

SKILLS & ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Infection Control

Infection control is critical to dental practice. Clinical faculty, staff, and students must know and be able to apply effective infection control procedures to prevent cross-contamination of themselves, their patients and other dental personnel.

All patients and health care workers may be exposed to a variety of microorganisms via blood or oral or respiratory secretions. These microorganisms may include viruses and bacteria that colonize or infect the oral cavity and respiratory tract. These organisms can be transmitted in dental settings through:

- Direct contact with blood, oral fluids, or other patient materials;
- Indirect contact with contaminated objects (e.g., instruments, equipment, or environmental surfaces);
- Contact of conjunctival, nasal, or oral mucosa with droplets, splatter or aerosols containing microorganisms generated from an infected person and propelled a short distance (e.g., by coughing, sneezing, or talking); and
- Inhalation of airborne microorganisms that can remain suspended in the air for long periods.

Communication

Students must be able to communicate effectively with peers, staff, faculty, patients and patient family members, and other members of the health care team. Communication requires the ability to assess all information provided by the patient, including non-verbal responses, within safety-related time frames. Students must be able to communicate in oral and written format that is succinct, organized and complete. These communications will include assessments, prescriptions and dental record notes. Students must be able to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, emotional and societal issues.

Sensory and Psychomotor Skills

Students must be able to gather patient information needed for a diagnosis through adequate visual, tactile, olfactory and auditory senses. Students must have sufficient physical abilities and stamina to provide dental care and respond to emergency situations. Students must have the manual dexterity to execute the gross and fine motor movements required to provide dental care for their patients.

Cognitive Abilities

Students must have the cognitive abilities to master the dental curriculum, including the basic, behavioral and clinical sciences. Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate and apply information. In addition, students must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships required to provide

dental care. Students must be able to demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills required in the practice of dentistry.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must be able to demonstrate professional behavior and function with integrity and responsibility while maintaining high ethical standards. In addition, they must be able to demonstrate the ability to be compassionate, empathetic and tolerant. Students must be able to interact in a collegial manner and demonstrate the ability to participate in teamwork. Students must possess the emotional health required to use their intellectual abilities fully, such as exercising good judgment, promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and developing mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients.

Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, respond appropriately to unpredictable circumstances, and display flexibility.

Chronic Conditions

Students must not have any chronic or recurrent conditions — such as infectious, psychiatric or substance abuse problems — that would interfere with providing quality patient care and safety, or that are not compatible with dental practice or training.