

EXEMPLAR TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR VETERINARY MEDICAL EDUCATION

AAVMC Taskforce on Technical Competencies

Our first goal was to communicate to candidates that they are welcomed and valued. To meet this objective, we developed the following Exemplary Introductory Language:

[Name of program] actively collaborates with students to develop innovative ways to ensure accessibility and creates a respectful, accountable culture through our specialized disability support. We are committed to excellence in accessibility and encourage students with disabilities to seek accommodations.

In keeping with OCR guidance, we then recommended a statement that provides direction to current and prospective students.

Applicants and students who, after review of the technical standards, determine that they require reasonable accommodation to fully engage in the program should contact the [name of office that oversees disability determination] to privately discuss their accommodation needs. Given the clinical nature of our programs, time may be needed to create and implement the accommodation(s). Accommodation(s) are never retroactive; therefore, timely requests are essential and encouraged.

In the next two domains our focus was on developing a functional rather than organic language to communicate the technical standards for observation and communication, while upholding the COE standards and EPAs.

Observation:

Students should be able to directly obtain information from demonstrations and procedures in pre-clinical and clinical coursework. Students should be able to assess a patient and evaluate findings accurately, detect changes in patient behavior, physical and mental status to provide appropriate veterinary care. These skills require the use of vision, hearing, and touch or the functional equivalent.

Communication:

Students should be able to communicate with clients and all members of the health care team, to establish effective professional relationships in order to elicit and provide information. Students should be able to communicate effectively and sensitively, both in person and in writing.

The motor domain was an important area of intentional development for veterinary medicine as students must be able to perform surgery and other techniques according to the COE CBVE standards. The Task Force carefully examined what skills and abilities were truly required in the practice of veterinary medicine, while continuing to prioritize functional over organic technical standards language.

Motor:

Students should, after a reasonable period of time, possess the capacity to directly perform physical examinations, and preventative, diagnostic, medical, surgical, and emergency procedures. Such actions require some coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, balance, and equilibrium.

Next, we developed the three remaining domains: intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative; behavioral and social abilities; and ethics and professionalism.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative:

“Students should be able to comprehend, retain, and apply detailed and complex information and engage in problem-solving in both the pre-clinical and clinical coursework. Students are expected to possess the ability to accurately measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and communicate information. In addition, after a reasonable amount of instruction, students should be able to comprehend spatial and three-dimensional relationships of structures, for example, the anatomical structure of an animal. And students should also be able to adapt to different learning environments and modalities.”

Behavioral and Social Abilities:

“Students should possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibility’s attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, fellow students, faculty, staff, and the entire health care team. They should be able to fully attend the curriculum, which requires active engagement in educational and clinical activities. They should display flexibility and adaptability and function in a fast-paced, changing environment with the uncertainties and stressors inherent in the clinical problems of many of their patients. Students must also be able to receive, comprehend, and act on informal and formal constructive feedback. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, professionalism, interest, motivation, punctuality, and consistent attendance are all personal qualities expected during the education process.”

Ethics and Professionalism:

“Students should maintain and display ethical and professional behaviors commensurate with the role of a veterinarian in all their interactions with clients, patients, faculty, staff, fellow students, the entire health care team, and the public. After a reasonable period of time, students should also be able to demonstrate realistic self-assessment of knowledge and skills and engage in personal reflective practice to achieve the competencies of the program and of the profession. The student is expected to understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of veterinary medicine and function within the law and ethical standards of the profession.”

Finally, we suggested providing explicit guidance for how students can request accommodations by including a statement about how to request accommodation. We also recommend a yearly attestation of the students’ ability to meet programmatic technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation.

Attestation and Meeting Requirements with or without reasonable accommodation:

The technical standards delineated above must be met with or without reasonable accommodation. After reviewing the technical standards, students who determine that they should require reasonable accommodation to fully engage in the program should contact the [name of office that adjudicates disability determination] to discuss their accommodation needs privately.

Accommodation information, not diagnoses, is shared with appropriate administrative and teaching staff and faculty on a need-to-know basis related to the timely implementation of accommodation. Given the clinical nature of our programs, time may be needed to create and implement the accommodations. Accommodations are never retroactive; therefore, timely requests are essential and encouraged.

I have read the technical standards for [insert name of school] and attest that I am able to meet these with or without reasonable accommodation.

Taskforce Members:

Leslie Sprunger, Chair
Liz Arnold
Erin Benson
Roslyn Casimir
Caroline El-Khoury
Kathy Salisbury
Grace Clifford, *Consultant*
Lisa Meeks, *Consultant*
Lisa Greenhill, *AAVMC Staff*
Ted Mashima, *AAVMC Staff*

Citation:

Sprunger, L., Meeks L., Arnold, L., Benson, E. Casimir, El-Khoury, C., Salisbury, K., Clifford, G., Mashima, T., Greenhill, L. (2023, November 1). Exemplar Technical Standards for Veterinary Medical Education. Washington; American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges.

**For more information, contact
Lisa Greenhill at lgreenhill@aavmc.org.**