

Title: OT Student Essential Functions

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to clarify the occupational therapy student's personal physical, emotional, sensory, and cognitive essential functions that are necessary for successful completion of the didactic and clinical components of the Occupational Therapy Program at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. All occupational therapy students are required to meet these essential functions.

Procedure:

1. Following admission to the Occupational Therapy Program at University of the Sciences in Philadelphia but prior to beginning academic coursework, all students must sign a form acknowledging that they have read and understand the essential functions.
2. Students who may have concerns about meeting these expectations are advised to meet with both their program director and their academic advisor.
3. If a student feels that he/she requires reasonable accommodation for didactic and/or clinical components of the program, he/she must contact the Assistant Dean of Students in the Division of Student Affairs and follow the procedures outlined in the University catalog and student handbook before any accommodations can be made. Essential functions can be successfully met by students who have documented disabilities, have requested reasonable accommodations and are receiving reasonable accommodations. Approved accommodations in a classroom setting are not guaranteed and may not translate to the practice setting.
4. Due to the time it takes to properly evaluate a student's needs and to implement reasonable accommodations, it is recommended that students request accommodations as early as possible, preferably at least 30 days before the start of a course or clinical education experience.

Essential Functions: The OT student/therapist must be able to perform the following skills

Motor Skills:

1. Position and move clients or equipment. This includes bending, stooping, kneeling, reaching and squatting while pushing and pulling loads up to 200 pounds while preventing injury to client and self.
2. Lift up to 50 pounds independently or up to 200 pounds with assistance while preventing injury to client and self.
3. Safely and effectively facilitate movement of the patient's body during transfers, functional mobility training, positioning, examinations and therapeutic interventions. The OT student/therapist needs to be able to assume standing, sitting, kneeling or squatting positions. Clients may be totally dependent for physical assistance.
4. Ability to be mobile for 3 to 4 hour intervals while safely assisting clients during functional mobility actions such as ambulation and transfers with or without equipment while preventing injury to client and self.

5. Manipulate objects/equipment of various sizes, shapes, temperatures, smells, and textures (e.g.: dials, knobs, testing instruments, therapy balls, scissors, clamps, kitchen equipment, bathroom equipment, raw food, etc).
6. Provide support and resistance to clients as needed through complex activities and movements while preventing injury to client and self.
7. Perform examination techniques and provide intervention to acutely ill clients without disturbing sensitive monitoring instruments and lines.
8. Maintain balance while performing intervention and examination techniques on clients who have compromised balance.
9. Possess the endurance to perform a variety of exertional activities for up to 8-10 hours with occasional rest breaks.

Sensory Skills: Sensory components are based on the ability to see, hear, smell, or feel as needed to fulfill the duties of an occupational therapist. Accommodations may be granted to assist students in achieving the necessary baseline to fulfill these components, but a student will be responsible for demonstrating appropriate competence. Activities that require sensory competence include (but are not limited to):

1. Examination techniques such as postural control assessment, vital sign assessment, muscle integrity/tension, wound description, and personal hygiene and continence assessment.
2. Gathering of information from equipment such as (but not limited to) biofeedback, electrocardiograph, visual perceptual testing equipment, driver testing equipment, kitchen cooking devices, pulse oximeters, auscultation and blood pressure devices.
3. Safe application of gradient pressures during examination and intervention including manual muscle testing and joint mobilization.

Emotional Abilities:

1. Possess the ability to manage a full client case load and a rapidly changing practice environment. A full client case load may vary from 7 to 10 sessions per day occasionally with 2 or more clients at one time to 14 to 18 clients per day in an outpatient clinical environment.
2. Recognize and respond appropriately and in a timely manner to potentially hazardous situations, including those that are life-threatening.
3. Possess the ability to accept responsibility for one's own actions and decisions.
4. Possess the ability and sensitivity to interact with patients with various abilities and cultural differences.
5. Possess the ability to accept feedback in a manner that reflects the ability to learn from and integrate feedback.

Cognitive Skills:

1. Identify and solve problems in a timely manner consistent with the demands of the situation.
2. Recall and retain information effectively in order to meet the minimal requirements of safely and effectively caring for clients.

