

Occupational Therapy Program
Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion, and Graduation

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Program includes a BS/MS entry-level professional degree. The BS/MS degree prepares a graduate to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy Examination. During the first two years of the BS/MS program, the student receives a liberal arts education in pre-professional studies. The professional program is structured to prepare the student for personal and professional development. It is flexible enough to meet the needs and interests of individuals while still insuring that upon graduation, the student will be competent to enter the profession. All students admitted into the OT program are expected to meet the essential functions and technical standards that follow.

If a student cannot demonstrate the skills and abilities outlined in this document, it is their responsibility to request reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation refers to ways in which the university can assist a student with a disability to accomplish specific tasks (for example: providing extra time to complete an examination or enhancing the sound system in a classroom). Reasonable accommodation does *not* mean that a student with a disability will be exempt from completing certain tasks; it *does* mean that the OT Program will work with a student with a disability in the BS/MS program to determine whether there are ways that can assist the student toward successful completion of the tasks.

A student for admission with a disability is not required to disclose the specifics of his or her disability, but prior to the start of either the BS/MS required courses, the student must indicate that they can complete these tasks, with or without reasonable accommodation. A student who cannot complete these tasks, even with reasonable accommodation, is ineligible for admission and so any previously made admission will be withdrawn. Once admitted, a student with a disability who wishes reasonable accommodation must contact the office of Accessibility Resources, located at 25 Capen Hall, at the North Campus. Their phone number is: (716) 645-2608 and their website is:

<http://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/who-we-are/departments/accessibility.html>

An offer of admission may be withdrawn if it becomes apparent that the student cannot complete essential tasks, even with accommodation, or if accommodations needed are not reasonable and would cause undue hardship to the institution, or if fulfilling the functions would create a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of others.

A student considering, or who has been accepted for admission into the OT degree program that has questions regarding these technical standards, or would like to discuss specific accommodations, should contact the Program Director for the Occupational Therapy Program.

For the successful completion of degree requirements, a student must be able to meet these minimum standards with or without reasonable accommodation.

Observation Skills

Observation requires the functional use of vision, hearing and somatic sensations to observe demonstrations and audio/visual materials as well as the ability to participate in lecture and laboratory experiences required by the curriculum. A student must have visual perception which includes depth and acuity. The student must be able to observe clients accurately during assessment and intervention as well as be able to obtain an appropriate medical history directly from the client or guardian. A student must be able to observe a client accurately at a distance and close at hand while noting non-verbal and verbal signals.

Communication Skills

Communication includes: speech, language, reading, writing and computer literacy. A student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively while conveying a sense of compassion and empathy towards clients to elicit information regarding mood and activities, as well as perceive non-verbal communications. The student must be able to communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently in oral and written English with all members of the team providing services. This includes the effective use of interpreter services for non-English speaking clients. A student must be able to complete forms according to directions in a complete and timely fashion. The student must also have the ability to use therapeutic communication, such as attending, clarifying, coaching, facilitating and touching. These skills are expected to be performed in clinical settings as well as in classroom and laboratory settings.

Motor/Psychomotor Skills

A student must possess sufficient motor function to obtain information from the client examination through assessment and intervention. This information may be elicited through observation, palpation, physical facilitation and inhibition. This includes verbal prompting and physical guidance to ensure the movement and safety of the client. A student must be able to motor plan and execute movements required to provide general and therapeutic care, including the positioning and transferring of clients as well as the ability to sit or stand over an extended period of time. The student must have the physical strength to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency treatment to clients. Motor and psychomotor skills require coordination of both gross and fine motor movement, equilibrium and the integrated use of touch and vision. The student is required to have the manual dexterity, strength and movement to perform tasks involving grasping, manipulating, pushing, pulling, holding, extending, rotating and lifting.

Intellectual – Conceptual Integrative and Quantitative Analysis Abilities

To effectively solve problems, the student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize information in a timely fashion. For example, the student must be able to synthesize knowledge and integrate the relevant aspects of a client's history, evaluation regarding the administration and interpretation of standardized and non-standardized assessment and other relevant data. A student must be able to provide a reasoned explanation for likely therapy, recalling and retaining information in an efficient and timely manner. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, instructors and professional literature in formulating evidenced-based treatment plans and interventions is essential to professional practice. The

student must have the ability to use computers for searching, recording, storing, retrieving, and communicating information.

