

## **Essential Skills and Abilities Requirements for Admission, Promotion, and Graduation in the Pharmacy Program**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The College of Pharmacy at the University of Manitoba is responsible to society to provide a program of study that ensures graduates have the necessary qualifications (specialized knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours and attitudes) necessary to enter the regulated profession of pharmacy in Canada. Graduates must be able to competently provide pharmaceutical care and apply specialized knowledge and skills as medication therapy experts in a broad range of practice settings. They are also expected to integrate knowledge, skills, and behaviours necessary to fulfill the seven Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada (AFPC) educational outcomes of the First Professional Degree Program in Pharmacy (Care provider, Communicator, Collaborator, Manager, Advocate, Scholar, Professional). It is critical for the College of Pharmacy to ensure its students provide safe and effective healthcare for patients and satisfactorily meet all of the essential functions described below before graduation.

Prospective applicants should be aware that cognitive, physical assessment, management skills, communication skills, and professional behaviours are all evaluated in time-restricted simulations of patient and healthcare professional encounters during the program. Further, in addition to obtaining a pharmacy degree, successful demonstration of these skills and behaviours are also required in the written examination and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) administered by the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) in order to become a registered/licensed pharmacist in Canada. Accordingly, the College of Pharmacy reserves the right to consider a student's ability to meet these requirements as part of the admissions process. By accepting admission and enrolling in the undergraduate program, the pharmacy student confirms that s/he has read these materials and understands the essential functions needed to be successful both in the program and as a health care professional.

A pharmacy student must possess aptitude, abilities, and skills in six critical areas: 1) observation and perception; 2) sensory and motor competencies; 3) conceptualization, integration and quantitative evaluation; 4) communication; 5) ethical, interpersonal, and professional skills; and (6) stamina. Each critical area is described in greater detail below and the syllabus for each course in the program outlines the specific outcomes that must be met. The course coordinator will monitor and maintain these standards in conjunction with the Office of the Dean. Pharmacy students must be able to independently perform the described functions, with or without accommodation, to achieve standing in each course and complete the program. These essential functions are attributes and skills the College of Pharmacy considers necessary for entrance, continuation, and graduation from the University of Manitoba's Pharmacy program. By clearly delineating these essential functions, the College ensures that each graduate will develop the necessary skills to subsequently enter any clinical practice, residency, or fellowship training. Any candidate for the pharmacy degree who cannot attain the required skills and abilities through their course of study may be requested to withdraw from the program.

### **(1) Observation and Perception**

Pharmacy students must be able to participate in learning situations and acquire information through observation and perception by use of senses and mental abilities. A student must participate progressively in patient encounters and acquire information through visual, auditory and somatic sensation.

### **(2) Sensory and Motor Competencies**

Pharmacy students must possess certain sensory and motor skills in order to competently perform the duties of a pharmacist in a timely manner. Adequate vision is essential, and visual requirements include, but are not limited to, reading written and illustrated material including prescriptions and labels; observing demonstrations in the classroom or laboratory including projected material; observing anatomic structures; discriminating numbers and patterns associated with laboratory instruments and tests such as scales and other measuring devices; conducting a physical exam and observing both a patient's physical symptoms and non-verbal cues. Pharmacy students must have sensory and motor function to prepare and dispense pharmaceuticals, including the use of equipment for compounding prescriptions. Pharmacy students must possess sufficient skills to participate in the administration of a medication, including drawing up medication doses from a vial and administering injections. Pharmacy students will be expected to perform and interpret findings from a physical assessment. Pharmacy students must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to participate in the general care and emergency treatment of patients. Pharmacy students must be able to respond promptly to emergencies, including arriving quickly when called, participating in the initiation of appropriate procedures, and rapidly and accurately preparing appropriate emergency medication.

### **(3) Conceptualization, Integration, and Quantitative Evaluation**

Pharmacy students must be able to learn through a variety of means, including individual study, large group didactic and active problem-based learning instruction, small group discussion, team projects, written and verbal presentations, patient care rounds, and utilization of computers and other technology. Pharmacy students must be able to recognize and accurately transcribe numbers, count and measure accurately, and be able to perform accurate and rapid calculations with or without a calculator or computer. Pharmacy students must be able to retain and recall information efficiently but also must possess appropriate judgment of their limits of knowledge in clinical situations. When knowledge is insufficient, pharmacy students must know where to obtain additional information and be able to interpret this information to apply it to patient care. Pharmacy students must be able to obtain critical patient information from patients, caregivers, patient charts, healthcare professionals, or other sources of information, and be able to think critically and apply this information along with calculation and other skills to determine a comprehensive patient care plan in an efficient manner. A patient care plan is a method of delivering pharmaceutical care comprised of identifying the problem, managing and seeking information regarding the solution, providing patient education and counseling, and monitoring and following-up on the selected treatment. Pharmacists are often faced with performing these tasks under

time-sensitive conditions. Given the nature of the working conditions of pharmacy practice, all of these activities must be done under time-restricted conditions.

#### **(4) Communication**

Pharmacy students must be able to communicate effectively with patients and their caregivers as well as other healthcare professionals in a timely manner. Communication includes written, verbal, and nonverbal elements. Communication with patients requires patient friendly language that shows both appropriate compassion and empathy. Pharmacy students must possess the necessary listening skills whilst observing nonverbal cues in order to effectively and efficiently elicit information and provide pharmaceutical care. Pharmacy students must be mindful that some situations must be addressed with care to meet the needs of the patient in a culturally appropriate manner, and referrals to other health care providers must be made as appropriate. Any written information provided to patients must be understandable by the patient. Pharmacy students must be able to ask effective questions of patients in order to make informed decisions and must be able to document and communicate appropriate findings efficiently in oral and written forms with all members of the health care team. Written information must be legible and understandable by others (including avoidance of unapproved abbreviations), and all communication must be done in a professional manner.

#### **(5) Ethical, Interpersonal, and Professional Skills**

A pharmacy student must be able to relate to professors, instructors, colleagues, preceptors, staff, and patients with honesty, integrity, non-discrimination, self-sacrifice, and dedication. Pharmacy students should be able to understand and use the special privileges and trust inherent in the patient relationship for the patient's benefit, and to know and avoid the behaviours that constitute misuse of these privileges. Students in the pharmacy program must interface with patients and healthcare providers regardless of age, gender, race, culture, and other personal life circumstances. Pharmacy students should demonstrate the capacity to examine and reason critically when faced with social and ethical questions that define pharmacy and the pharmacist's role. Pharmacy students must be able to identify personal reactions and responses, recognize multiple points of view, and integrate these aptly into clinical decision-making. When difficult situations or differences of opinions arise, a pharmacy student must be able to conduct himself/herself in a professional manner, regardless of the behaviour of others.

The pharmacy profession requires flexibility that students must demonstrate via appropriate critical thinking, ethical, and emotional stability (including anxiety and stress management) through adapting to various situations. A pharmacy student must be able to utilize knowledge and skills, exercise good judgment, complete patient care responsibilities promptly and accurately, and relate to patients, families, and colleagues with courtesy, compassion, maturity, and respect for their dignity. In the event of deteriorating emotional function, it is essential that a pharmacy student is willing to acknowledge the problem and/or accept professional help before it poses danger to self, patients, and/or colleagues.



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