

Technical Standards for the Master of Health Science in Occupational Therapy

The mission of the AU Occupational Therapy Department is to develop occupational therapists who change the world through exemplary service, innovative practice, and excellence in scholarship. The Department of Occupational Therapy (OT) provides graduate professional education to prepare a quality health professional who represents this mission and the entry-level standards established by the Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). OT students should be able to meet academic standards, display appropriate behaviors, interpersonal skills and professionalism, use effective communication, apply competent therapeutic skills, and advocate for optimal health promotion practices. Occupational therapy students need a realistic understanding of the profession within varied settings. Students should understand the role distinction between the occupational therapist and the occupational therapy assistant. Students should be able to work effectively with all populations while demonstrating cultural humility and respect for others.

The OT curriculum requires the graduate student to be able to perform the following technical standards:

ACADEMIC SKILLS:

- In a timely manner, employ logical thinking, critical analysis, problem solving, and creativity in a variety of settings.
- Perform evidenced based reviews of the literature to guide informed decision-making.
- Perform appropriate screening, assessing, planning, providing care strategies, and formulate client and family centered education, and discharge preparations within a variety of settings and specified timelines.
- Demonstrate effective and timely clinical and research documentation.
- Gather and measure relevant data and synthesize results.
- Pose relevant questions and seek out appropriate responses in a timely manner.
- Demonstrate the ability to multi-task and address complex needs or solve dynamic problems.
- Generate graduate level papers, meet competency levels on assessments, including written and lab practical examinations.
- Prioritize and organize multiple workload needs.
- Demonstrate scholarly research skills necessary for completion of the research capstone project.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

- Demonstrate professional verbal, nonverbal, and written communication skills, including email correspondence, such as with faculty, staff, peers, fieldwork supervisors, guest participants, guest speakers, and research participants as necessary.
- Demonstrate computer competence in the use of word processing, email, learning management systems, course-specific software, databases, and search engines.
- Demonstrate effective communication to teach others.

SENSORIMOTOR SKILLS:

- Possess sufficient sensory and motor system function to elicit essential data from the manipulation of assessment materials and therapeutic technologies and equipment.
- Safely move, handle, and transfer various clients independently (up to 150 pounds).
- Perform manual dexterity and sensory-related tasks sufficiently such as to fabricate orthotic devices, adapt equipment, and safely use thermal, auditory, and electrical modalities.
- Safely perceive, navigate and modify varied environments and communities for the therapeutic benefit of self and others.
- Adjust personal posture, mobility, coordination, strength, and energy for the therapeutic process.
- Perform sensory and motor skills in a timely manner for safety and competency considerations.

BEHAVIORAL-INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ABILITIES:

- Use sound judgment in regard to the safety of self and others and adhere to safety regulations within a variety of settings.
- Display honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility for behavior as expected of an occupational therapist.
- Ability to effectively work with others who may have a range of impairments or disabilities.
- Ability to place personal needs secondary to the needs of others.
- Ability to respond and adjust actions or behaviors.
- Ability to demonstrate empathy, integrity and sincere concern for others.
- Ability to display effective social and interpersonal skills within a variety of settings and cultures.
- Ability to seek out professional self-development opportunities.
- Display flexibility and adaptation appropriate to the demands and the needs of others.
- Display professional language, attire, and mannerisms in all professional environments including the classroom, laboratory, fieldwork, and volunteer experiences.
- Articulate personal needs in an appropriate and professional manner.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the use of self, including personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments, as a part of individual and group interactions.
- Demonstrate the ability to work well with others.
- Accept lifelong learning and competence expectations as a personal value.

HEALTH PROMOTION PRACTICES:

- Display good health practices and hygiene for safe interaction with others.
- Update immunization records as required by the University.
- Update certifications in CPR and First Aid within required timelines.
- Understand the importance of personal health, habits, and the prevention of disease/infection, including use of universal precautions.
- Display an awareness of personal issues and report issues that would interfere with the ability to perform essential functions competently.

