Professional & Technical Standards for the Doctor of Pharmacy Program

California Northstate University College of Pharmacy (CNUCOP) endeavors to select applicants who have the ability to become highly competent pharmacists. The college adheres to the guidelines promulgated by the American Council for Pharmacy Education in its “Guidelines for Accreditation Standards. Within these guidelines, the college has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of its curriculum; the evaluation of students; and the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory academic achievement, but also on non-academic factors that serve to insure that the candidate can complete the essential functions of the academic program required for graduation.

The professional and technical standards, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, and the development of professional attributes required by the faculty of all students at graduation. The essential abilities required by the curriculum are in the following areas: Motor, sensory, verbal and written communication, intellectual (conceptual, integrative, and qualitative abilities for problem solving and decision-making), and the behavioral and social aspects for the performance of the profession of pharmacy.

Pharmacy is a physically and mentally demanding profession in which practitioners are asked to place the interests of their patients above their own which requires commitment to a life of service and dedication to continuous learning. The rigorous four year pharmacy school curriculum is where candidates begin to develop the qualities necessary for the practice of pharmacy. It is during this period of professional pharmacy education that the candidate acquires the foundation of knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviors that he or she will need throughout his or her professional career. The abilities that pharmacists must possess to practice safely are reflected in the technical standards that follow. Candidates to the CNUCOP program must be able to meet these standards.

a. Visual
Candidates must be able to observe and participate in experiments in the basic sciences. (For example, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues). In order to make proper clinical decisions, candidates must be able to observe a patient accurately. Candidates must be able to acquire information from written documents, films, slides or videos. Thus, functional use of vision is necessary (close and at a distance).

b. Oral-Auditory
Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively and rapidly with patients (must be able to speak and hear) and members of the health care team (both verbal and written). Candidates must be fluent in English. In emergency situations candidates must be able to understand and convey information essential for the safe and effective care of patients in a clear unambiguous and rapid fashion. In addition, candidates must have all the ability to relate information to and receive from patients in caring and confidential manner.

c. Motor
Candidates must possess the motor skills necessary to perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers. Motor skill demands require reasonable endurance, strength, and precision. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients as well as complete the CPR and First Aid component of the program. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of senses, of touch, and vision.

d. Sensory
Candidates need enhanced sensory skills including accuracy within specific tolerances and functional use for laboratory, classroom, and clinical experiences. Students who are otherwise qualified but who have significant tactile sensory or productive disabilities must be evaluated medically. These disabilities included individuals who were injured by significant burns, have sensory motor deficits, or cicatrix formation.

e. Strength and Mobility
Candidates must have sufficient posture, balance, flexibility, mobility, strength and endurance for standing, sitting, and participating in the laboratory, classroom and clinical sites.

f. Cognitive
In order to effectively solve clinical problems, candidates must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize in a timely fashion. In addition, they must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of others.

g. Social
Candidates must possess the emotional health required for the full utilization of their intellectual
abilities, the exercise of good judgment for the prompt completion of all responsibilities, and for the development of effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients.

The unpredictable needs of patients are at the heart of becoming a pharmacist. Academic and clinical responsibilities of students must require their presence during day and evening hours.

Students will be judged not only for their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the school’s curriculum, and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners of pharmacy.

h. Professional

Candidates must demonstrate the judgment and emotional stability required for full use of their intellectual abilities. Possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the College of Pharmacy curriculum and prepare to enter the profession of pharmacy.

Candidates must: exercise good judgment in the treatment of patients; function within both the law and ethical standards of a healthcare professional; be able to work effectively and professionally as part of a team during the pharmacy curriculum and as a member of a health care team after graduation.

Candidates must be able to participate in a culturally diverse classroom and practice environments; be sensitive and behave in a professional manner during interactions with patients, their families, and health care personnel; maintain regular, reliable, and punctual attendance for classes, experiential education and clinical responsibilities; and be responsible for contributing to collaborative, constructive learning environments, accept constructive feedback from others, and respond with appropriate modification in a professional manner.