



Virtua Health College  
of Medicine & Life Sciences  
of Rowan University

**Accessibility Services**  
**Information For**  
**Accommodations**

All documents should be returned to:  
Jacqueline Giacobbe, MS.Ed, MA  
Assistant Dean, Academic Services  
One Medical Center Drive, Suite 210  
PO Box 1011  
Stratford, NJ 08084  
[giacobja@rowan.edu](mailto:giacobja@rowan.edu)

Please allow up to 10 business days for review by the SOM Office of Academic Affairs. A staff accessibility services professional will contact you to schedule a meeting.

# **Rowan-Virtua SOM Technical Standards for Admissions, Matriculation, Promotion and Graduation**

## **Technical Standards for Admissions, Matriculation, Promotion and Graduation**

The Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine is committed to selecting candidates who can satisfy the academic and performative standards, meet the technical standards, and are well prepared for residency and licensure. We are also dedicated to fostering an inclusive, accessible environment, ensuring all students have equal access to necessary resources for success.

Because the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree signifies that the holder of such a degree is prepared for entry into the practice of medicine within postgraduate training programs, it follows that graduates must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. In order to carry out the activities described below, candidates for the D.O. degree must be able to consistently, quickly and accurately integrate all information received, and have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

A candidate for the D.O. degree must have these technical skills, including: observation, communication, motor, conceptualization, integrative and quantitative, and behavioral and social. Accommodation is available to assist with a variety of disabilities. Under all circumstances, a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. Therefore, ordinarily, the use of an intermediary in the clinical setting is not permitted.

A student whose behavior or performance raises questions concerning his or her ability to fulfill the technical standards may be required to obtain evaluation and/or testing by a health care provider designated by the School, and to provide the results to the campus Student Health Service for the purpose of determining whether the student is fit to pursue the educational program. If the student is deemed fit to pursue the program, the School reserves the right to require actions recommended by the health care provider.

### **Observation**

Candidates and students must have sufficient vision to be able to observe demonstrations, experiments, and laboratory exercises in the basic sciences. This will require the candidate to observe material at a distance and close-at-hand (such as overhead projections and slides) and organisms and structures through a microscope. Candidates and students will be required to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close-at-hand and to interpret radiographs and other graphic images and digital or analog representations of physiological phenomena (such as EKG's). Consistent with being able to assess asymmetry, range of motion, and tissue texture changes, it is necessary to have adequate visual capabilities for proper evaluation and treatment integration. The observation and information acquisition will require candidates and students to have functional, visual, auditory, and somatic sensations, enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities.

### **Communication**

Candidates and students must be able to communicate effectively in English with faculty, other care workers, other students, and patients. They must be able to directly communicate effectively with patients in speech, writing and listening.

### **Motor**

Candidates and students should have sufficient motor function to execute movements reasonably required to provide patients with general care, emergency treatment, and osteopathic treatment. This requires proper posture, upper and lower extremity strength and adequate tactile sensory ability. Students should be able to assist patients in positioning for osteopathic procedures. Students must be able to maintain all physical, behavioral, and cognitive skills needed to become an osteopathic physician.

## **Professionalism**

Candidates and students must demonstrate the ability to exercise good judgment, promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients.

Compassion, integrity, ethical standards, concern for others, appropriate hygiene and appearance, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and educational processes.

Candidates and students must also be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and schedules and to adapt to chaotic environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.

Additionally, Rowan-Virtua SOM maintains a curriculum that stresses the importance of the body as a unit and the applicability of palpation as an integral part of diagnosis and treatment for all patients. To acquire competencies in physical diagnosis and osteopathic manipulative medical diagnosis and treatment, as well as to maintain empathy for patients, all students are required to examine and practice clinical skills on others and serve as the “patient” who will be examined and have clinical skills performed on them by their classmates. Students are required to assume the role of the patient to develop an understanding of the patient’s experience throughout the curriculum. This includes but is not limited to permitting self and demonstrating on others physical exams such as abdominal, cardiac and musculoskeletal, osteopathic structural exams, osteopathic diagnosis, and osteopathic manipulative treatment. This is a core learning objective.

## **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physicians, requires all of these intellectual abilities.

## ***Accommodations***

All students, employees and applicants have equal opportunity at Rowan-Virtua SOM. Discrimination against applicants and students due to any category protected by applicable law, including but not limited to disability and religion, is prohibited. Therefore, Rowan-Virtua SOM will, if requested, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified enrolled students and candidates with disabilities or religious restrictions unless: a) such accommodations impose an undue hardship to the institution, or b) direct threats of substantial harm to the health and safety of others due to the disability cannot be eliminated by any reasonable accommodations available that would allow the student to perform the technical standards, or c) such accommodations fundamentally alter the educational program or academic standards. Requests to be excused from the requirement to treat patients of another sex will not be considered a reasonable accommodation. Students will be judged during the course of study on their acquisition of the knowledge necessary for the practice of medicine, their ability to perform the aforementioned technical skills, and their physical and behavioral capacities to meet the full requirements of the school’s curriculum.

Admitted and/or enrolled candidates with disabilities are encouraged to reach out to the Accessibility Service Office at 856-566-6980 or email Jackie Giacobbe at [giacobja@rowan.edu](mailto:giacobja@rowan.edu) to schedule a confidential consultation. Additional information is also available on the Academic Affairs website:

<https://som.rowan.edu/education/academic/disability.html#disabilities>

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ON DISABILITIES**

### **What constitutes a disability?**

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A disability is defined as a physical, mental or emotional condition that affects one or more major life activities (such as processing information, writing, hearing, or seeing). Rowan University is mandated by federal law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (<https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>) to ensure that:

**“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States ...shall, solely by reason of...disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from the participation in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”**

### **What are the laws related to disabilities?**

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Section 504 protects the rights of qualified individuals who have disabilities; the law defines a “qualified person with a disability” as one “who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity.” Disabilities covered by legislation include (but are not limited to) AIDS, blindness, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, head injuries, hearing disabilities, specific learning disabilities, loss of limb(s), multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, emotional disabilities, speech disabilities, spinal cord injuries, and vision disabilities.

