

## TECHNICAL STANDARDS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA) must possess the knowledge, skills and personal capacities to work with diverse populations, including individuals with physical and mental disabilities, in a variety of settings including: hospitals, long term care facilities, schools, supported employment environments, homes, community programs, assisted living and adult day programs, and community settings.

These technical standards are intended to provide awareness of the skills required for the OTA Program at St. Catherine University. The standards are not conditions of admission to the program, but persons interested in applying to the OTA Program should review the standards to gain a better understanding of the skills, abilities, and behavioral expectations necessary to complete the OTA Program and prepare to be an occupational therapy professional. The University complies with the requirements of the Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Therefore, in partnership with Disability Resources, reasonable accommodations will be considered and implemented.

### Students with Disabilities

**Student Responsibility:** Equal access is a right of students with disabilities, but it requires students to advocate for this right. Students must initiate the request for an accommodation, provide current documentation, and bring forth additional requests. The OTA Program will provide reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to learning materials, but the student must be able to meet all academic requirements, abide by the student code of conduct, and demonstrate professional behaviors.

**Disclosure:** Students are not required to disclose that they have a disability, nor are they required to disclose any specific information about their disability, unless they wish to request accommodation for their disability. Formal disclosure requires that the student submit appropriate documentation to the Disability Resource Center. The information will be reviewed and the student will be assisted to identify appropriate accommodations.

Although students may discuss their disabilities or needs with their academic advisor or other faculty or staff, this discussion alone does not constitute formal disclosure. Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodations until formal disclosure is made and the Disability Resource Center has required the implementation of specific accommodations. Early disclosure may enable faculty to help the student adjust his or her program in ways that optimize the student's performance and that may prevent potential problems.

### Technical Standards and Essential Requirements

Technical standards and essential requirements describe functions necessary for students to complete their education and training in the OTA Program and to assume the role of an occupational therapy professional. They are stated to ensure that all students, regardless of disability status, are aware of the expectations of the program. Academic requirements are not waived due to a student's disability. Students must be able to meet the academic requirements and behavior expectations with the approved accommodations.

Technical standards are the skills, knowledge and experience the student must bring to the program (often as part of the admissions process), and are considered essential to participate in the OTA Program. Essential requirements are those skills and abilities that all students must be able to do, with or without accommodation, to complete fieldwork experiences and graduate from the program. The OTA Program views technical standards and essential requirements as lying within the overlapping domains of academic performance, clinical performance, and the broader context of social behavior.

The following are the behavioral, social, personal, and professional abilities students must possess to successfully complete coursework in the OTA Program. The OT student must be able and willing to:

1. Observe and participate in academic and fieldwork settings.

Additional essential requirements include the capacity to:

- Observe patients to evaluate the patient's functioning and safety status
- Observe demonstrated clinical techniques
- Interpret emotional affect, nonverbal cues, and response to treatment of both individual clients and groups of clients
- Observe and differentiate changes in anatomical structures and body movements
- Participate successfully in a structured manipulative or craft activity
- Participate in exploratory learning involving handling objects of various size, weight, and height
- Move in a timely way to various classrooms and locations required for class/clinical experiences
- Maintain a stationary position for extended periods of time
- 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. fabricating splints, patient transfers, art/craft activities, handling techniques to facilitate/inhibit movement)
- Perform assessments and treatments 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 not hinder co-workers' ability to provide prompt care

2. Communicate effectively in oral and written form with students, faculty, staff, clients, family, and other professionals in both the academic and healthcare settings.

Additional essential requirements include the capacity to:

- Exchange information effectively
- Seek out and address problems or questions to the appropriate people at the appropriate times
- Interact with and communicate meaning to others (e.g. instruct another to perform transfer)
- Communicate quickly, effectively, efficiently, and respectfully in a recorded format
- Communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently, and respectfully in oral English
- Participate in small group and class discussions and presentations
- Receive and process technical and professional materials
- Follow instructions
- 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 client behavior and function, discharge summaries, and recommendations
- Communicate with clients to build rapport and elicit information
- Interpret verbal and nonverbal communication

- Effectively adjust communication for intended audience

3. Apply cognitive skills for comprehending course materials, problem solving, clinical reasoning/ judgment and responsiveness to make decisions in a safe and effective manner.

