ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED FOR COMPLETION OF THE M.D. DEGREE AT THE KECK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE OF USC

PREAMBLE

The Keck School of Medicine awards the M.D. degree to its students who demonstrate mastery of the requisite general knowledge and basic skills necessary to continue training as interns and residents in order to practice medicine. Essential characteristics and abilities required for completion of the M.D. program consist of certain minimum physical abilities, communication skills, intellectual, conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities, and behavioral and social attributes. A candidate for the M.D. degree, herein referred to as “candidate”, must demonstrate sufficient mental stability to successfully complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of medical training. A candidate must possess sufficient physical and emotional stamina to accomplish the daily activities associated with the rigors of medical education. Graduates are expected to be capable of satisfactorily completing graduate medical education programs, passing licensing exams, and obtaining medical licenses. Consistent with this goal, the University of Southern California (USC) is fully committed to comply with the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Keck School of Medicine of USC does not discriminate against qualified individuals with these essential characteristics and abilities who apply for admission to the M.D. degree program or are enrolled as medical students. Any applicant or student with these essential characteristics and abilities requesting special accommodations based on a disability is required to register and be approved by the Disability Services and Programs (DSP) Office in the Center for Academic Support on the University Park Campus.

The Keck School of Medicine of USC is responsible for the safety of patients with whom candidates will interact. Consideration of patient safety is an essential factor in establishing requirements for physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities for admission, continued enrollment, promotion and graduation. An avowed intention to practice only a narrow part of clinical medicine does not alter the requirement that all students demonstrate full competence in the entire curriculum. Essential characteristics and abilities as described herein are a prerequisite for admission, continued enrollment, promotion and graduation from the Keck School of Medicine. All candidates for the M.D. degree must meet all essential characteristics and abilities as described in this document.

I. PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

After reasonable training and experience, the candidate must be able to observe and participate in demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to dissection of cadavers, and examination of anatomical and microbiological specimens. Observation of gross and microscopic structures and information acquisition require visual, auditory, and somatic sensory functions sufficient to pass examinations.

After reasonable training and experience, the candidate must be capable of performing a complete physical examination, including compassionate observation, palpation, percussion, and auscultation of a patient. The candidate must be capable of using instruments, such as, but not limited to, a stethoscope, an ophthalmoscope, an otoscope, and a sphygmomanometer. The candidate must be capable of performing required clinical procedures such as, but not limited to the following: pelvic examination, digital rectal examination, drawing blood from veins and arteries and giving intravenous injections, basic cardiopulmonary life support, spinal puncture, and obstetrical and surgical procedures. The candidate must be physically capable of performing basic laboratory tests, using a calculator and a computer, reading an EKG, and interpreting common imaging tests. He/she must be able to respond to emergency situations in a timely manner and provide general emergency care such as airway management, placement of intravenous catheters, simple wound repair, and basic obstetrical procedures. The observations and information acquisition discussed in this document require sensory awareness, physical mobility, coordination of both gross and fine motor neuromuscular function, and balance and equilibrium.

II. COMMUNICATION
A candidate must be able to communicate in a respectful and timely manner with all individuals: both within and outside of the USC community. Communication includes speech, writing, nonverbal, and electronic communication. A candidate must possess written and oral English language fluency. He/she must be able to communicate in an effective and sensitive manner with patients, in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal affective and gestural cues. These communication skills also must enable the candidate to obtain a medical history from a wide variety of patients. The candidate must be able to produce written documentation and perform oral presentations of patient cases as required in the clinical rotations, which includes patient history, physical exam and case assessment. Also, the candidate must be able to sufficiently comprehend written materials and oral instructions in the curricular materials, medical records, laboratory reports, and pharmacological prescriptions.

III. INTELLECTUAL-CONCEPTUAL, INTEGRATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ABILITIES

A candidate must have sufficient cognitive (mental) capacity to assimilate the technically detailed and complex information presented in formal lectures and associated teaching materials, small group discussions, medical literature, individual teaching settings and clinical settings. A candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize information across modalities, appreciate three-dimensional spatial relationships among structures and logical sequential relationships among events, and form and test hypotheses in order to enable effective and timely problem-solving in diagnosis and treatment of patients.

IV. BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

A candidate must possess the emotional health, maturity, discipline, and professional attributes necessary for the competent practice of medicine. These include but are not limited to: integrity and ethics, honesty, reliability and dependability, punctuality, flexibility, empathy, cultural competence, conscientiousness, a sense of altruism and a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. The candidate for the M.D. degree must accept responsibility for learning and exercise good judgment in decision making and actions. A candidate must possess self-awareness of limitations, beliefs, and values, capacity for improvement, and must not disrupt or interfere with the learning of others. He/she must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads, function effectively under stress, and demonstrate resilience and adaptability. The candidate must be physically present for all required educational activities including examinations. Candidates must demonstrate a respectful and professional manner in all interactions. Candidates must be willing and able to interact with and care for all individuals of the community, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, or any other protected status identified by the University’s Non-Discrimination Policy.

V. SAFETY

The Keck School of Medicine of USC has the responsibility to consider the safety and welfare of patients and others. Should a candidate for the M.D. degree have a condition or exhibit behavior that places patients or others at risk, that condition may be the basis for denial of admission or dismissal from the school. Students must be able to comply with all requirements to work in a clinical environment and with hazardous materials.

VI. DEMONSTRATION OF ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ABILITIES

All students entering and continuing in the Keck School of Medicine of USC must demonstrate they possess all of the “Essential Characteristics and Abilities”, with reasonable accommodation if necessary, and each student will be expected to certify that he/she meets these standards. At its sole discretion, the Keck School of Medicine of USC can require that a candidate for the M.D. degree undergo an evaluation to determine whether these essential characteristics and abilities can be met.

Applicants and students should contact Disability Services and Programs (DSP) in the Center for Academic Support on the University Park Campus if they have questions as to what accommodations are
reasonable. As soon as a student is aware of the need for an accommodation, the student shall register with DSP. Students who fail in a timely manner to register with DSP or provide necessary documentation may not receive accommodations. DSP shall work with students who request accommodations to make recommendations to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs concerning reasonable accommodations.

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs shall be responsible for administering this policy and determining whether a reasonable accommodation can be provided without compromising the School's academic standards and its determination that the candidate possesses the Essential Characteristics and Abilities.

Do you possess these essential characteristics and abilities? YES_____ NO_____

If not, please explain in the space provided (use additional space if necessary).

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By signing my full legal name and USC ID below, I hereby certify that I have read, understand and agree to the Essential Characteristics and Abilities Required for the Completion of the MD degree at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Non-compliance may lead to corrective action up to and including termination from the program.

Full Legal Name _____________________________________________________________

USC ID Number __________________________________________ Date ________________