



Essential Functions Policy for the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program For Admissions, Continuation, and Graduation and Disability Accommodation

Effective April 2001; updated April 2019

- I. Purpose: The College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CVMBS) at Colorado State University (CSU) is committed to training competent, caring veterinarians through a quality doctor of veterinary medicine (DVM) education. To ensure the CVMBS also meets its ethical responsibility to society to protect the welfare of veterinary patients, the health of the human public, as well as careful and individual attention to the needs of each candidate for the DVM degree, the faculty has established a list of functions essential to the successful completion of these goals.

The CVMBS recognizes the DVM degree as a broad, undifferentiated degree requiring the acquisition of general knowledge and basic skills performed in a reasonably independent and autonomous manner in all fields of veterinary medicine. The education of a veterinarian requires the assimilation of knowledge, the discipline of life-long learning, the acquisition of skills, and the development of critical judgment in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in veterinary practice.

Colorado State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status or disability. The University complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, related Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veteran's readjustment Act of 1974, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, and all civil rights laws of the state of Colorado. Accordingly, reasonable accommodations may be made to facilitate the progress of otherwise qualified candidates with a disability, where such accommodations do not require fundamental alteration of the nature of the program, significantly lower or effect substantial modifications of standards, or create significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of others.

II. Policy

- A. Identification of essential functions: The CVMBS has an ethical responsibility to train DVM students to protect the safety, health and welfare of pets and production animals both before and after graduation, and to promote public health. The CVMBS faculty retains the discretion and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students; the design, implementation and evaluation of its curriculum; evaluation of students; and the final determination of granting a DVM degree. Desirable characteristics of a veterinary graduate are based not only on satisfactory academic achievement, but also on non-academic factors that serve to ensure that the student can fulfill the essential functions of the

academic programs required for graduation, which include, but are not limited to the following functions.

1. Observational skills: Veterinary students must be able to master the acquisition of information from a variety of sources. This information will be presented in a variety of learning formats, including, but not limited to: written texts, journal articles and reference materials; colloquia and demonstrations in the basic sciences; physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations on computers; observation of microbiologic cultures and microscopic slides; gross studies of animal tissues in normal and pathologic states. Beyond the observational skills necessary to acquire information, candidates must possess certain observational skills in assessing the patient. Veterinary students must be able to evaluate a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand, including the use of visual, auditory and somatic sensations, which may be enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities. Veterinary students must also be able to observe and interpret written and graphic information, e.g., radiographic, scintigraphic, and ultrasound imaging studies, electrocardiograms, and endoscopic examinations.

If, for any reason a veterinary student's ability to observe or acquire information through the above-mentioned sensory modalities is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate the ability to obtain the required information, whether related to basic or clinical sciences, by alternative means.

2. Communication skills: Veterinary students must be able to communicate professionally, effectively and sensitively utilizing verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills with patients, their owners and all members of the health care team using traditional or alternative means in a timely fashion. Veterinary students must be able to create and comprehend written material such as medical records, laboratory reports and pharmacologic prescriptions, and must possess adequate interpersonal skills, empathy towards others, and willingness to interact cooperatively in all professional environments.
3. Motor skills: Veterinary students must have sufficient motor skills to carry out all necessary procedures involved in the learning of the basic and clinical sciences as well as those required in the hospital and clinical environment in an independent and autonomous manner. These include, but are not limited to, physical examinations and surgical, clinical, laboratory and other technical procedures required for learning, diagnosis and treatment. Veterinary students must possess the motor skills necessary to perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers to complete basic and specialized portions of the physical examination of a patient. Veterinary students are expected to execute movement and assume reasonable body postures required to provide general diagnosis and treatment of patients, as well as emergency medical care such as, but not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, securing an airway, and administration

of medication.

4. Intellectual/Conceptual abilities: Veterinary students must have sufficient cognitive capabilities to assimilate the technically detailed and complex information presented in textbooks, journals and other written reference materials, colloquia, tutorials, individual teaching sessions and clinical settings. Further, students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, recall and synthesize information across various modalities and form and test hypotheses. In addition, veterinary students should be able to comprehend the three-dimensional relationships and understand spatial relationships of structure. Problem solving, the critical and essential skill demanded of veterinarians, requires all of these intellectual abilities, which must be performed in a timely fashion.
5. Behavioral and social attributes: Veterinary students must possess the emotional maturity required for full utilization of intellectual abilities, and to exercise good judgment in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Required skills include the ability to function in stressful and demanding environments, including clinical, laboratory and classroom environments, and demonstration of the flexibility to cope with changing situations and the ambiguity inherent in veterinary medical problem solving.

