Fitness Evaluation Policy

To Whom This Policy Applies

University of Arizona, College of Medicine – Tucson (UACOMT) Undergraduate Medical Students

Who Needs To Know This Policy

UACOMT undergraduate medical students, faculty, community faculty, staff, and residents/fellows.

Purpose/Background

All UACOMT undergraduate medical students must meet the Technical Standards of the M.D. Program at all stages of the curriculum. Satisfaction of the Technical Standards is an academic requirement.

Fitness for Duty evaluations are used to determine if a student's academic or behavioral performance is/may be affected by impairment that includes but is not limited to: medical, behavioral, or substance abuse issues.

The purpose of the Fitness for Duty evaluation is to determine the student's ability to perform their academic and clinical duties responsibly and safely – meaning that the student is not a danger to patients, colleagues, self, or anyone in the learning environment or university/clinical properties.

Definitions

Fitness for Duty Evaluation: An evaluation to determine the student's ability to perform their academic and clinical duties responsibly and safely.

Impairment: conditions that may affect a student's academic or behavioral performance include, but are not limited to: medical, behavioral, or substance abuse issues.

Technical Standards: A document outlining the essential qualifications for admission and ongoing participation in the MD Program. All accepted candidates to UACOMT are required to sign the Technical Standards as a contingency of their admission to and continued enrollment at UACOMT.

Fitness for Duty Evaluation Determination: Written confirmation by the physician or psychologist who conducted the evaluation that the student does or does not meet the Technical Standards for the MD Program.

Notification: Any and all notifications must be made in writing. Email communication satisfies that requirement.
1. UACOMT may require a Fitness for Duty evaluation when:
   a. UACOMT administration receives a concern that a student’s behavior or performance may threaten the health or safety of the student, patients, instructors, or anyone in the learning environment.
   b. A student’s performance or behavior indicates that a student is or may be struggling to meet the Technical Standards.

2. A student may be assigned to virtual learning during the course of the Fitness for Duty evaluation process. Alternatively, students may be required to stop progress in the curriculum and unable to enroll pending a Fitness for Duty evaluation.

3. Fitness for Duty evaluations must be conducted by an evaluator approved by the UACOMT. Approved evaluators cannot be UACOMT faculty members.

4. The Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs will provide the pertinent information directly to the evaluator(s) selected to perform the Fitness for Duty evaluation.

5. The evaluator will generate a written Fitness for Duty Evaluation Determination addressed to the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs regarding the student's ability to perform the Technical Standards required for the MD Program.
   a. The Evaluation Determination is not required to include specific health information about the student.
   b. If accommodations are required for the student to meet the Technical Standards, the Evaluation Determination will note this fact.

6. If a student requires accommodations to meet the Technical Standards, the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs will refer the student to the Disability Resource Center (DRC).
   a. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the DRC and complete the DRC’s assessment and accommodation process.
   b. If the student failure to contact the DRC within two weeks of the Evaluation Determination, the student will be deemed unable to meet the Technical Standards of the MD Program.

7. A student that cannot meet the Technical Standards will be offered a medical or personal leave of absence when eligible. If a student has exhausted all leave of absence options, the student may withdraw from the MD Program.
   a. Students who are absent from the curriculum for a period of three months without being on an approved leave of absence will be dismissed in accordance with the Grading and Progression Policy and Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal.

8. Ability to meet the Technical Standards of the MD Program is an academic requirement. A student who refuses a Fitness for Duty evaluation will not be
permitted to continue in the curriculum and will be academically dismissed from UACOMT in accordance with the Grading and Progression Policy and Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal.

9. The Fitness for Duty Evaluation Determination and all written records regarding this process will be maintained by the Office of Curricular Affairs.

10. If new or continuing concerns are reported following the initial Evaluation Determination, the UACOMT may require a second evaluation by a new evaluator.

Responsibilities & Procedures

PROCEDURES

1. Any individual with concerns about a student's ability to meet the Technical Standards should be reported to the UACOMT Administration.

2. The Vice Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education will coordinate with the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs regarding the reported concern.

3. If UACOMT administration determines that a Fitness for Duty Evaluation is warranted, the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs will notify the student and meet with the student to discuss the concern.
   a. The Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or Senior Associate Dean of Student will provide the student with the pertinent information, including a copy of the Technical Standards and an outline of the specific concerns to be addressed by the evaluator.
   b. The student will receive a list of approved evaluators. Any cost associated with the evaluation will be borne by the UACOMT.

4. Once the student selects an evaluator to perform the Fitness for Duty evaluation, the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs will provide the pertinent information to the evaluator(s).
   a. The evaluator will generate a written Fitness for Duty Evaluation Determination regarding the student's ability to perform the essential functions outlined in the Technical Standards.
   b. The written Determination does not require the Evaluator to provide specific health information about the student.
   c. If accommodations are required to for the student to meet the Technical Standards, the Evaluation Determination will note this fact.

5. The evaluator will provide the Determination directly to the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and/or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
   a. If the student is deemed to meet the Technical Standards, the student may return to the learning environment.
   b. If the student is deemed not to meet the Technical Standards, the student will receive guidance on available options, including a leave of absence or
withdrawal.