The mission of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, College of Dentistry is to improve human oral health through education, research, and public service. To fulfill this mission one of the primary goals of the College is to educate and graduate dental health professionals and scientists who are professionally competent and in whom high ethical standards have been instilled. The course or instruction at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, College of Dentistry inculcates the importance of life-long learning for the dental health care professional through pre-doctoral dental education, postdoctoral dental education and continuing dental education.

As a primarily surgical specialty, defined by general anatomical boundaries, the practice of dentistry has unique requirements in that the accumulation of scientific knowledge must be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of essential surgical skills, technical functions, and professional attitudes and behaviors. Such requirements are requisite to the provision of safe and effective medical and surgical treatment of the hard and soft tissue of the oral cavity and adjacent anatomical areas, including the teeth, jaws, and surrounding soft tissue.

The faculty of the College of Dentistry has a responsibility to graduate the best possible dental health professionals; thus admission to educational programs in the College of Dentistry is offered only to those who present the highest qualifications for education and training in the art and science of dentistry.

Applicants to programs of the College of Dentistry must possess the following general qualities: critical thinking, sound judgment, emotional stability and maturity, empathy, physical and mental stamina. Applicant must possess the ability to acquire knowledge, surgical skills and technical functions and use such knowledge, skills, and functions in a wide variety of didactic, laboratory, and clinical settings at an acceptable level of competency, as defined by the college.
The faculty of the College of Dentistry has a responsibility for the welfare of the patients treated under the aegis of the College and to the educational welfare of its students relative to the educational programs of the college. The Committee on Admissions of the College of Dentistry maintains that certain minimal technical standards must be present in applicants to the various educational programs of the college. A candidate for the Doctor of Dental Surgery degree, as well as dentists in the various advanced education programs of the college, must have the following essentials: motor skills’ sensory/observational skills; communication skills; intellectual-conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities; behavioral/social skills and professionalism.

Motor Skills

Candidates for admissions to programs of the College of Dentistry must have sufficient motor function to perform and participate in didactic, preclinical technique, laboratory, and clinical procedures and exercises at an acceptable level of competency, as defined by the college. At a minimum, this includes coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and touch. Candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must have manual dexterity, including full functioning wrists, hands, fingers and arms.

Sensory/Observational Skills

Candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must have sufficient sensory/observational skills to perform and participate in didactic, preclinical technique, laboratory, and clinical procedures and exercises at an acceptable level of competency, as defined by the college. At a minimum, this includes the ability to participate in didactic, preclinical technique and laboratory exercises and interact with patients in terms of observation and data gathering. Candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must have the functional use of visual and other surgery modalities.

Communication Skills

Candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must have sufficient communication skills to perform and participate in didactic, preclinical technique, laboratory, and clinical procedures at an acceptable level of competency, as defined by the college. At a minimum, this includes the ability to communicate effectively in written and spoken English in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings.
Intellectual/Conceptual, Integrative and Qualitative Skills

Candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must have sufficient intellectual/conceptual, integrative, and qualitative skills to perform didactic, preclinical technique, laboratory, and clinical procedures and exercises at an acceptable level of competency, as defined by the college. At a minimum, this includes the ability to manage data, problem solve, and make rational decisions regarding patient care in a timely manner.

Behavioral/Social Skills and Professionalism

Candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must have sufficient behavioral/social skills and professionalism to perform didactic, preclinical technique, laboratory, and clinical procedures at an acceptable level of competency, as defined by the college. At a minimum, this includes the attributes of integrity, empathy, communication, and motivation, in addition to emotional maturity and stability, sound judgment, punctuality, and interpersonal skills. For this reason, candidates for admission to programs of the College of Dentistry must be adaptable, able to cope with stress, assertive, able to delegate responsibilities, meet deadlines and manage time, and function as part of a dental health care team.

Summary

In summary, the faculty of the College of Dentistry prepares students to assume their responsibilities as dental health care professionals. The Committee on Admissions in the College of Dentistry, in accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (PL101-336), has established the aforementioned essential functions of students in educational programs offered by the College of Dentistry.
The Committee on Admissions of the College of Dentistry will consider for admissions applicants who demonstrate the ability to perform or to learn to perform, the essential skills listed in this document. The College must strive to see that students or dentists with impaired intellectual, physical, or emotional functions do not place patients in jeopardy. Students will be judged not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the College’s curriculum and to graduate as skilled and effective dental health care professionals.

Upon admission, a student who discloses a properly certified disability will receive reasonable accommodation but must be able to perform the essential functions of the curriculum, as described in this document, either with or without reasonable accommodation. Students seeking accommodation should initiate their request in the Office of Academic Affairs of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, College of Dentistry.