

## Technical Standards and Essential Requirements

The College of St. Scholastica Department of Occupational Therapy provides an accessible and inclusive community for all individuals. Technical Standards and Essential Requirements reflect the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students and occupational therapy practitioners must demonstrate. Successful participation in the MS OTH program requires that individuals admitted to the Program are able to demonstrate the Technical Standards at the time of admission. Essential functions must be demonstrated, with or without reasonable accommodations, in order to complete the Program and demonstrate competence of entry-level generalist practice.

Individual degrees of ability vary, however all students must be able to demonstrate the technical standards at admissions and be able to achieve the essential requirements by Program completion. Individuals who are admitted to the MS OTH Program who feel they do not possess the Technical Standards or may not be able to acquire the Essential Requirements by graduation are encouraged to contact The College's Center for Equal Access. The Technical Standards may be performed with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (AD).

Reasonable accommodations are established on an individual basis based on the request of the student to the Center for Equal Access. Accommodations are determined jointly between the Center for Equal Access and the Department of Occupational Therapy to determine reasonable accommodations for classroom and fieldwork and ensure the student is capable of performing all Technical Standards and Essential Functions established by the Program. Consideration must be given to whether the accommodations would jeopardize client safety or the education process of the student, other students or The College of St. Scholastica, including all course work and fieldwork requirements deemed essential for graduation. Students must maintain the technical standards throughout the Program and demonstrate preparedness to meet the essential functions of an occupational therapist at the time of graduation. Therefore, if a student's ability to complete the technical standards or make progress towards the Essential Requirements at any time during the Program should be communicated by the student with the Center for Equal Access to determine if reasonable accommodations are needed.

Students follow The College of St. Scholastica's policy and guidelines regarding accommodations if they want accommodation while on Level I or Level II fieldwork. Students requesting accommodations during fieldwork must contact the Center for Equal Access for assistance. Fieldwork accommodations may be different from academic accommodations, and may require a different accommodations letter from the Center for Equal Access. For example, assignment extensions may not apply

with documentation and intervention planning as deadlines are closely tied to timely feedback before scheduled sessions, meetings, or reimbursement. The student should consult with the Center of Equal Access in identifying appropriate fieldwork accommodations. Once the student receives the accommodations letter, they will consult with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) for next steps in contacting the fieldwork site regarding ability to provide reasonable accommodations. Fieldwork sites may require their own accommodations process in addition to The College of St. Scholastica's Center for Equal Access.

Students must demonstrate competence in five functional areas across each of these domains in order to progress in and complete the Occupational Therapy Program. These functional areas are: (1) observation, (2) sensory and motor coordination and function, (3) intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and application skills (4) communication, and (5) behavioral, social, personal, and professional attributes. The specific functions described below are considered critically important to the performance of the role of an entry-level occupational therapy professional.

## Observation

Technical standards - the admitted student must:

- Acquire information presented through demonstrations, experiences, and video/virtual reality
- Utilize visual, tactile, auditory, and other sensory and perceptual modes for observation and acquiring information

Essential requirements - the graduating student will:

- Observe individuals to evaluate their occupational performance and safety
- Observe individuals' interaction with environment
- Observe individuals' environment for accessibility and potential safety hazards
- Observe and differentiate changes in anatomical structures and body movements
- Observe emotional affect, nonverbal cues, and response to occupational therapy process of both individuals and groups
- Transfer observations into written plan of care and communicate observations with individuals and the interdisciplinary team

## Sensory and motor coordination and function

Technical standards - the admitted student must:

- Participate in exploratory learning involving handling objects of various size, weight, and height with fine motor and gross motor tasks, including
  - Moving one's body to stand, walk, climb, bend, reach, stoop, balance,

- kneel, crouch/squat, crawl, and twist
- Lifting - floor to mid-thigh 20-50 pounds, mid-thigh to shoulder level 10-50 pounds, shoulder level and above 10-20 pounds (weights are approximate)
- Pushing/Pulling - floor to mat 10-100 pounds, mid-thigh to shoulder level 10-100 pounds, shoulder level and above 10-20 pounds (weights are approximate)
- Carrying with both hands more than 10 feet at least 10 pounds
- Move in a timely way to various classrooms and locations required for class/clinical experiences
- Maintain self in classroom and/or clinic for extended periods of time
- Process sensory information from people and the environment
- Produce concise, legible, and clear written communication (handwritten and electronic)
- Effectively use technology including computers, electronic devices, and online resources

Essential requirements - the graduating student will:

- Participate in active experiential learning situations that include performing and/or demonstrating ability to instruct others in manual and skilled tasks both in the classroom and clinical experiences; (e.g. occupation-based activities, orthotic fabrication, client transfers, preparatory activities, handling techniques, equipment management)
- Perform assessments and interventions that require such functions as palpation, manipulation of clinical tools, positioning of client and self, and demonstration of adaptive equipment and techniques
- Initiate emergency responses and/or assist others to provide prompt care
- Tolerate and safely handle body fluids (e.g., urine, fecal material, blood)
- Interpret and utilize sensory information from people and the environment

## Intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and application skills

Technical standards - the admitted student must:

- Receive, process, and comprehend text, oral presentation, numbers, and graphs displayed in print, lecture, and audio-visual formats and store information for self-reference
- Possess the following intellectual skills: attention, comprehension, measurement, mathematical calculation, reasoning, integration, analysis, comparison/contrast,

critical-thinking, problem-solving, planning

- Critically evaluate own performance and the performance of others
- Effective use of technologies including computer, electronic devices, and ability to interface with supporting software programs and online resources (e.g. learning management system, electronic health records, Exxat, database searches)
- Articulate rationales for decision making
- Produce legible, concise, and understandable written communication (handwritten and electronic)
- Able to read, understand, and apply policies and procedures of the MS OT Program and fieldwork sites

