

OZARKS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OTA 2.3

Essential Functions

A. Purpose

To maintain compliance with Standard A.3.2 set forth by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)

B. OTC Policy Connection

OTC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission

C. OTA Program Procedure

An essential function is a fundamental job duty than an employee must be able to perform, with or without a reasonable accommodation (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2024).

OTA students should be aware that these essential functions may or may not be consistent with the critical competencies/essential functions of fieldwork sites or potential employers. The ability to achieve program essential functions with or without accommodation does not imply or guarantee employability in any setting. Fieldwork sites and employers have the right to determine critical competencies/essential functions necessary within their environment. Neither OTC nor OTA faculty determine or are responsible for site or employer-specific competencies.

In order to participate in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, students must be able to demonstrate or have the ability to become proficient in the following essential functions *with or without reasonable accommodation*:

| Essential Function | Technical Standard | Examples of Necessary Activities (not all inclusive) |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Communication | Students must have written and verbal communication sufficient to accurately and effectively communicate verbally, non-verbally, in writing and in electronic formats with clients, families, supervisors, and peers. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use paper and pencil to enter documentation into the medical record (simulated or actual) in <10 minutes. 2) Communicate and interpret responses with appropriate volume, concisely and accurately in fluent English with patients, families, other healthcare providers, and supervisors in both verbal and written communication. 3) Recognize the need for and access English as 2nd Language (ESL) services if having difficulty with fluent English communication. 4) Communicate verbal and written documentation & responses using proper pronunciation, spelling and grammar. 5) Utilize a translator when necessary for accurate, safe, and effective communication with patients or caregivers. 6) Adapt communication to match the needs of the intended audience. 7) Interact and establish rapport with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds 8) Train clients and families through effective demonstrations, verbal instructions, & teaching/learning strategies. 9) Understand when to use medical/professional language versus using language style and reading-level appropriate for client interaction. 10) Accurately interpret and communicate assessment and intervention results in written and verbal format. |
| Computer Skills | Students must access and use a desktop and/or laptop computer for the purpose of completing online assignments, documenting patient performance and communicating through email with providers or caregivers. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use a computer, laptop, or tablet to enter electronic documentation into the medical record (simulated or actual) in <10 minutes. 2) Achieve basic competency in word processing, PowerPoint, e-mail, use of internet Browsers, and Canvas Learning Management System. 3) Achieve basic competency in using online documentation systems with both narrative and pull-down menu options. 4) Ability to accurately input settings into physical agent modality machines, both electrical and heat-based modalities. 5) Input data into the computer through typing. |

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|--------------------|---|--|
| Coping Skills | Students must demonstrate the ability to independently manage one's own physical, mental and emotional health, as well as recognize and seek appropriate care when impairment or limitation occurs. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Temper extremes, make judgments and respond on the basis of intelligent reflection and rational thought (A). 2) Demonstrate self-control and manage emotions in difficult or stressful situations, as well as attending to one's personal triggers and trauma-responses for the sake of patient safety and comfort. 3) Discontinue treatment when a medical condition impairs or limits the ability of the student to perform clinical or lab activities with reasonable skill and safety (L). 4) Perform assessment and interventions independently, accurately, and efficiently in busy and fast-paced environments. 5) Demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, problem solving skills and resilience in rapidly changing environments. 6) Demonstrate reliability, responsibility, dependability, and fulfillment of obligation during lectures, labs, or clinical experiences. 7) Manage professional and personal boundaries appropriately with clients, caregivers and co-workers. |
| Critical Thinking | Students must demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving ability sufficient to carry out OT assessments and interventions independently in an effective and safe manner. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use sound judgment during clinical and lab activities. 2) Apply treatment precautions and contraindications, as appropriate. 3) Adhere to infection control procedures. 4) Demonstrate ability to make appropriate decisions in an emergency or where a situation is not clearly governed by specific guidelines. 5) Respond in a timely manner to a timer, alarm or an emergency situation. 6) Create interventions using evidence-based research 7) Remember, understand, and apply data from a variety of sources in a timely manner. 8) Assess patient's response to treatment and react appropriately based on the response. 9) Demonstrate problem-solving skills in patient care. (Assess, plan, implement, and evaluate self, patient, and treatment given). 10) Perform observation and task analysis to fit treatment plan to patient needs and capabilities. 11) Grade or adapt activities as needed to meet the patient's skill level accurately. 12) Identify cause-effect relationships in lab, lecture and clinical settings. 13) Follow policies and procedures required by clinical and academic settings. |