3. Integrate and analyze information including information from client records, examination; and diagnostic tests to develop appropriate plans of action, as well as to provide a safe environment for the client and self.
4. Exercise good judgment and clinical reasoning in all aspects of client care.
5. Acknowledge limitations of knowledge and/or performance in order to obtain the appropriate supports to provide optimal client care.
6. Ability to effectively integrate new information with current knowledge and practice in order to provide optimal client care.

Communication/Professional Behavior

1. Possess the ability to effectively communicate with patients who have a wide range of impairments.
2. Possess the ability to interact effectively and positively with clients who have challenging interpersonal and communication skills.
3. Possess the ability to receive, write and interpret written communication in both academic and clinical settings. Record observations and plans legibly, efficiently, and accurately.
4. Maintain mature, sensitive, respectful and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals in academic and clinical environments including highly stressful situations.
5. Possess the ability to use one's intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and display professional behavior at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, expressions of empathy, respectfulness, use of authority, degree/quality of verbal interactions, use of body language and non-verbal communication.
6. Possess the ability to learn and abide by professional standards of practice.
7. Possess the ability to be prompt, arrive on time, and complete assignments on time.
8. Possess the ability to set priorities, be dependable, be organized and follow through on responsibilities.
9. Self-direct one's own learning and be engaged in the classroom and in fieldwork.
10. Possess the ability to recognize/handle personal and professional frustrations, balance personal and professional obligations, handle responsibilities, work with other cooperatively, and respond appropriately to social cues.

Essential Functions Required of Students for Admission and Progression in a Samson College of Health Science Program

Applicants and students should be able to perform these essential functions or with reasonable accommodations, such as the help of compensatory techniques and/or assistive devices, be able to demonstrate ability to become proficient in these essential functions.

Essential Function	Technical Standard	Some Examples of Necessary Activities (not all inclusive)	Yes	No
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment	Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations; evaluate patient or instrument responses; synthesize data; draw sound conclusions.		
Interpersonal Skills	Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, psychiatric, cultural and intellectual backgrounds	Establish rapport with patients and colleagues. Use therapeutic communication (attending, clarifying, coaching, facilitating, teaching). Function (consult, negotiate, share) as a part of a team.		
Communication Ability	Communication abilities sufficient for effective interaction with others in spoken and written English	Explain treatment procedures; initiate health teaching; document and interpret instructions. Listen attentively.		
Physical Endurance	Remain continuously on task for several hours while standing, sitting, moving, lifting, and/or bending	Manually resuscitate patients in emergency situations or stand/walk for extensive periods of time.		
Mobility	Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces; full range of motion; manual and finger dexterity; and hand-eye coordination	Move around in patients' rooms, work spaces and treatment areas. Negotiate stairs while guarding an unstable client.		
Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective patient care and operate equipment	Calibrate and use equipment; transfer and position patients or lift and operate equipment with necessary strength and dexterity. Manage wheelchairs (leg rests), use pressure cuffs, and stethoscopes.		
Adequate Height	Ability to reach and operate overhead equipment	Turn wall mounted monitors/gauges on and off. Close guard a client taking a fragile object from a high shelf.		
Hearing Ability	Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs	Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, auscultatory sounds, and cries for help.		
Visual Ability	Normal or corrected visual ability sufficient for patient observation and assessment, ability to discriminate between subtle changes in density (black to gray) of a color in low light	Observe patient/responses, secretions, color. Read thermometer, chart, computer screen, digital printouts, label and gauges. Interpret subtle color differences in diagnostic laboratory test kits, on stained microscopic slides, and when using laboratory instruments.		
Tactile Ability	Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment	Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention.		
Olfactory Ability	Olfactory senses (smell) sufficient for maintaining environmental and patient safety	Distinguish smells which are contributory to assessing and/or maintaining the patient's health status or environmental safety (fire).		
Professional Attitude and Demeanor	Ability to present professional appearance and implement measures to maintain own physical and mental health, and emotional stability	Work under stressful conditions and irregular hours. Be exposed to communicable diseases and contaminated body fluids. React calmly in emergency situations. Demonstrate flexibility. Show concern for others.		

Note: Students requiring reasonable accommodations may contact the Administrator of Student Accommodations at 215-596-8758

I certify that I have read and understand the above essential functions and that I meet each of them, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Signature _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

Adapted from: Red Alert: The Americans with Disabilities Act Implications for Nursing Education (March, 1993).