Technical Standards

Applicants and matriculants for the DVM degree must possess the following Technical Standards, which are broken down into five categories: 1) Observation Skills, 2) Communication Skills, 3) Motor Skills, 4) Intellectual-Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative) Abilities, and 5) Behavioral and Social Attributes. All applicants and matriculants are held to the same academic and Technical Standards. These Technical Standards can be met with or without reasonable accommodations. If you believe that you may need accommodations, please consult the MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (www.rcpd.msu.edu).

I. Observation Skills
Applicants and matriculants must be able to observe required information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic and clinical sciences, including but not limited to information conveyed through physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations in animals, microbiological cultures and microscopic images of microorganisms, and gross and microscopic evaluation of tissues in normal pathologic state. Furthermore, applicants and matriculants must be able to:

- Observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand, to acquire information from written documents, and to visualize information as presented in images from paper, films, slides, and video
- Perceive and interpret signs of fear, aggression, and other potentially dangerous behaviors made by various animal species; sense and interpret warning sounds and signs in the veterinary health care environment
- Interpret x-ray and other graphic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomenon (such as EKGs) with or without the use of assistive devices.

Such observation and information acquisition necessitates the functional use of visual, auditory, and somatic sensation while being enhanced by functional use of other sensory modalities including smell. In any case where a candidate’s ability to observe or acquire information through these sensory modalities is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to acquire and demonstrate observation skills.

II. Communication Skills
Applicants and matriculants must be able to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in behavior, activity and posture, and perceive non-vocal communications. Applicants and matriculants must be able to communicate effectively orally and in writing with clients and colleagues. Applicants and matriculants must be able to sense and respond to directions given in emergency situations and during clinical and surgical procedures. Such communication skills require the functional use of visual, auditory, and somatic senses, enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities. When an applicant or matriculant’s ability to communicate through sensory modalities is compromised, the applicant or matriculant must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to meet the communication skills.
III. Motor Skills
Applicants and matriculants must possess the motor skills necessary to:

- Directly perform restraint procedures, palpitation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, laboratory tests, and diagnostic procedures.
- Execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency medical care such as, but not limited to, airway management, placement of intravenous catheters, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, application of pressure to control bleeding, suturing of wounds, other surgical procedures, and the performance of obstetrical maneuvers.

Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch, hearing, and vision. Applicants and matriculants must possess the ability to perform routine restraint procedures and to lift patients, tissues, or equipment with or without assistance.

IV. Intellectual-Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative) Abilities
Applicants and matriculants must be able to assess, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize subjective and objective information. In addition, the applicants and matriculants must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of veterinarians, requires all these intellectual abilities. Applicants and matriculants must be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes
Applicants and matriculants must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities. In addition, applicants and matriculants must possess the social and behavioral skills necessary to:

- Exercise good judgment (i.e. recognizing and communicating limitations, discerning when to ask for help, prioritizing responsibilities, truthfulness in self-report, maintaining professional boundaries with patients).
- Conscientiously complete all assignments and responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients.
- Function effectively under stress.
- Interact, cooperatively, with clients and members of the health team, including students.
- Tolerate physically, emotionally, and mentally demanding workloads.
- Adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients.
VI. Responsibilities

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. The Committee on Student Admissions at the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine will consider for admission to the College any applicant who demonstrates the ability to acquire knowledge necessary for the practice of veterinary medicine, as well as the ability to perform or to learn to perform the skills as described in this document. Applicants will be evaluated not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on these Technical Standards which are necessary to meet the full requirements of the school’s curriculum and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners of veterinary medicine.

Once accepted into the College of Veterinary Medicine, the university provides reasonable accommodations, however it does not change essential academic requirements, Technical Standards, or job functions. Accommodation determinations are based on documentation and an individualized needs assessment. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, a verified individual services accommodation (“VISA”) form will be issued. This form must be presented to the Instructor of Record(s) at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible. The VISA includes information about the role of the student, faculty member, and RCPD staff members; a sample is available on the RCPD website.

Students must continue to meet the Technical Standards throughout their enrollment in the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine. The Student Performance Committee determines compliance as part of each student’s end of semester review to determine progression in the curriculum. If a student does not demonstrate compliance with the Technical Standards, s/he may be referred to RCPD for additional assessment for potential reasonable accommodation(s). Subsequent to that assessment, the Student Performance Committee will determine the student's ability to continue in the veterinary school after consultation with the RCPD. If no reasonable accommodations can be made that allow the student to meet the Technical Standards, the student will be placed on suspension pending dismissal. The student is able to appeal and grieve a suspension pending dismissal as described in the Student Manual for Assessment and Promotion. In addition, the RCPD has internal mechanisms to request reconsideration and dispute disability determinations or appropriateness of accommodations (https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/awareness/dispute).