**M.D. Competencies and Program Objectives**

The following list of competencies serves as the institutional learning objectives for the M.D. degree program at Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM). These competencies are organized around the competency domain framework of the **Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)**, and reflect the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes expected of MUSM graduates.

The student graduating with a Doctor of Medicine degree from MUSM will be prepared for entry into the profession of medicine. Demonstration of the following competencies will provide evidence of readiness to enter residency training:

1. **PATIENT CARE**

MUSM graduates must be able to participate in the provision of family-centered patient care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health. Graduates should be able to:

1. Demonstrate compassion when interacting with patients and their families, treating them with respect and dignity.
2. Demonstrate consideration of patient’s privacy, health records, culture, and psychological needs.
3. Obtain an appropriate medical history accurately, efficiently, and respectfully.
4. Perform an appropriate physical examination accurately, efficiently and respectfully.
5. Generate and prioritize differential diagnoses and formulate a diagnostic strategy for common complaints.
6. Identify the extent of medical evaluation needed, appropriate to the patient presentation.
7. Perform bedside procedures from a core skills list defined by the faculty.
8. Interpret results of common diagnostic studies.
9. Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education.
10. Document patient information accurately, efficiently, and respectfully.
11. Develop patient management plans for common medical problems.
12. Identify circumstances that require relieving pain and suffering in patients, and demonstrate knowledge of appropriate means to relieve pain and suffering.
13. Identify life-threatening emergencies and apply appropriate initial intervention.
14. Demonstrate effective patient education/counseling skills.
15. Apply emerging information of patients’ biologic, genetic, and population-level risks to support prevention and treatment decision.
16. **MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE**

MUSM graduates must demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological, and social-behavioral sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care. Graduates should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an investigatory and analytic thinking method that approaches clinical problems in a logical, efficient, and evidence-based manner.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the normal structure and function of the body and of each of its major organ systems, across the life span.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the mechanisms important in maintaining homeostasis.
4. Identify general mechanisms of disease-causing illness.
5. Identify the altered structure and function (pathology and pathophysiology) of the body and its major organ systems resulting from disease.
6. Utilize evidence-based scientific knowledge in diagnosing patient conditions and diseases.
7. Identify the role of non-biological determinants of health and illness including socioeconomic, environmental, familial, cultural, and psychosocial to inform therapeutic decision-making.
8. Apply knowledge of the epidemiology of common diseases within a defined population for approaches useful in reducing the incidence and prevalence of those diseases.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of conventional and non-conventional therapeutics and therapeutic decision-making.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of bioethics.
11. Identify the natural history, clinical presentation, diagnostic findings, treatment, management strategies, prevention, and prognosis for common medical problems.
12. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of health promotion and wellness.
13. **PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT**

MUSM graduates must be able to investigate and evaluate their patient care practices, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and improve their patient care practices. These relate to the areas of lifelong learning, self-directed learning, critical thinking, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and informatics.

Graduates should be able to:

1. Reflect upon clinical experiences and apply scientific information to systematically improve patient care and the workplace environment.
2. Locate, appraise, assimilate, and apply evidence from peer-reviewed, evidence-based medical and public health literature for care of patients and populations.
3. Apply the knowledge of scientific study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies.
4. Use technology to efficiently access and manage medical information and to provide timely and effective care.
5. Practice self-directed learning and progressive professional development.
6. Apply knowledge of patient safety issues and quality improvement methods to improve medical care and population health.
7. **INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

MUSM graduates must be able to demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills with patients, patient families, peers, and other members of the health care team. Graduates should be able to:

1. Create and sustain appropriate therapeutic relationships with patients.
2. Demonstrate effective patient education/counseling skills.
3. Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills.
4. Demonstrate effective use of communication technologies and modalities.
5. Work effectively within an interprofessional health care team as a member and leader.
6. Apply the ethical principal of patient autonomy by eliciting patient preference and incorporating it into the health care plan.
7. Teach, present, and model knowledge, skills, and attitudes effectively to peers and to members of an interprofessional health care team.
8. **PROFESSIONALISM**

MUSM graduates must demonstrate professional behavior, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to patients. Graduates should be able to:

1. Demonstrate respect (tolerance), compassion, altruism, and integrity when interacting with peers, staff, faculty, and patients.
2. Demonstrate reliability by being present, on time and prepared for all educational, administrative, and patient care activities.
3. Maintain confidentiality and proper professional boundaries (physical, sexual, financial, emotional, social, and electronic) with patients, peers, faculty, other members of the health care team and the public at large.
4. Apply ethical principles to be truthful about medical data, appropriately deal with medical errors, and convey information honestly and tactfully to patients, peers, faculty, and staff.
5. Promote the physical and mental wellness of patients and their families, and members of the health care team, and recognize and avoid impairment.
6. Recognize limitations and continually assess one’s own level of competency.
7. Recognize and manage situations that present a potential conflict of interest, including balancing obligations to patients with one’s self interest and the interest of the health care system.
8. Produce and maintain clear, accurate, and timely patient documentation.
9. **SYSTEMS-BASED PRACTICE**

MUSM graduates must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care and the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value. Graduates should be able to:

1. Outline the organization and financing of the U.S. health care system and the effects of both on access, utilization, and quality of care for individuals and populations, especially in the context of rural and underserved populations of Georgia.
2. Compare and contrast types of medical practice and healthcare delivery systems, including methods of controlling health care costs, allocating resources and maintaining quality of care.
3. Identify the ethical implications of health care resource allocation and emerging technologies on population health.
4. Describe ways to practice medicine as a community-responsive physician who can engage the community, contribute to the reduction of health disparities, and advocate for quality patient care, especially in rural and underserved populations.
5. Demonstrate ability to assist patients as they navigate through available medical and non- medical community resources.
6. Demonstrate the ability to help the patient and family navigate through end-of-life issues.
7. Demonstrate the ability to assess the health status of populations, identify community assets and resources, and recommend community-based strategies to improve the health of individuals and populations.
8. Describe the public health responsibilities of the physician including disease surveillance, reporting adverse events, emergency preparedness, and prevention of chronic conditions.

*These six Medical Student Competencies were first adopted in August 2005, updated in May 2012 and updated in August, 2019.*