Essential requirements - the graduating student will:

- Recall, comprehend, analyze and synthesize information including organizing and prioritizing extensive amounts of information in short periods of time
- Apply critical thinking and clinical reasoning to didactic and fieldwork activities
- Utilize theoretical perspectives and occupation-based models during occupational therapy process
- Identify and interpret emotional affect, nonverbal cues, and response to intervention of both individual clients and groups of clients
- Select relevant methods for screening and evaluation
- Assess clients person factors, occupational performance, and contexts
- Modify, update, and terminate occupational therapy process and procedures as needed
- Accurately interpret evaluation results
- Use statistics, tests, measurements, and data for research and evidence-based practice
- Develop and implement intervention plans
- Determine scope, frequency and duration of service
- Supervise, select and delegate tasks, and collaborate with faculty, supervisors, peers, and colleagues
- Refer clients to other professional services and collaborate with other professionals involved in services for individuals, groups, and populations
- Follow all policies and procedures of practice settings

# Communication

Technical standards - the admitted student must:

- Read, write, and understand oral and written English to communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently
- Willingness to complete self-reflection for awareness of own bias and managing microaggressions (observed, inflicted, and received)
- Resolve conflicts and negotiate with others - Seek out and address problems or questions to the appropriate people at the appropriate times
- Interact with and communicate with others (including but not limited to peers, faculty and staff, clients, families/caregivers of clients, interdisciplinary professionals)
- Demonstrate awareness of own non-verbal communication and how it may be interpreted by others
- Communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently in a recorded format
- Participate effectively in small groups, class discussions, and presentations
- Receive and process technical and professional materials
- Follow instructions and processes and report to appropriate individuals any variations in adhering to instructions/processes

Essential requirements - the graduating student will:

- Communicate respectfully with others that is reflective of inclusion, belong, and justice for all individuals
- Read and record observations and plans efficiently, accurately, and legibly in the client record
- Prepare and communicate concise but complete assessments, progress notes, changes in individuals' performance and behavior, discharge summaries, and recommendations
- Communicate with clients to build rapport and elicit information
- Interpret verbal and nonverbal communication
- Effectively adjust communication for intended audience
- Communicate with supervisors and interdisciplinary professionals involved in educational activities and occupational therapy process

# Behavioral, social, personal, and professional attributes

Technical standards - the admitted student must:

- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, ethics, responsibility, compassion, stewardship, and respect for others including functioning in accordance with the role of College of St. Scholastica student and occupational therapy Code of Conduct in all professional, fieldwork, and research activities
- Respect others' rights and property
- Recognize and critically self-evaluate the impact of social status and professional attitudes, behaviors, values, and expectations in learning environments and throughout occupational therapy process
- Maintain commitment to the educational process
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of peers, faculty, staff, and clients, including adherence to HIPAA regulations in clinic/occupational therapy service settings
- Recognize potentially dangerous situations and equipment and proceed safely in order to minimize risk of injury to self or others
- Accept and give constructive feedback and criticism
- Comply with workplace setting safety requirements, which may include work area/equipment/supply regulations, clothing or physical requirements (e.g. scrubs, nail length for client safety/infection control)
- Complete required assignments and tests within required timelines
- Attend and participate in online and in-person classes, including face to face and virtual synchronous and asynchronous, for 30 or more hours per week during each academic semester. Classes consist of a combination of online and in-person lecture, discussion, large and small groups, clinical activities, and various assessment methods, which may include video recording
- Participate in additional activities outside of class time that enhance learning experiences
- Actively engage in self-directed learning process
- Engage appropriately in a supervisory process
- Consent to an annual tuberculosis screening and other immunizations required by the program or fieldwork settings or provide documentation of exempt status
- Complete and pass state and federal criminal background checks
- Maintain current CPR certification

## Essential requirements - the graduating student will:

- Adhere to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics
- Complete client interventions, assessments, and documentation within required timelines
- Create an environment that maximizes client responses
- Establish and maintain a location conducive to video conferencing, telemedicine fieldwork, and test monitoring.
- Appropriately apply concepts of universal precautions and infection control
- Collaborate with peers, faculty, staff, colleagues, and care team
- Take responsibility for professional competence, conduct, and growth
- Demonstrate consistent, professional work behaviors in classroom, clinic, and fieldwork
- Continue with lifelong learning to support professional development and continued competence
- Engage appropriately in a supervisory process
- Consent to annual safety and health requirements
- Complete and pass state and federal criminal background checks
- Maintain current CPR certification
- Adhere to HIPAA regulations

## Resources

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2018). [2018 ACOTE standards and interpretive guide \(effective July 31, 2020\)](#).

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). Guidelines for supervision, roles, and responsibilities during the delivery of occupational therapy services. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(Suppl. 3), 7413410020. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S3004> (AOTA membership required)

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2018). Guidelines for documentation of occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 72(Suppl. 2), 7212410010. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2018.72S203> (AOTA membership required)

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). AOTA 2020 occupational therapy code of ethics. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(Suppl. 3), 7413410005. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S3006>

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2021). Standards of practice for occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 75(Suppl. 3), 7513410030. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2021.75S3004> (AOTA membership required)

[College of St. Scholastica Center for Equal Access](#)

Gupta, J., Gelpi, T., & Sain, S. (2005). Reasonable accommodations and essential job functions in academic and practice settings. *OT Practice*, 10(15). CE-1-CE-8. (AOTA membership required)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Your rights under section 504 of the rehabilitation act.](#)

U.S. Department of Justice. (2010). [Americans with disabilities act of 1990, as amended.](#)