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|----------------------|--|---|
| Numerical Skills | Students must possess skills necessary to independently perform basic mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication & division) during OT assessments and interventions, without the use of a calculator. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Calculate heart rate and other vital signs requiring basic multiplication of 2-3 numbers. 2) Calculate assistance levels (performed vs. available) requiring basic division of 2-3 numbers. 3) Calculate assessment results requiring the average of 3 numbers. 4) Convert between decimals, fractions and percentages 5) Understand and interpret the meaning of numeric values and changes in values, such as vital signs. 6) Calculate units of treatment for productivity using a standard clock, as well as adding and subtracting from total units. 7) Calculating chronological age using addition and subtraction, ability to carry numbers in a mathematical problem as well as cross-multiply numbers. |
| Interpersonal Skills | Students must have the ability to interact, communicate and understand others, using the skills of active listening, empathy, teamwork, emotional intelligence, problem solving and conflict resolution. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Maintain respectful client, collegial and organizational relationships through interactions that demonstrate fairness, respect, discretion and integrity (A). 2) Demonstrate actions and attitudes of commitment, caring, dedication, responsiveness and understanding to clients and colleagues (A). 3) Actively listen to feedback on performance from faculty or supervisors, ask clarifying questions, reflect and be able to apply the feedback in future situations to improve skills or professional behaviors. 4) Actively contribute to group discussions and lead group training for class and/or clinical intervention purposes. |

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| Mobility Skills | Students must demonstrate independent mobility skills which allow for the safe and effective completion of OT assessments and interventions in lab and clinical experiences. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Maneuver in small spaces around patients and equipment, including bending and moving around items. 2) Move physically from room to room or floor to floor in a hospital, school, or outpatient setting 3) Travel by automobile from building to building or from home to a facility in city or highway traffic. 4) Position self effectively in front of a screen for typing, viewing, reading and creating documentation, medical records, and class modules/homework. 5) Perform CPR with a client, if needed, during clinical experiences. 6) Transfer patients safely who may require physical assistance. This includes transfers from a wheelchair or bed and may include transfers to the bathtub, shower, toilet, bed, and/or therapy mat. 7) Lift at least 50 pounds independently. 8) Demonstrate sufficient strength and balance to transfer, move, assist patients/clients in their daily occupations without injury to patient/client or self. 10) Maneuver/position self on the floor and/or in a chair and be able to quickly move to a standing position if necessary to retrieve a running client. |
| Fine Motor Skills | Students must demonstrate fine motor ability in both hands that allows for precise manipulation and dexterity during OT assessments and interventions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Adjust, apply, and clean large and small therapeutic devices. 2) Perform assessments or interventions through the execution of reach, grasp, and pinch movements to activate or place the equipment. 3) Demonstrate coordination of gross and fine motor upper extremity movement patterns and strength to perform therapeutic activities, daily life occupations, and exercises with clients. 4) Perform a technique with proper positioning, hand placement, direction of force, and amount of force. 5) Provide safe and effective interventions and assessments using bilateral integration (two hands at once). 6) Use hand and finger strength to manipulate objects, open containers, and set-up intervention activities. |
| Endurance | Students must demonstrate stamina that allows for successful completion of an average class or clinical day. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tolerate sitting for up to 3 hours per day without a break. 2) Tolerate standing for 8-9 hours per day with or without breaks. 3) Tolerate driving in an automobile for 1 hour to access clinical sites. 4) Maintain stamina for standing, sitting, walking, bending (at the waist or knees) for long periods of time. |

