

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR GME

GENERAL STATEMENT: Graduate Medical Education (GME) at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) is governed by the overarching University of Iowa policy on *Human Rights, Affirmative Action and Employment Opportunity* which includes the *Disability Protection Policy and Accessibility Statement*. GME strives to make reasonable accommodations for the functional limitations of applicant and existing resident and fellow physicians with disabilities pursuant to applicable federal and state law. Applicants to residency and fellowship programs and current resident/fellow trainees with disabilities seeking accommodations should contact Faculty and Staff Disability Services. Like all staff, faculty, and students, resident and fellow physicians are protected from coercion, retaliation, interferences, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation of a complaint. Inquiries and complaints are directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity for a confidential investigation. Disabled applicants/employees, disabled veterans, or veterans of the Vietnam Era desiring more information should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

All applicants and trainees at UIHC must possess the intellectual, ethical, physical and emotional capabilities as described in the technical standards outlined in this policy. For purposes of this policy, medical residents and fellows are also referred to as trainees.

I. TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND RETENTION: Technical standards are criteria that go beyond academic requirements or training prerequisites for acceptance into a GME residency or fellowship and are essential to meeting the academic and clinical requirements of the particular GME training program, though additional performance expectations may occur in certain GME programs. Trainees with or without disabilities, applying to and continuing in a GME residency or fellowship will be expected to meet the same requirements and will be held to the same fundamental standards. Beginning and continuing in a GME training program assumes a certain level of cognitive and technical skill. Although not all trainees are expected to gain the same level of proficiency with all technical skills, some skills are so essential that mastery must be achieved, with the assistance of reasonable accommodations where necessary. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to assist in learning, performing and satisfying the technical standards. Every reasonable attempt will be made to facilitate the progress of trainees where it does not compromise training standards or interfere with the rights of other trainees or the care or rights of patients. Applicants and active trainees must possess the capability to complete the entire curriculum of the GME program. Abilities and skills required are noted in six areas below. Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain of these areas, but each trainee must meet the essential technical standards in a way such that he or she will be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner and progress to the point of independent practice in the trainee's GME specialty or sub-specialty training program. The use of a trained intermediary is not acceptable in many clinical situations as it implies that the trainee's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation.

The technical standards are:

- Observation - Trainees must have the functional ability to observe and must have sufficient use of the senses necessary to perform all necessary physical examinations and patient care pursuant to their specialized area of training.
- Communication - Trainees must be able to relate reasonably to patients and establish sensitive, professional relationships with patients, peers, colleagues and staff. They must be able to communicate to the patient and to their colleagues with accuracy, clarity and efficiency.
- Motor - Trainees must be able to participate in diagnostic and treatments required for their specialty.
- Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities - Trainees must be able to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and reach reasonable diagnostic and therapeutic judgments. Trainees must be able to display good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients. They must be able to respond with prompt and appropriate action in emergent situations.
- Behavioral and Social Attributes - Trainees must be able to accept criticism and respond with appropriate modification of their behavior. They must possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency necessary to complete the training program's curriculum, gain progressive independence according to the timeline outlined by the Program Director's established curriculum and enter the independent practice of medicine at the completion of the program. They must demonstrate professional and ethical demeanor and behavior in all dealings with peers, faculty, staff and patients.
- Cultural Competency - Trainees must be able to communicate with and care for persons whose culture, sexual orientation or religious beliefs are different from their own. They must be able to provide patient care for any patient regardless of the trainee's and patient's race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age or sexual preference. Similarly, trainees must be able to interact professionally with colleagues and other healthcare professionals without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age or sexual preference.

- II. ACCOMMODATION:** Whether it is an applicant or a current trainee, GME does not discriminate in access to its programs on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, marital status, religion, color, or national origin. The applicant or current trainee is responsible for disclosing to the Program Director any disability for which he/she might seek accommodation. Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis so as to facilitate equal access. In providing such accommodations, professional, legal, and moral responsibilities with respect to nondiscrimination are recognized. Residents and fellows with disabilities are strongly encouraged to identify themselves as early as possible so that reasonable accommodations for which they may be eligible can be determined and provided. Any documents containing disability related information are confidential and maintained securely in the Program and/or in the GME Office. The costs of required assessments are borne by the resident or fellow if not covered by health care insurance.
- III. PROCESS:** To remain in good standing, residents and fellows with and without disabilities are required to meet the technical standards noted in this policy and any other achievement standards determined by the faculty, the particular standards of the training program and of the respective specialty or sub-specialty. Any disability (pre-dating entry to the program or newly acquired) requires the following process to be followed if accommodation is to be considered:
- Disclosure – The *new* resident or fellow who seeks accommodation for a disability pre-dating entry to the program must meet with the Program Director and provide satisfactory written documentation to the Program Director no later than the end of the first week of training. A *current* trainee who is experiencing new difficulties and would like to consider the possibility of disability accommodation must first disclose his/her request and then meet with the Program Director. If the Program Director determines that a formal assessment is indicated, the Program Director may assist the trainee in finding a qualified professional to assess the scope of the current difficulties or if documentation already exists, the trainee must directly release that information to the Program Director or sign a release that will allow the evaluating professional to forward information to the Program Director. The Program Director may determine who is qualified to assess an impairment or disability and may request documentation to verify professional qualifications.
 - Assessment – The information provided by the professional must reflect the trainee's current status, be factual, objective, and technically valid, and must establish clearly that the disability substantially limits one or more of the trainee's major life activities. The professional who conducted the evaluation should identify specific options for the management of the disability.
 - Review - The Program Director will review the disclosed information. The Program Director may determine an appropriate accommodation, or, as deemed appropriate, the information may be shared with the GME Director or his designee for further review. Additional information may be requested before a final determination is made as to any or appropriate accommodation.