Behavioral/ Social Attributes and Professionalism

The student is expected to demonstrate attributes of empathy, integrity, concern for others, appropriate interpersonal skills and motivation upon admission and throughout the program. The student must also possess the emotional well-being required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities. The student is also expected to exercise good judgment for the prompt completion of all responsibilities inherent to diagnosis and assessment and intervention, and for the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with clients. A student must be able to tolerate both physically and mentally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. The student must be able to adapt to a changing environment, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of clients. As a component of the student's education, they must demonstrate ethical behavior at all times.

Specifically, students must be able to:

1. Attend and participate in classes for 30 or more hours per week during each academic semester. Classes consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, laboratory, clinical activities and various testing methods.
2. Use auditory, tactile and visual senses to receive classroom instruction and to evaluate and treat clients or patients.
3. Read, write, speak and understand English at a level consistent with successful course completion and development of positive client-therapist relationships.
4. Complete readings, assignments and other activities outside of class hours.
5. Apply critical thinking processes to their work for courses and fieldwork.
6. Exercise sound judgment in class and at fieldwork sites.
7. Work effectively with instructors and peers in a variety of course and clinical assignments.
8. Participate in fieldwork experiences which typically require students to be present up to 40 or more hours per week on a schedule that corresponds to the operating hours of the site.
9. Independently gather decision-making pieces of information during client assessment activities in class or at the fieldwork site.
10. Perform assessment and intervention activities in class or at the clinical setting.
11. Sit for three to eight hours daily; stand for one to four hours continuously.
12. Frequently lift weights less than 10 pounds and occasionally lift weights between 10 and 50 pounds.
13. Occasionally carry up to 25 pounds while walking up to 50 feet.
14. Frequently exert 75 pounds of push/pull forces to objects for up to 50 feet and occasionally exert 150 pounds of push/pull force for this distance.
15. Frequently twist, bend and stoop.
16. Occasionally kneel, squat, crawl, climb stools and reach above shoulder level.
17. Frequently move from place to place and position to position at a speed that permits safe handling of classmates and clients.
18. Frequently stand and walk while providing support to a classmate simulating a disability or while supporting a client or patient with a disability.

19. Climb stairs and negotiate uneven terrain.
20. Frequently use hands repetitively with a simple grasp and frequently use a firm grasp and manual dexterity skills.
21. Frequently coordinate cognitive, visual/perceptual activities with sensorimotor activities.

Essential Tasks for Admission, Promotion and Graduation

The tasks listed below are essential for all students considering admittance to the OT Program, and through the duration of the program, to be recommended as a candidate for graduation. The ability to perform these tasks assists in ensuring a safe and effective classroom environment, and to protect students, clients, patients, and faculty. If a student is unable to comply with any of the following tasks, he or she should not enter the program. Failure to comply with the regulations listed below once admitted to the program may lead to dismissal.

Students must agree to:

- 1) Follow safety procedures established for each class and clinic.
- 2) Interact with others appropriately and as needed, for productive classroom discussion, respectful interaction with classmates and faculty, and development of appropriate therapist-client relationships.
- 3) Maintain personal appearance and hygiene conducive to classroom and clinical settings, including adhering to a professional dress code.
- 4) Demonstrate appropriate health status prior to enrollment, with annual updates on some items; no active tuberculosis; rubella (German measles) and rubeola (measles) immunity; tetanus-diphtheria booster within 10 years of anticipated graduation; and hepatitis B vaccine series or written declination,
- 5) Annually complete OSHA-regulated Blood-borne Pathogen Exposure Training.
- 6) Follow standards, policies and procedures specified in the OT Program Student Handbook, in the Affiliation Agreement (contract between university and clinical sites), and in the Fieldwork Handbook. The most recent copies of these documents are available for review.
- 7) Complete required HIPAA training and provide a paper copy of certificate of completion to the OT Program.