual abilities. A candidate must be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion for effective patient treatment.

### 5. Behavioral

GENERAL: A candidate and student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, maintenance of patient confidentiality, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients.

SPECIFIC: A candidate and student must recognize that the curriculum is physically, mentally, and emotionally taxing. He or she must be able to tolerate demanding workloads, effectively function under stress, adapt to changing environments, and display adaptability and acceptable function in the uncertain environment inherent to patient care. Compassion, integrity, empathy, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed throughout the admission and educational processes. Further, a candidate must be able to manage apprehensive patients with a range of moods and behaviors in a tactful, congenial, personal manner so as not to alienate or antagonize them. A candidate must accept critical feedback and respond by appropriately modifying behavior.

***The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry will consider for admission any applicant capable of acquiring the necessary knowledge with the ability to perform or learn to perform the skills specified in these standards. These technical standards are also required to successfully complete a set of competencies developed by the School and required for graduation. These competencies are available upon request through the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry, 405 School of Dentistry Building, 1919 7th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35294-0007.***

***Questions regarding this document should be directed to the Assistant Dean of Admissions, The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry, 125 School of Dentistry Building, 1919 7th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35294-0007.***

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