



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Essential Functions Policy

Success in the Occupational Therapy Assistant curriculum requires a student to demonstrate the cognitive skills, psychomotor skills, communication skills, self-care abilities, and affective behaviors expected of an entry-level occupational therapy assistant. Entry-level occupational therapy assistants are competent clinicians who provide interventions to the general population of acute and rehabilitation clients in a variety of healthcare settings. The purpose of this document is to delineate the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors deemed essential for completion of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program and entrance into professional practice.

The following list is illustrative and does not represent an all-inclusive listing of the functions of an occupational therapy assistant. Throughout the OTA program, students will be assessed not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the OTA program's curricula and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program educates students as general practitioners, in accordance with the requirements of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). Occupational Therapy is a profession that includes several domains of practice, e.g., hospital based, school systems, and mental health. The various domains encompass skill sets that differ according to the setting and job. For this reason, occupational therapy assistant students must have knowledge and entry-level competence that spans all domains, so that they are prepared for employment in all areas of practice.

MU OTA is committed to the education of all qualified individuals, including persons with disabilities, who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the Program. It is the policy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). In accordance with federal regulations established by the ADA, Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding students and applicants with disabilities, the following standards are described to assist each applicant/student in evaluating their prospect for academic and clinical success.

If a student cannot demonstrate the following skills and abilities, it is the responsibility of the student to request appropriate accommodation. The OTA program will provide reasonable accommodation if it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered and does not impose an undue hardship such as those that cause a significant expense, difficulty or are unduly disruptive to the educational process.



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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 client's body during transfers, functional mobility training, positioning, examinations, and therapeutic interventions.
4. The OTA student needs to be able to assume standing, sitting, kneeling, or squatting positions. Clients may be totally dependent for physical assistance.
5. Ability to be mobile for three-to-four-hour intervals while safely assisting clients during functional mobility actions such as ambulation and transfers with or without equipment while preventing injury to client or self.
6. 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.).
7. Provide support and resistance to clients as needed through complex activities and movements while preventing injury to client and self.
8. Perform examination techniques and provide intervention to acutely ill clients without disturbing sensitive monitoring instruments and lines.
9. Maintain stable balance while performing intervention and examination techniques on clients who have compromised balance.
10. Possess the endurance to perform a variety of exertional activities for up to 8-10 hours with occasional rest breaks.
Sensory Skills
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, 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 caseload and a rapidly changing practice environment. A full client caseload may vary from 7 to 10 sessions per day occasionally with two or more clients at one time to 14-18 clients per day in an outpatient clinical environment.



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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 clients 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 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 judgement and clinical reasoning in all aspects of client care.
5. Acknowledge limitations of knowledge and/or performance to obtain the appropriate support to provide optimal client care.
6. Ability to effectively integrate new information with current knowledge and practice to provide optimal client care.
Communication/Professional Behavior
Professional Behavior:
1. Possess the ability to effectively communicate with clients 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.
4. Record observations and plans legibly, efficiently, and accurately.
5. Maintain mature, sensitive, respectful, and effective relationships with clients, students, faculty, staff, and other professionals in academic and clinical environments including high stressful situations.
6. Possess the ability to use one's intellectual abilities, exercise good judgement, and always display professional behavior. 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.
7. Possess the ability to learn and abide by professional standards of practice.
8. Possess the ability to be prompt, arrive on time, and complete assignments on time.



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9. Possess the ability to set priorities, be dependable, be organized and follow through on responsibilities.
10. Self-direct one's own learning and be engaged in the classroom and in fieldwork.
11. Possess the ability to recognize/handle personal and professional frustrations, balance personal and professional obligations, handle responsibilities, work with others cooperatively, and respond appropriately to social cues.
Communication Skills: includes speech, language, reading, writing, and computer literacy.
1. Effectively and sensitively communicate with clients to elicit information regarding mood and activities, as well as perceive nonverbal communication.
2. Effectively and efficiently communicate with other members of the health care community (i.e., students, teachers, clients, peers, staff, and personnel) to convey information essential for safe and effective care, (e.g., to ask questions, explain conditions and procedures, teach home programs, and safety in a timely manner and acceptable norms in academic and clinical settings.
3. Receive and interpret written communications in both academic and clinical settings in a timely manner.
4. Receive and send verbal communication in life threatening situations in a timely manner within the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
Self-Care Abilities
1. Maintain general good health, hygiene, and self-care in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical settings.
2. Arrange transportation and living accommodations for/during off campus clinical assignments to foster timely reporting to the classroom and clinical setting.

I, _____ the undersigned, have read and understand the essential functions policy for the Methodist University Bachelor of Science, Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. By signing below, I am acknowledging compliance with these standards to the best of my ability as specified above.

Signature

Date