Additional essential requirements include the capacity to:

- Take record of lectures for self-reference
- Receive, process, and comprehend text, oral presentation, numbers, and graphs displayed in print, lecture, and audiovisual formats including texts, journals, articles, and healthcare records
- Use technology responsibly and ethically
- Possess the following intellectual skills: comprehension, measurement, mathematical calculation, reasoning, integration, analysis, comparison/contrast, critical-thinking, problem-solving, planning
- Critically evaluate his/her performance and the performance of fellow students
- Utilize introduced theoretical perspectives and information during the observation, screening, and assessment process
- Select relevant methods for screening and evaluation
- Assess clients and contexts
- Modify screening and evaluation procedures as needed
- Accurately interpret evaluation results
- Demonstrate the ability to use statistics, tests, measurements, and research
- Develop and implement intervention plans
- Update, modify, and terminate interventions
- Determine service scope, frequency and duration
- Supervise, select and delegate tasks, and collaborate with the OT
- Refer clients to other professional services
- Follow all policies and procedures of program and clinical sites

4. Demonstrate emotional health and stability required for exercising good judgment, full use of intellectual abilities and prompt completion of all academic and fieldwork responsibilities as well as the ability to be flexible and to adapt to changing environments.

Additional essential requirements include the capacity to:

- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, ethics, responsibility, and compassion and dignity for others by adhering to the OT Code of Ethics
- Participate in all required program curriculum activities including ability to collaborate with others
- Effective interpersonal skills necessary for productive classroom discussion and respectful interaction with classmates, faculty, fieldwork educators and clients
- Respect others' rights and property
- Maintain lab area, equipment, supplies, personal appearance, and hygiene in a professional manner
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of fellow students, instructors, and clients
- Complete all required assignments and tests in a timely manner consistent with program expectations
- Use judgment in safety
- Adhere to safety precautions
- Recognize potentially dangerous situations and equipment and proceed safely in order to minimize risk of injury to self or others

- Use equipment in intended manner
- Attend class approximately 35+ hours per week including lectures, laboratory, and integrated clinical experiences.
- Attend fieldwork full time (up to 12 hours/day), assuming the physical, cognitive, and emotional responsibilities/demands of an entry level OTA
- Consent to immunizations required by the Program or fieldwork settings or provide documentation of exempt status
- Complete compliance requirements of university and fieldwork sites in a timely manner, e.g. background checks, drug screens, fingerprinting/Live Scans
- Remain up-to-date on CPR and First Aid certifications
- Accept and give constructive feedback and criticism
- Create an environment that maximizes client responses
- Take responsibility for professional competence, conduct, and growth
- Demonstrate consistent work behaviors in classroom, clinic, and fieldwork
- Engage appropriately in a supervisory process

\*Students with sensory or motor limitations may be able to perform and function as an occupational therapy assistant. They should possess the ability to direct others, and/or use assistive technology to safely complete a task in a timely manner.

### **Disability Resources**

*(Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act)*

St. Catherine University is committed to creating and promoting accessible and inclusive learning environments for all. To achieve this goal, Disability Resources partners with students, faculty, and staff to ensure full access and participation in the University's programs and services.

Disability Resources consults with students to determine appropriate accommodations and identify resources that address barriers to access. The resources, strategies, and accommodations are individualized and determined on a case-by-case basis. Disability Resources works with students living with a variety of disabilities such as:

- Learning Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Psychological Disability
- Chronic Medical Conditions

Students work with the coordinator of Disability Resources to identify reasonable accommodations and other supportive services. If you anticipate needing accommodations or other support services through Disability Resources, please contact the coordinator as early as possible.

Contact information

*Lisa King, Disability Resources OTA Online*

*(612) 730-1806 **lbking@stkate.edu***

*Lisa lives in Oregon and is on Pacific time zone. Please email for an appointment.*