Under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, colleges and universities may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all education programs and activities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act contains more specific information about compliance issues in post-secondary education than the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law in 1990. The ADA, however, did extend the law to cover public and private institutions of higher education and any other entities that receive funding. The ADA has also facilitated access to public services.

### **Accommodations**

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At Rowan-Virtua SOM, accessibility services are provided by Academic Affairs for all students on the Rowan University - Stratford Campus. This accommodations process facilitates Rowan University’s compliance with these federal laws by providing services and appropriate and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. This does not mean excusing a person with a disability from responsibilities or lowering expectations in the classroom, but rather allowing the student to use her or his abilities to assimilate information or perform class work in a manner that allows fair competition with other students. We encourage students to disclose and request accommodations by contacting Jackie Giacobbe at [gjacobja@rowan.edu](mailto:gjacobja@rowan.edu) or 856-566-6980 for a confidential consultation; all such requests remain confidential.

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to an individual without a disability.

Accommodations are designed to lessen the effects of the disability and are required to provide fair and accurate testing to assess a candidate’s knowledge or expertise in the subject. In other words, the purpose is to adjust for the effect of the student’s disability, not to dilute academic requirements. The evaluation and assigning of grades should have the same standards for all students.

## **Accessibility Services at Rowan-Virtua SOM**

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Although students are not required to identify themselves as having a disability, they are not eligible for services until they have done so. To request support or services at Rowan-Virtua SOM, students must submit to Academic Services the "[Request for Accessibility Services](#)" form, along with documentation that supports the need for their requested accommodations.

Written documentation should be no older than five years and any physical, cognitive and/or behavioral evaluations should be conducted by a licensed professional. Temporary disabilities require yearly updates.

### **Learning Disability - Documentation requirements**

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Students are required to submit documentation to the Office of Academic Affairs to verify eligibility to receive services. This documentation must be current (within five years), must be conducted by qualified licensed professionals, and must include the following\*:

1. **Aptitude Assessment:** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III is the preferred instrument. Group intelligence tests, the Slosson Intelligence Test, and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test are NOT appropriate.
2. **Achievement Assessment:** Current levels of reading, mathematics, and written language are required. Preferably, a certified Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant should administer tests. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test for age-appropriate students. The Wide Range Achievement Test is NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement.
3. **Information Processing:** Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long-term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed, etc.) must be assessed. Information from subtests on the WAIS-III or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability as well as other instruments relevant to the presenting learning problem(s) may be used to address these areas.

\* Students with ADD or ADHD are required to have their doctor fill out a Rowan University [ADD/ADHD verification form](#).

### **Psychological/Psychiatric Disorders - Documentation requirements**

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Students are required to submit documentation to the Office of Academic Affairs to verify eligibility to receive services. The documentation must be current (within one year) and must include the following:

1. **Diagnosis:** A diagnosis must be given by a qualified professional (psychologist, counselor or psychiatrist) indicating the need for services.
2. **Treatment/Recommendations:** A program of treatment must be prescribed for the University to provide appropriate accommodations.

### **Limitations in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine / Osteopathic Clinical Skills (OMM/ OCS) – Documentation**

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The learning modality in the Rowan-Virtua SOM OMM / OCS Course requires that students both practice and perform OMM techniques on their classmates as well as having those techniques performed on them. This cooperative learning method is the most appropriate and efficient way to acquire these manual skills and to integrate them into students' practice of medicine.

If a student feels that having OMM performed on them is contraindicated for any physical issue they have, they should submit the [OMM Accommodation Request Form](#) and diagnostic information from their treating physician (preferably a DO, who can speak most knowledgeably about what techniques should and shouldn't be performed on a particular student). The documentation should specify the region of the body that is affected and, if known, which techniques should be avoided.

## **All Other Disabling Conditions**

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Students with disabilities other than those mentioned above must also submit the Request Form and documentation to the Academic Affairs office to verify eligibility to receive services. The documentation must be from the physician who has diagnosed and treated the student. The documentation must be current (within five years) and should be typewritten on the physician's letterhead and include the diagnosis, prognosis, and recommendations. The letter should certify the condition as a disability as defined in section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Temporary disabilities require yearly updated documentation. This information is required to develop an appropriate Accommodation Plan.

## **Interactive Process**

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Upon receipt of the documentation, an Academic Affairs staff member will collaborate with the student to discuss and establish the services that are needed. Together, the staff and student determines appropriate academic adjustments and arranges to provide needed auxiliary aids. The process of requesting and receiving accommodations is interactive; all constituents--the student, the instructor, Academic Affairs and individual departments and programs--work together to make sure the process works. It is the responsibility of the Academic Affairs staff to determine eligibility for services based on documented disability and consultation with others as needed.

Accommodations are provided at no expense to the student and are based upon each individual's unique needs. The School will accommodate educational and special individual needs to the extent possible. However, the School does not provide personal devices, such as wheelchairs; individually prescribed devices, such as hearing aids; or services of a personal nature including assistance in eating, toiletries, dressing, or transportation for personal needs.

The law requires that records and information documenting a disability remain confidential. The office can disclose the specific nature of a student's disability *only when that student allows the release of information*. Therefore, it is not appropriate for faculty members or department staff to request written copies of medical records of testing information. All questions regarding the credibility of a student's qualification for services should be directed to Academic Affairs for clarification.

For additional information on Accessibility Services, contact Jackie Giacobbe at 856-566-6980.

