

# LSU School of Veterinary Medicine Technical Standards

## INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana School of Veterinary Medicine (LSU SVM) professional degree program is designed to provide a comprehensive foundation of knowledge in veterinary medicine through clinical skills development, comprehensive professionalism development, and early clinical immersion. We emphasize case-based coursework focused on clinical reasoning through course integration within a competency-based curriculum.

The broad knowledge and skills required to complete the LSU SVM professional degree program are taught in alignment with the Competency Based Veterinary Education (CBVE) Model and adheres to the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA COE) accreditation policies. The AVMA COE is the national accrediting agency for veterinary medical education in the United States. The AVMA COE assures that minimum standards in veterinary medical education are met by all AVMA-accredited colleges or schools of veterinary medicine, and that students enrolled in those colleges or schools receive an education that will prepare them for entry-level positions in the profession.

This curriculum includes 2.5 years of pre-clinical education involving extensive, sustained hours in class and labs and 1.5 years of clinical curriculum involving direct patient care and communication with clients, colleagues and veterinary professionals. Both the pre-clinical and clinical time require additional preparatory review and self-directed learning.

To ensure that graduates achieve entry level knowledge in the CBVE domains, DVM candidates (prospective students, applicants, and/or enrolled DVM students) must be able to perform minimal essential functions and technical standards in the following categories:

- 1) Observation; 2) Communication; 3) Motor; 4) Intellectual Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative; 5) Behavioral and Social Abilities; 6) Ethics and Professionalism.

These standards seek to balance the rights of the candidates and the safety of the veterinary patient, clients and other involved parties. The balance also reflects all individual components of the pre-clinical and clinical DVM program, the minimum competency-based skills required in the SVM curricula, AVMA COE accreditation requirements, and conditions for licensure in the US.

The LSU SVM is committed to actively collaborating with candidates to ensure our program is accessible, fostering a respectful, accountable culture through disability support with collaboration and direction from the LSU Office of Disability Services (ODS) to help support successful completion of the DVM program. LSU SVM does not discriminate based on ability, and all candidates will be considered regardless of their disability status.

It is the candidate's responsibility to contact ODS to establish eligibility for accommodations and to notify the Senior Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Success of the potential need for reasonable accommodations, after which the LSU SVM will work collaboratively with ODS to provide reasonable accommodations to facilitate enrollment and participation of qualified individuals with disabilities. These accommodations cannot fundamentally alter the essential program requirements of the curriculum, compromise animal or human safety, lower academic or clinical competency standards, nor can they exclude any elements in the pre-clinical and clinical components deemed essential to the education of a veterinarian. Determinations of reasonable accommodations are individualized, interactive, and documentation-based with the Office of Disability Services.

Accommodations cannot include the use of human intermediaries to aid or alter the candidate's decision making or who directly complete the required competencies for the candidate. Accommodations required by the DVM candidate cannot pose a direct threat to the candidate, patients, clients, or any other individuals involved in the DVM program. The accommodations cannot interfere with or disrupt the educational experiences of other candidates nor create an undue hardship for the LSU SVM. Timely requests are essential, as accommodations may take time to implement and cannot be granted retroactively.

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

Candidates must acknowledge their ability to meet the following technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation. Due to the nature of the DVM program, candidates may not qualify for admission or continued enrollment in the DVM program if the technical standards cannot be met. These standards are in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges.

### **1. Observation**

Candidates must be able to accurately assess an animal's behavior and mentation, as well as observe findings on physical examination and be able to observe demonstrations and

procedures in the basic and clinical sciences. These skills require one's own use of vision, hearing, and touch or the functional equivalent.

Essential functions candidates must be able to perform based upon the minimal experience of a novice veterinary professional student to meet this standard include, but are not limited to:

- Observing gross and microscopic cells, tissues and organisms. (Blood smears, parasites, histopathology, anatomic specimens, etc.)
- Recognizing signs of distress, fear, aggression, or other potentially dangerous behaviors made by a variety of species at a distance and in proximity in rapidly evolving situations. Sense and interpret warning sounds and signs in a clinical environment.
- Assess mentation of a patient.
- Perform a physical exam including assessing the physical appearance and obtaining vital physical information from a patient through observation, palpation, auscultation, and manipulation.
- Interpret graphical images and videos such as radiographs and ultrasounds and interpret physiological recordings via digital or analog recording mechanisms with or without the use of assistive devices. Interpret monitoring devices and treat patients based upon observation both at a distance and in proximity.

## **2. Communication**

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

Essential functions that candidates must be able to perform to meet this standard include, but are not limited to:

- Communicating effectively using verbal, nonverbal, and written methods in a variety of environments including classrooms, laboratories, veterinary clinics, farms and feedlots, specialty practices, and emergency hospitals, even when background noise is present.
- Clearly articulate patient information, instructions, and other pertinent information in high-stress situations and surgical settings (including when wearing surgical masks). This can be achieved either naturally or through assistive devices, using verbal, non-verbal, and written communication where appropriate.

- Use professional and timely written communication to accurately document patient care (e.g. medical records), provide care instructions, and share other essential information with colleagues, the veterinary team, clients, and stakeholders.

### 3. Motor Function

Candidates must possess the physical capacity to perform physical, diagnostic, medical, surgical, and emergency procedures, requiring coordination of both fine and gross motor movements, balance, and equilibrium. These actions must be executed safely and efficiently within a clinically relevant timeframe. They must be able to adhere to universal precautionary measures and meet safety standards applicable to laboratories, inpatient and outpatient settings, and other pre-clinical and clinical activities. They must be able to perform within different work environments (e.g. indoors, barns, field services) and conditions such as extremes of warm and cold temperatures.

