



## ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES<sup>i</sup> FOR THE ENTRY-TO-PRACTICE PHARMACY PROGRAM<sup>ii</sup>

The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia is responsible to society to provide a program of study so that students graduate with the knowledge, skills, professional behaviours, and attitudes necessary to enter the practice of pharmacy in Canada. Pharmacy is an evolving profession, which in the past was primarily concerned with the safe dispensing of medication. This task is increasingly being managed by pharmacy technicians, while pharmacists assume new roles that take better advantage of their clinical knowledge and skills. Pharmacists are becoming more involved in decision-making about patients' drug therapy and working with patients, caregivers, and other health care professionals to help patients better manage their medications and illnesses. Pharmacists are now prescribing some medications, administering injections, and conducting basic physical assessments of patients (e.g. taking blood glucose readings, and measuring blood pressure, respiration rate, and other vital signs). In order to provide these services, pharmacists need extensive knowledge of drug therapy, clinical reasoning skills, and the communication skills and ethical values necessary to provide effective care to patients.

To provide students with the necessary education to become a pharmacist, the program uses a broad range of teaching techniques (e.g., lectures, labs, tutorials, case discussions, and clerkship placements in community and institutional practice sites) and assessment strategies (e.g., individual and group quizzes; written, oral and practical exams; Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs, which are timed simulations of clinical scenarios); assignments; presentations in class and to the public; group projects; and portfolios). Ultimately, students must be able to manage health problems and provide comprehensive, compassionate care to patients. Thus, students in the Pharmacy program must possess the skills necessary to interview, assess, and counsel patients, and competently complete certain technical procedures in a reasonable time while ensuring safe and effective patient outcomes.

In addition to obtaining a Pharmacy degree, an individual must pass licensure examinations in order to practice pharmacy. Students should be aware that cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, clinical reasoning, physical assessment, pharmacy management skills, communication skills, and professional behaviours are evaluated in written form and in oral, time-limited simulations of patient encounters on these licensing exams.

All students must have the required skills and abilities described in the Technical Standards below. All applicants to the program are expected to review this document to assess their ability to meet these standards. This policy does not preclude individuals with disabilities from entering the Pharmacy program. Students who anticipate requiring disability-related accommodation are responsible for notifying the UBC Access and Diversity, Disability Services Office.

Given the comprehensive, additive, and integrative nature of the curriculum, students are normally expected to complete the Pharmacy program within four years. Students may be granted an extension of time within which to complete the Pharmacy program. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Technical Standards for Students in the Pharmacy Program**

A student in the Pharmacy program must demonstrate the following abilities:

#### **Observation**

A student must be able to participate in learning situations that require skills in observation. In particular, a student must be able to accurately observe a patient and acquire visual, auditory, and tactile information.

#### **Communication**

A student must be able to communicate in written and verbal English. A student must be able to communicate with and observe patients in order to effectively and efficiently elicit information. They must be able to describe appearance, emotional state, mood, activity, gait, and posture and perceive body language and other non-verbal communication. A student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, care-givers, and any member of the health care team. A student must also be able to coherently summarize a patient's condition and therapeutic plan, and be able to document their patient care activities in writing.

#### **Motor**

A student must demonstrate the ability to safely supervise the dispensing of medications, perform a physical assessment as needed, and use technology productively and effectively. These tasks must be done in a timely fashion. More specifically, but not exclusively, a student must be able to demonstrate and/or supervise the appropriate use of common medication delivery devices (e.g. inhalers, eye drops, patches), medical devices (e.g. blood pressure monitor, blood glucose monitor), and mobility aids.

#### **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

A student must demonstrate the cognitive skills and memory necessary to measure, calculate, and reason in order to analyze, integrate, and synthesize information. All of these problem-solving activities must be done in a timely fashion.

#### **Behavioural and Social Attributes**

A student must consistently demonstrate the emotional health required for full utilization of her/his intellectual abilities. The application of good judgment and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the care of patients are necessary. The development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, care-givers and other members of the health care team are also required, irrespective of sex, age, racial or ethnic background, health status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. The student must be able to tolerate the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the program and function effectively under stress. Adaptability to changing environments and the ability to function in the face of

uncertainties that are inherent in the care of patients are both necessary. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, intercultural sensitivity, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are expected.

