

Technical Standards of the Veterinary Technology Program

The field of veterinary technology is both **intellectually** and **physically** challenging. All students must meet the following standards to successfully complete courses in the Veterinary Technology Program.

These requirements are necessary to protect the students, other veterinary personnel, clients, and patients. They include performing clinical essential skills set forth by the American Veterinary Medical Association-Committee of Veterinary Technician Education Activities (AVMA-CVTEA) accrediting body and technical standards required by the Veterinary Technology Program and the veterinary profession.

Technical Standards refer to criteria that go beyond academic requirements and are fundamental and essential to meeting the program's academic requirements. To fulfill the educational experiences and training at the Veterinary Technology Program, students must be able to perform specific behavioral (mental, emotional, social), physical and cognitive/intellectual standards. These standards and expectations represent the minimum requirements for the satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum.

The UPR/MSC/SHP-Veterinary Technology Program acknowledges the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act and at the same time affirms that technical standards and attributes must be present in all prospective candidates to the Veterinary Technology Program. **Students with or without disabilities applying to the Program will be expected to have met the same requirements and will be held to the same fundamental standards.** Every reasonable attempt will be made to facilitate the progress of students where it does not compromise the Veterinary Technology Program standards or interfere with the rights of other students. UPR/MSC abides by all state and federal nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements.

All candidates for the Veterinary Technology Program must possess essential skills, abilities and aptitudes necessary to complete the program curriculum successfully in seven major areas:

1. General Physical Requirements

Students must:

- Possess the physical ability to
 - ✓ tolerate walking and standing for at least ten minutes at a time, multiple times per hour.
 - ✓ lift and/or carry up to 50 pounds from the floor to waist level or higher at least several times per day
 - ✓ lift objects weighing up to 50 pounds to a height of one meter or higher and carry the object or animal for a distance of two meters without assistance.
 - ✓ use hands and arms to handle, install, position, and move materials, equipment, and supplies without assistance.
 - ✓ handle, position, and restrain live animals of small and large animal species.
- Be able to have sustained contact with multiple species of animals and be amenable to learning the safe handling, restraining, and working with these animals. An individual should not be

allergic to any species of animals to the extent that would prohibit working in a facility that has them.

2. Cognitive Ability

Candidates must be able to demonstrate conceptual, intellectual, and integrative abilities necessary for clinical and ethical reasoning, critical thinking and problem solving.

Students must:

- Be able to function in a structured environment within significant time constraints and capable of making rapid decisions in urgent situations and meeting deadlines.
- Possess a willingness to assist with and perform a wide variety of routine medical, surgical, and diagnostic procedures common to the veterinary setting; including humane euthanasia and handling of sick, injured, fractious, or aggressive animals without fear
- Be able to complete required tasks/functions under stressful and/or unpredictable conditions, including emergency situations.
- Be able to access information from books, reference manuals, computers, and paper and electronic medical documents to perform duties and safely use equipment without assistance.
- Be able to prioritize, organize, and utilize time-management skills to perform tasks.
- Evaluate, synthesize and communicate diagnostic information to the attending veterinarian and/or staff.
- Be able to progress toward minimal supervision as they advance through the program.

3. Communication Skills

Candidates must be able to quickly, clearly, effectively and efficiently communicate and elicit information in both English and Spanish.

Students must:

- Read, write, speak and report accurately and effectively in Spanish.
- Read and write accurately and effectively in English.
- Comprehend and carry out complex written and oral instructions given in Spanish and also in English.
- Be able, when communicating with other individuals by speech, either in person or by telephone, to make legible and coherent written notes in Spanish and in English within the margins and space provided on the appropriate forms.

4. Professionalism and Interpersonal Skills

Candidates must be able to develop, and maintain, mature, sensitive, effective and professional relationships with clients, members of the veterinary community and health care teams.

Students must:

- Demonstrate professional and socially appropriate behavior; maintain cleanliness and personal grooming consistent with close human and animal contact.
- Be able to interact appropriately with clients and all members of the veterinary healthcare team.
- Have the ability to exercise good judgment and make appropriate professional and procedural judgment decisions under stressful and/or emergency conditions (i.e. unstable patient condition), emergent demands (i.e. stat test orders), and a distracting environment (i.e., high noise levels, complex visual stimuli, aggressive animals).
- Show up for required experiences on time and prepared; hand in assignments on time.

- Maintain a professional demeanor on service, and be able to function at a high level in the face of personal fatigue, dissatisfied clients, tired colleagues and large workloads.
- Possess adequate endurance to tolerate physically, emotionally and mentally demanding workloads; to function effectively under stress, and proactively make use of available resources to help maintain both physical and mental health.
- Be able to work for extended periods, occasionally with rotating shifts, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.
- Take responsibility for themselves and their behaviors.
- Develop successful working relationships with preceptors, staff and peers by accepting constructive feedback, suggestions and criticism and if necessary, with open-mindedness and the intention to improve and modify behavior, if necessary.

5. Manual Dexterity and Mobility

Candidates must have adequate proprioceptive senses (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis and vibratory) as well as the ability to manipulate with precision, at a fine level of movement, patients, medical instruments and equipment.