Essential functions that candidates must be able to perform to meet this standard include, but are not limited to:

- Fine motor tasks:
  - Palpating pulses and anatomical structures, performing diagnostic procedures (e.g. fine needle aspirate), performing clinical procedures (e.g. catheter placement, cardiopulmonary resuscitation), and handling surgical and anatomical instruments.
- Gross motor tasks:
  - Moving safely, including while handling/restraining/evaluating patients ranging from <1 kg to > 800 kg in confined or open areas, and with tolerance to appropriate standing, sitting, or kneeling for extended periods of time.
  - The ability to perform actions such as, bending, sitting, standing, balancing, carrying, pushing, pulling, crouching, and the effective use of tools and equipment. This includes the ability to transition between these positions or perform them simultaneously, as required in clinical and instructional settings.
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- Physical abilities:
  - Routinely lift animals or objects weighing up to 10 kg to a height of 1 meter without assistance.

- Carrying objects or animals weighing up to 20 kg for distances of at least 2 meters without assistance.
- Sustaining contact with multiple species of animals and the environments in which they are housed and treated. During such contact, the individual must be able to carry out routine medical care on such animals. Medical accommodation will be considered on an individual basis and cannot alter the minimum curriculum requirements.

#### **4. Intellectual-Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative) Abilities**

Candidates must possess sufficient cognitive abilities and effective learning strategies to assimilate large quantities of complex information presented in pre-clinical and clinical curricula. They must comprehend, integrate, conceptualize, evaluate, order, recall, synthesize, communicate, and apply subjective and objective information in a timely manner across a variety of learning modalities including classroom instruction, team-based activities, independent study, and laboratory and clinical procedures. Candidates must also continuously evaluate their knowledge and pursue further learning to advance their professional medical knowledge and competence. They must demonstrate the ability seek appropriate resources to support their learning.

Candidates must demonstrate reading comprehension skills, the ability to follow verbal and written instructions accurately, and the capacity to meet deadlines. These requirements ensure comprehension of curriculum materials, policies, and communications; respect for established procedures and safety requirements; and personal reliability, accountability, and effective time management.

Candidates are expected to accurately perform and report measurements and calculations, interpret spatial and three-dimensional concepts, and understand spatial relationships among structures. They should also be able to recognize logical and sequential relationships among events and formulate, test, and apply hypotheses that enable effective problem solving. Candidates must develop the ability to integrate patient history, physical exam findings, and other diagnostic data to create appropriate diagnostic, treatment, and monitoring plans that can be communicated both verbally and in written format. These intellectual and problem-solving skills must be performed promptly and accurately to ensure patient safety and high-quality care across diverse learning and clinical environments. Candidates must have the capacity to employ various technologies

related to learning and clinical application such as computers, digital resources, and clinical equipment.

## **5. Behavioral and Social Abilities**

Candidates must possess the emotional health and awareness required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities consistent with essential program requirements . This includes the exercise of good judgement, the prompt completion of all pre-clinical activities and responsibilities 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 must be able to fully attend the curriculum, which requires active engagement in educational and clinical activities. They must display flexibility and adaptability and function in a fast-paced, changing environment throughout the curriculum. Candidates must be able to receive, comprehend, and act on informal and formal constructive feedback. Candidates are expected to demonstrate compassion, integrity, concern for others, professionalism, motivation, punctuality and consistent attendance during the education process.

They must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and long hours, to function effectively under stress, and to display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments. They must be capable of regular, reliable, and punctual attendance at classes, labs, and clinical responsibilities. Candidates must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept and provide constructive feedback, and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. It is expected that minimal accommodations will be requested regarding this set of standards.

Examples of the above essential functions include but are not limited to:

Demonstrating professional behavior within the classroom and laboratory setting in both curricula and non-curricula settings including coming prepared, being punctual and avoiding disruptive behaviors.

- Contribute to a positive work and study environment by effectively giving and receiving feedback and take personal responsibility for making positive changes based upon constructive feedback and self-reflection.
- Manage a high caseload while being able to handle the uncertainties and stressors inherent in the veterinary medical profession, including adapting to rapidly changing, fast-paced environments and clinical situations.

- Exercise sound judgement in the diagnosis and care of patients for continuous periods of time which may be longer than 8 hours.
- Provide patient care after-hours and respond to on-call duties promptly with a positive and professional attitude.
- Timely completion of medical records and patient care to meet legal standards/expectations.

## 6. Ethics and Professionalism

Candidates must 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. Candidates must 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 candidate is expected to understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of veterinary medicine and function within these professional standards.

Essential functions candidates must be able to perform to meet this standard include, but are not limited to:

- Maintain professional behavior and appearance in all pre-clinical and clinical activities, official extracurricular activities, and official university and school functions.
  - This includes verbal, non-verbal, or written communications both internally and externally.
- Adhere to the professional and ethical principles and code of conduct of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), LSU Code of Conduct, LSU Vet Med Student and Faculty Code of Ethics, and the Veterinarian's Oath.

By providing my acknowledgement as requested, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the technical standards required of me at Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine. Furthermore, I affirm that I am able to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations. If I am not able to meet the above standards at any time during the program, I understand that it is my responsibility to immediately notify the Office of Admissions and Student Success.