Veterinary students must demonstrate compassion, honesty, integrity, concern and respect for others. In addition to possessing an intrinsic desire for excellence, they must possess tolerance for and acceptance of difference, and show interest and motivation to become an effective veterinarian.

Veterinary students must understand and accept their role as medical professionals within their communities.

Should a student have a permanent physical or psychological condition that prevents him/her from successfully participating in their classroom responsibilities or their clinical duties even after RDS-recommended and associate dean-approved accommodations are implemented, there may be a basis for denial of matriculation or for dismissal.

- B. Non-discrimination: In accordance with CSU's *Equal Access and Non-discrimination Policies*, the CVMBS is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and affirmative action, and, as such, ascribes to a policy of non-discrimination. This includes admission and access to and participation in CVMBS programs, activities and services. The CVMBS strives to promote full realization of equal opportunity through a positive, continuing compliance with applicable law.

Information regarding CVMBS equal opportunity policies, affirmative action plan, or CSU complaint procedures is available through the Office of the Dean.

- C. Accommodations: The CVMBS recognizes its obligation and opportunity to provide overall program access for persons with disabilities. The CVMBS also

has the responsibility to promote the health and safety of students, veterinary patients and owners, and attendant health care professionals. If a student has a condition that would place patients or others at significant risk of substantial harm to their health and safety, that cannot be sufficiently mitigated through reasonable accommodations, the student may not be considered otherwise qualified to meet the essential functions and academic requirements of the program. This may result in denial of matriculation or dismissal from the program. However, diligent and thoughtful effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodations to support the progress of a disabled student. Such reasonable accommodations may not result in a fundamental alteration of the nature of the program, significantly lower or affect substantial modifications of academic standards, or create significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of others.

III. Procedure

A. Responsibilities

1. Implementation of policy: Responsibility for the implementation and application of this Policy and Procedure rests with the Associate Dean of Veterinary Academic and Student Affairs. Any questions regarding the Policy or Procedure shall be directed to the Office of the Dean.
2. Certification: In compliance with federal non-discrimination law, The CSU Office of Resources for Disabled Students (RDS) and University Counseling Center (UCC) are responsible for certifying students with disabilities to academic and other campus units with documentation thereof in restricted securement at the CSU RDS.
3. Requesting accommodations: The ‘DVM Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities’ policy may be found at <http://csu-cvmbs.colostate.edu/Documents/dvm-policy-disability.pdf>.

B. CSU policy dissemination and program accessibility:

The CSU *Equal Access and Non-discrimination Policies*, which cover academic matters such as student recruitment, admission, participation and services, is available on the RDS website (<http://rds.colostate.edu/university-commitment>).

C. CVMBS *Essential Functions Policy* dissemination and program accessibility:

1. Each DVM student will receive a copy of this policy along with his/her acceptance letter, and will be asked to sign an *Acceptance and Notification of Essential Functions Form* (Appendix), acknowledging its receipt.
2. The CVMBS Office of the Dean will maintain copies of the policy, and the policy will be posted on the DVM Student Resources web page: <http://csu-cvmbs.colostate.edu/dvm-program/Pages/dvm-student-resources.aspx>.

- D. Assessment/identification of disability: All DVM applicants and students will be assessed by the same academic and professional criteria for admission, promotion, retention, and graduation. The school may require, at the appropriate time, that an applicant or student undergo evaluation for the purpose of determining whether he/she is able to meet the essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation.
1. Applicants: During the admissions process, qualified candidates will be considered without regard to their (dis)ability status by the Admissions Committee. After acceptance, all matriculates will be required to sign the *Acceptance and Notification of Essential Functions Form* to indicate that they have read and understood their responsibility for meeting the essential functions as outlined. This signed form becomes a permanent part of the record of all matriculating DVM students. If a matriculate does not sign this form, he/she will be subject to academic dismissal. An appeal for readmission under these circumstances shall be in the form of a letter addressed to the Dean of the College documenting any extenuating circumstances that should be taken into consideration during the review of the case.
 2. Students: Disabilities occurring after matriculation will be managed on an individual basis by the DVM Curriculum Committee in a manner consistent with the *Essential Functions Policy* to best meet the needs of the student and the CVMBS.

The CSU CVMBS wishes to acknowledge the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawai'i for their assistance in the preparation of this Policy.

ACCEPTANCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the *Essential Functions Policy for the Professional Veterinary Medical Program for Admissions, Continuation, and Graduation and Disability Accommodation*. I have had an opportunity to review the representations set forth therein, and seek such counsel as I may deem necessary. Further, I understand the *Policy* and what may be expected of me as a student in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program.

Print name

Signature

CSUID (**not** your SS#)

Date