Students must:

- Be able to move his/her entire body a distance of no less than three meters within two seconds of a signal to do so, to move rapidly from danger while handling animals in confined spaces.
- Possess fine motor movements in order to perform the *essential functions* of the profession. This includes the dexterity to manipulate small equipment, adjust resistance on equipment, hold hooves while cleaning and evaluating, manage syringes, catheters, and common surgical instruments.
- Possess tactile ability necessary for physical assessment and to perform nursing duties in a timely manner. This includes performing palpation during physical exams, administering oral, intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intravenous medication, insert and remove tubes, collect organic samples from live animals and perform wound care.
- Possess the ability to palpate and interpret findings, i.e. palpation of pulses, lymph nodes or trachea to determine proper endotracheal tube size.
- Be able to hold surgical instruments in one hand and perform fine movements with such instruments. This includes ability to assist in holding of hemostats or other instruments while assisting in surgery; induce and monitor general anesthesia in an animal patient; place intravenous and urinary catheters without assistance.
- Be able to hold, manipulate, or tie materials ranging from a cloth patch to a very fine string. This includes the ability to hold and manipulate a surgical sponge; tie a 3-0 silk suture; endotracheal intubation; intravenous injection; catheterize animals to obtain sample of urine and/or other body fluids; apply bandages without assistance.

6. Sensory (Auditory, Olfactory, and Visual Skills)

Candidates must have functional use of senses to safely and correctly assess patients and interpret and record data.

Students must:

- Possess adequate visual ability, with or without correction, that allows the determination of minute areas of detail, very small variations in color and adequate depth perception (size, shape and texture), including differentiation of details as viewed through a microscope. This includes ability to characterize and interpret the color, odor, clarity, and viscosity of body structures and fluids, observe variations in skin and mucus membrane color, integrity, pulsations, tissue swelling, etc.

- Possess visual ability to allow for observation and assessment as necessary in nursing care both from a distance and close by in order to recognize physical status and non-verbal responses including behaviors.
- Possess auditory ability necessary to monitor and assess health status, including auscultation of heart and lungs, and hear equipment alarms and warning sounds from animals, humans, and/or equipment of impending danger or injury.
- Recognize and respond appropriately to distress sounds from animal and alarms/warning signals on animal-monitoring equipment directly and through intercommunication systems to ensure patient safety.
- Detect and respond appropriately to odors in order to maintain environmental safety and patient needs.
- Be able to use a compound microscope to identify cells and organisms and be able to differentiate colors of stained objects.
- Be able to observe movement at a distance ranging from 30-45 centimeters to 15-20 meters at a discrimination level that permits detection of subtle differences in movement of the limbs in animals. This includes ability to detect and describe a change in color of hair coat caused by licking or trauma; detect abnormal head posture in a parakeet; monitoring respiratory rate during anesthesia; ability to read anesthesia monitoring equipment.
- Be able to discriminate shades of black and white patterns in which the band is not more than 0.5 mm in width. This includes ability to characterize bacterial hemolysis on a blood agar plate; density patterns on a radiograph; and ability to see ECG tracing.
- Possess adequate depth perception to allow detection of a 0.5 cm elevation which is no more than 1cm in diameter on a slightly curved surface having a slightly irregular surface. This includes detection of tissue swelling on the hip on a smooth-haired dog; determining presence of reaction to skin testing for allergies.
- Be able to perceive the natural or amplified human voice without lip reading to permit oral communication in a surgery room with all occupants wearing surgical masks.
- Be able to perceive the origin of sound as needed to detect movement of large animals in a pen or corral; monitoring multiple patients in an ICU.

7. Safety and Biosecurity

Candidate must be able to adhere to established safety, infection control, and biosecurity protocols to protect themselves, patients, clients, faculty, staff, and the public while participating in educational and clinical activities.

- Rabies Prevention Requirements: Students must comply with the program's rabies prevention policies, which may include completion of a pre-exposure rabies vaccination series or adherence to an approved institutional rabies risk mitigation protocol before participating in activities involving live animals.
- Animal Handling Restrictions: Students who are not vaccinated against rabies and are participating under an approved rabies risk mitigation protocol must comply with all restrictions established by the program. These restrictions may limit contact with animals whose rabies vaccination status or exposure history cannot be verified.
- Occupational Health and Safety Compliance: Students must demonstrate the ability to follow safe handling procedures, use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), recognize potential hazards, and implement measures designed to reduce the risk of injury, zoonotic disease transmission, and exposure to hazardous materials.
- Professional Responsibility: Students must exercise sound judgment and maintain situational awareness when working with animals, biological specimens, chemicals, medications, and clinical equipment in accordance with program, institutional, and clinical site policies.

8. Allergy and/or fear

Candidates must be able to have sustained contact with multiple species of animals and the environments in which they are housed and treated. During such contact, the individual must be able to carry out routine medical care on such animals.

- Students who are allergic to cats, dogs, rabbits, birds, horses, cows, sheep, pigs, or hay must have written permission from their physician regarding their physical ability to interact safely with the allergens that these present.
- Students who have a phobia of certain species must acknowledge that they will be required to interact with all species of animals.

Candidates must be able to perform all of the above skills within specific timeframes appropriate for academic and clinical settings, in a complete and timely fashion. All students must be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner, with or without recommended accommodation for documented disabilities.

All applicants will be asked to review these standards and to sign a form certifying they have read, understand and are able to meet all the Technical Standards of the Program.

Any applicant who has a question about whether he or she can meet these standards and expectations is strongly recommended to contact the Veterinary Technology Program (Office A-1060 Tel 787-758-2525 Ext 1022)

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