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| Professionalism/Ethics | Students must present to class and clinical experiences with a professional demeanor and the ability to follow the AOTA and Missouri Board of OT Code of Ethics. (A=AOTA; L=Licensure) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Demonstrate behavior that reflects integrity, supports objectivity, and fosters trust in the profession and its professionals (L). 2) Divulge no confidential information regarding any patient/client/family member/or classmate unless disclosure is required for performance of duty or required by law (L). 3) Provide care without discrimination, bias, or partiality on any basis with respect for the rights and dignity of all individuals (A, L). 4) Refuse to participate in illegal or unethical acts or conceal illegal, unethical, or incompetent acts of others (L). Represent student credentials, training and level of education accurately (L). 5) Be truthful in oral, written and electronic communication (A). |
| Cognition | Students must be alert and oriented with sufficient cognition to interact with clients, colleagues, and supervisors efficiently and appropriately. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Stay on task for long periods of time (up to 3 hours at a time without a break). 2) Meet the minimum 2.5 GPA for all pre-requisite coursework. 3) Earn a 75% summative score in all OTA courses. |
| Olfactory Sense | Students must possess olfactory (smell) senses sufficient for maintaining environmental and patient safety and performing accurate OT assessments and interventions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Distinguish odors which contribute to a patient's health status or environmental safety. 2) Possess tolerance to smells that may be considered malodorous. |
| Visual Sense | Students must possess visual senses sufficient for maintaining environmental and patient safety and performing accurate OT assessments and interventions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe and interpret patient/client movement or occupational performance based on visual evidence. 2. Observe a patient/client at a distance greater than twenty (20) feet and close-up noting verbal and nonverbal signals. 3. Visually monitor and assess a patient's physical, emotional, and psychological responses, and equipment settings. 4. Monitor vital signs, changes in patient status, skin changes, and electronic monitoring devices. 5. Determine and comprehend dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, e.g. differentiating right and left, up and down, etc. 6. View and interact with video, graphics, and written word electronically or on paper. 7) Accurately read patient ID bracelet, and other pertinent materials for safe patient care and professional practice. 8) Accurately read gauges, such as sphygmomanometer, charts, digital and paper print-outs, dials for goniometry, and labels for safe and effective client treatment and classroom activities. |

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| Tactile Sense | Students must possess tactile (touch) senses sufficient for maintaining environmental and patient safety and performing accurate OT assessments and interventions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perform a physical assessment through on-hands application that may include palpation of anatomical structures, noting surface characteristics, assessment of tone, temperature, depth, etc. 2) Perform palpation, range of motion, percussion and other physical manipulation while determining appropriate force, pressure and discerning texture, temperature, weight, and proprioception when providing interventions (detecting heat on skin, providing manual techniques etc). 3) Tolerate a variety of textures and surfaces on the skin without adverse reactions. 4) Differentiate hot and cold, deep and light touch, sharp or dull sensations for the purpose of safety with equipment and modalities. |
| Hearing Sense | Students must possess auditory (hearing) senses sufficient for maintaining environmental and patient safety and performing accurate OT assessments and interventions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor and interact with patients, other professionals and families. 2) React appropriately to auditory stimuli such as alarms, emergency signals, timers, and cries for help. 3) Respond appropriately to verbal instructions, audio, video, electronic media in the classroom, lab or clinic. 4) Discern accurate blood pressure sounds through a stethoscope. 5) Perceive and interpret accurate sounds through a telephone when speaking with families or supervisors. 6) Tolerate loud, sustained, and high-pitched noises. |
| Time Management | Students must organize and prioritize job tasks and carry out tasks with appropriate time management. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet impending deadlines for assignments, exams, clinical documentation and/or clinical reports in a timely fashion. 2) Complete timed written, oral, laboratory, electronic, and clinical practical examinations with efficiency and effectiveness. 3) Complete electronic testing using the NBCOT guideline of 1 minute per question. 4) Manage time effectively to participate in a 14-17 credit hour semester, with multiple courses at one time. |

Reviewed: 8/21/23; 10/15/24 with Advisory

Next Review: 10/15/26