### **Students with Disabilities**

UBC recognizes its moral and legal duty to provide academic accommodation and is committed to facilitating the integration of students with disabilities into the University community. In accordance with UBC policies<sup>iii</sup>, and the BC Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, each student with a disability is entitled to accommodation that will assist her/him to meet the program's educational standards without compromising those standards. Accommodations will be made to facilitate a student's progress. However, such accommodation cannot compromise patient safety and well-being. Accommodation may require members of the University community to exercise creativity and flexibility in responding to the needs of students with disabilities while maintaining academic and technical standards.

This document acknowledges that central to the success of a student with a disability in completing the Pharmacy program is her/his responsibility to demonstrate self-reliance and to identify needs requiring accommodation in a timely fashion.

### **Time Accommodations**

#### a) Accommodations for Exams

UBC's Access and Diversity office sometimes determines that accommodation for particular disabilities will include extra time to write exams. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis, and typically applies to exams assessing knowledge but not always to exams that simulate clinical practice where real-world time constraints exist and would affect patient care. Extra time does not apply to the in-class participation polls and group quizzes that are used in some Pharmacy courses.

**Written Exams:** Written exams for students with extra time accommodations are normally supervised by staff at the Access and Diversity office. Students are responsible for ensuring that the necessary arrangements are made at least 7 days before the exam date or 7 days before the start of the exam period.<sup>iv</sup>

**Practical and Oral Exams:** The practical and oral exams for students with extra time accommodations are supervised by instructors in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, as these exams require the Faculty's resources, equipment, and expert assessors. Students with extra time accommodations for written exams do not always need extra time for these types of exams, and often opt to do them within the usual time allowed, as these exams are designed to simulate the actual time constraints of practice and of licensing exams. However, the extra time accommodations determined by Access and Diversity can be provided for these exams. This requires considerable planning on the Faculty's part and may require evening or weekend scheduling of these exams, as determined by Faculty, so arrangements must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the scheduled exam.

## b) Accommodations for Clinical Placements

Students with disabilities affecting their stamina for learning at a practice site may be accommodated with reduced time per day (to a minimum of a 6-hour day with additional time for breaks) and/or reduced days per week (to a minimum of four 6-hour (plus breaks) days or three 8-hour (plus breaks) days per week). The minimums have been determined to be appropriate for accommodating students' needs while also providing the necessary opportunities to meet the educational outcomes for clinical placement courses.

Accommodations in the amount of time per day and the number of days per week should be requested in the September prior to the placement (that is, up to a year in advance) so that suitable arrangements with the preceptors and practice sites can be made. Depending on the duration and the scheduling of the course within the curriculum, such accommodations can result in delayed graduation.

### Other Accommodations

Accommodations for students with disabilities may take other forms, such as adjustments in the exam schedule or clinical placements in communities where appropriate access to medical care is available. These types of accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Access and Diversity office.

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<sup>i</sup> This document is adapted with permission from the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM) Policy Document, "Essential Skills and Abilities Required for the Study of Medicine," approved November 2003. In addition to the Ontario schools and faculties of medicine, the University of Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, University of Calgary and University of British Columbia (Faculty of Medicine) have adopted similar policies, based on the aforementioned COFM Policy Document. McMaster University, on its online Admission page, simply refers applicants to the COFM Policy.

<sup>ii</sup> "Entry-to-Practice Pharmacy Program" refers to both the BSc(Pharm) and the Entry-to-Practice PharmD programs.

<sup>iii</sup> Namely, UBC's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment, Policy#3 (<http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2013/08/policy3.pdf>); and Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities, Policy #73 (<http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy73.pdf>).

<sup>iv</sup> See the information on exam accommodations on the Access and Diversity website: <http://www.students.ubc.ca/access/disability-services/instructors-accommodating/exam-accommodations/>