

Policy: Technical Standards: Occupational Therapy	Issued: 06/01/2020	Revised: 02/10/2022 6/22/2024
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Technical Standards: Occupational Therapy

The Entry-Level OTD program in the School of Health Sciences at University of the Pacific prepares occupational therapists to serve as generalist providers of occupational therapy care. In order to function as a clinical occupational therapist, an individual must be able to meet certain physical, emotional, intellectual, and communication expectations for performance. Occupational therapy requires the accumulation of scientific knowledge as well as the simultaneous acquisition and demonstration of psychomotor skills, cognitive skills, and professional attitudes and behaviors. The faculty is committed to an educational environment where students may develop emotionally, spiritually, socially, and cognitively.

Technical standards must be met with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Any accommodations recommended, such as using an intermediary or other aid, cannot substitute for demonstrating any of the standards below nor replace the student's judgement. The school is committed to enabling students with disabilities to complete the course of study in the OTD program by means of reasonable accommodations consistent with the ADA. The purpose of technical standards is to delineate the psychomotor skills, cognitive skills, and professional attitudes and behaviors deemed essential for matriculation into, continuation in, and completion of the educational program.

Clinical Technical Skills

The student must be able to perform certain clinical technical skills and exhibit professional behaviors associated with the role of a general OT practitioner to successfully complete the Doctoral Program. The clinical technical standards in this document apply to satisfactory performance in all academic, professional, and clinical course work, as well as fulfillment of non-academic essential functions of the curriculum involving physical, cognitive, and behavioral factors that are essential to a professional clinical practitioner. More specifically, students in the Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program must have adequate abilities and skills in the following five broad domains: (1) Observation; (2) Communication; (3) Sensory-Motor Processing; (4) Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Emotional Intelligence; and (5) Behavioral and Social Attributes.

1. Observation:

- The student must be able to observe demonstrations and conduct clinical procedures grounded in the basic sciences, including but not limited to, biological, anatomic, and physiologic sciences.

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- The student must be able to observe a client accurately at a distance and as they work closely. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities.
- The student must be able to integrate all information visually and through the other senses.

2. Communication:

- Students must demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and colleagues, including patients from different cultural and social backgrounds and in stressful situations. This includes but is not limited to the ability to establish rapport with patients and communicate evaluation and treatment information effectively. Students must be able to understand and speak the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice.
- The student must be able to elicit information from clients, perceive non-verbal communications and describe changes in mood, activity, movement, and posture.
- The student must learn to modify their level of communication to be easily understood by clients who are not adept in health literacy using lay terms as needed in a respectful approachable manner.
- The student's communication includes not only speech, but writing, reading, interpreting data in figures, graphs and have computer literacy.

Sensory-Motor Processing and Functions:

- The student must have intact sensory and motor processing and functions sufficient enough to elicit information from clients by touch palpation, auscultation, and other manual and diagnostic procedures.
- The student will be required to coordinate both gross and fine muscular skills, balance and equilibrium and functional use of the senses of hearing, touch, and vision.
- The student, more specifically, must be able to exercise such fine motor skills in order to adequately perform passive range of motion, manual muscle testing, evaluate the degree of pain and other clinical signs and symptoms.
- The student must exercise a level of dexterity, sensation, and visual acuity as to accurately complete such processes as making fine measurements of physical examination, such as measuring blood pressure, rate of respiration and pulse, and performing therapeutic procedures, such as the use of physical agent modalities.

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- The student must also be able to hear sufficiently to accurately differentiate clinical findings using instruments such as stethoscopes, sphygmomanometers, and Doppler devices.
- The student must be able to perform methods of evaluation using a goniometer, dynamometer, and pinch gauge, and devices to evaluate light touch pressure sensation, thermal sensation and vibration using a tuning fork.
- The students must also be able to fabricate splints, create assistive devices and use hand tools for therapeutic media and adaptive devices.
- The student must be able to move patients/clients to transfer them safely and engage in some emergency procedures such as CPR. These are also expectations that require a necessary level of strength.
- Students must be able to complete a comprehensive Occupational Therapy evaluation and conduct treatment in a clinical environment which may include measuring Range of Motion, strength, endurance, muscle tone, pain level, ADL skills, fine motor skills, transfer skills, functional mobility, balance, response to sensation, cognitive status, and home management skills.
- The student must be able to move quickly and to transport themselves in a manner which provides timely response in both rehabilitation and acute care situations.

3. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Emotional Intelligence:

- The student must have the intellectual capacity, cognition, and emotional intelligence necessary to analyze and resolve clinical situations and problems.
- The student must be able to identify significant findings from the client's history, the physical examination, and clinical assessments, to provide a reasonable client-centered explanation for likely causal factors and choose an appropriate plan of care for both short term and long-term problems that may affect participation in daily activities.
- The student must have the ability to incorporate new information from many sources in formulating measurable treatment plans is essential. Good judgment in client-centered assessment, a team approach, diagnostic, and therapeutic planning must access the best available evidence using data bases.
- Students must demonstrate the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in clinical situations.
- The student must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others and seek help when appropriate and needed.

4. Behavioral and Social Attributes:

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- The student must possess the emotional health required for full use of his or her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment and carry out all responsibilities in the education of clients, care givers and family members.
- The student must develop mature, sensitive, effective, and professional relationships with clients and members of the health care team.
- The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively to manage their own stress levels.
- Students must demonstrate the ability to maintain composure and continue to function well with patients who are undergoing periods of stress and may exhibit challenging attitudes or behaviors.
- The student must be able to adapt to changing environments, tolerate ambiguity, demonstrate flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the health care and health promotion delivery system.
- The student must have compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation which are all personal qualities that are desired attributes in a health professional and assessed during the admissions process and educational outcomes.

Ethical Standards

A student must demonstrate the ability to reason morally and practice occupational therapy in a professional, ethical manner. This includes all practice and academic settings working with clients, patients, families, aggregate, community populations, faculty, peers, and all members of the healthcare team. Professional OT practice is held to a high standard as outlined by the American Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (2020).

Essential Functions of Occupational Therapy Students

Occupational therapists employ rehabilitation and environmental strategies that contribute to self-sufficiency, social integration, improved health status, and population health of persons with chronic disease and disability. To perform these functions the student must gain the knowledge, attitudes and skills for practice that may be provided directly to individuals, or in educational or consultative roles to clients in health care, schools, industry, and community settings. Occupational therapy students must be capable of social, cognitive, sensory and motors skills that will be needed in the classroom and the clinical fieldwork setting.

Students with sensory and or motor limitations may be able to perform as an OT student if they possess the ability to direct an assistant to perform the activity or use assistive technology. If they are directing another, they must be able to monitor the person's performance, perceive objects in the environment and observe performance. For example, a student with physical

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limitations may be able to instruct another person (an assistant or aide) to perform tasks that they cannot do because of weakness or lack of movement. It is also possible to use compensatory aides and assistive technology such as hearing aids or sign-language interpreters, adaptive equipment, or computers. A student will be given the opportunity to demonstrate competence while using these accommodations (personal or equipment).

The student must possess the following cognitive and social skills central to making decisions and interacting with clients, families, and other professionals in the practice of occupational therapy.

Cognitive skills are necessary for problem solving, clinical reasoning and judgment. Students must be able to:

- Make meaningful and accurate observations and present findings in written reports.
- Receive and accurately integrate detailed and comprehensive presentations of material from texts, journals, medical records and from client interviews into lesson and treatment plans.
- Perform evaluations of clients with complex medical and performance problems.
- Analyze clinical data and accurately report results.
- Compare and identify differences in client's performance.
- Identify and respond to factual information provided by others as well as the more subtle cues of mood, temperament, and gestures.
- Maintain a safe environment with the client during evaluation and intervention sessions.
- Maintain attention to tasks to effectively participate in class, group sessions, team meetings and treatment of clients.
- Give and receive constructive feedback and adapt one's own behavior to the situation.
- Modify treatment interventions to meet the client's occupational needs.
- Demonstrate maturity in the decision making and service delivery process.
- Meet deadlines for assignments or tasks in both the academic and practice environment.
- Maintain confidentiality according to professional and institutional standards.
- Utilize social skills that are necessary for forming and maintaining therapeutic relationships.
- Interact with faculty, other students and clients using professional language and professional demeanor.
- Participate as a member of a group and a member of a team.
- For all didactic course work attend class on campus and in-person M-F 8:00am-6:00pm
- For all clinical rotations attend physical location of site and take on the same hours as clinical educator
- Seek out constructive feedback from teachers, clinical supervisors, and clients.

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- Demonstrate flexibility and maturity in professional interactions.
- Impart information in such a way that others can understand and use the information.
- Elicit information from clients, families, practice supervisors, faculty, and peers.
- Present observations and clinical findings with accuracy and confidence.
- Maintain professional and ethical standards at all times.

Students must review and acknowledge that they can consistently meet these technical standards, either with or without accommodations.

Student Name: _____
 (Print)

 (Signature) University I.D. Number _____