



# Essential Functions for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

## Example of Technical Standard (not limited to)

### Observation

Ability to participate actively in all demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and clinical experiences in the academic program component and to assess and comprehend the condition of all clients assigned to him/her in a fieldwork experience, including data collection for assessment and evaluation, screening, intervention, and contribution to discharge. Such observation and information usually requires functional use of visual, auditory, and somatic sensations.

### Visual

- Able to read print on LED display on therapeutic instruments for assessment and intervention.
- Able to visually discriminate postural, sensorimotor, musculoskeletal, and color changes.
- Recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language.
- Able to assess and manipulate the environment at varied distances.

### Auditory

- Receive, assess, and interpret verbal communication from clients, families, fellow students and staff. Respond appropriately to call bells, emergency alarms, and auditory timers.
- Distinguish between normal and abnormal blood pressure readings.

### Tactile

- Palpate a pulse and detect changes or abnormalities of surface texture, skin, muscle tone, and temperature. Palpate and manipulate bony landmarks of upper and lower extremities in preparation for activity engagement.

*Example: Observation of change in client vital sign status before, during, and after occupational engagement.*

### Communication

- Ability to communicate effectively in English using verbal, non-verbal and written formats with academic and clinical faculty, students, clients, families and all members of the healthcare team.
- Sensitively and effectively elicit and assess verbal and non-verbal information while engaging in intervention with clients, families, and colleagues.
- Effectively articulate information to clients, families, staff, instructors and fellow students in both academic and clinic settings using correct terminology (verbally and in writing).
- Effectively interpret both verbal and written communication in academic and clinic settings.

- Recognize, interpret, and respond to non-verbal communications.
- Demonstrate active listening skills.
- Present and receive feedback in academic and clinical settings in a professional manner.

*Example: Given a scenario, the student may present a treatment plan with rationale and role play.*

### **Motor**

Sufficient motor ability to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective therapeutic intervention and emergency treatment as necessary.

- Demonstrate ability to use multiple grasp and pinch patterns, including dexterity for writing and keyboard function, and firm grasp for sustained hand/arm use as in lifting, push/pull, twisting, transferring and carrying. Students must regularly lift and/or move objects up to 10 pounds, occasionally lift and/or move objects at 25-50 pounds, and occasionally lift/move objects at greater than 50 pounds using proper body mechanics.
- Demonstrate stability, mobility, balance, strength and agility to assist and safeguard clients during transfers and daily activities during clinical experiences.
- Provide emergency treatment and follow emergency protocol both in academic and clinical settings when necessary.
- Stand or sit for sufficient periods of time to actively engage in academic, lab, and clinical activities (may be up to eight hours per day).
- Demonstrate manual dexterity and coordination necessary to manipulate equipment and perform procedures in such therapeutic interventions as splinting, wheelchair adjustment, feeding, or orthotics and prosthetics.

### **Intellectual**

Ability to collect, interpret and integrate information. Ability to demonstrate clinical reasoning.

- Read, comprehend, and retain relevant information in textbooks, class presentations, medical records and professional literature.
- Integrate, retain, and synthesize information to effectively problem solve.
- Exercise sound clinical judgment and complete tasks within required time limits.
- Apply knowledge to both academic and clinical situations and problem-solve using clinical reasoning.
- Utilize effective teaching and learning techniques and test taking strategies.

### **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

- Possess the emotional health and stability necessary to exercise sound clinical judgment and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, their families, and other members of the health care team.
- Possess the ability to tolerate taxing workloads, function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical settings with clients.
- Possess compassion, integrity, and concern for others. Demonstrate respect for academic and clinical instructors.

- Demonstrate professional behaviors and a strong work ethic.
- Manage time and energy within heavy academic schedules and deadlines in academic, clinic and home environments.
- Demonstrate flexibility during client, environmental, or situational change.
- Demonstrate emotional health needed to sustain professional behavior under physical and emotional stress.
- Acknowledge and respect individual values and opinions.
- Demonstrates sensitivity to cultural differences within academic, clinical, and community settings.
- Demonstrate a concern for others, appropriate interpersonal skills, interest and motivation.
- Accept responsibility and accountability for one's own actions.
- Comply with the Practice Act of the Georgia Board of Occupational Therapy and the American Occupational Therapy Association's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics/Ethics Standards

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