

## **Essential Skills Requirements for Occupational Therapy Practice**

Listed below are essential skills that a student should possess in order to progress satisfactorily through the Occupational Therapy Associate (OTA) curriculum. A prospective student with a disability that is concerned that the disability may impact his or her ability to perform one or more of these skills, provide patient care, or participate in other job activities, is encouraged to contact a disabilities services counselor for assistance by calling 919-536-7207.

**Critical Thinking:** The OTA student must possess critical thinking skills sufficient for clinical judgment. The student must be able to use the OT process as a basis for solving client problems, including identifying cause and effect relationships in clinical situations, developing appropriate interventions, and safely and effectively providing treatment.

**Interpersonal Skills:** The OTA student should possess interpersonal and self-management skills sufficient to interact with individuals, families and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds. The student must be able to establish therapeutic relationships with patients, families and significant others.

**Communication:** The OTA student should possess communication skills sufficient for interaction with clients, caregivers and other professionals in verbal and written form. The student must be able to effectively report and document clinical observations, provide client and caregiver instruction, gather data through interviewing, participate in team meetings and provide in-service presentations.

**Mobility:** The OTA student should possess physical skills sufficient to maneuver throughout the facility and within small spaces to provide effective intervention. The student must be able to move around in patient rooms, bathrooms and other workspaces to provide effective treatment implementation.

**Motor Skills:** The OTA student should possess gross and fine motor skills sufficient to function as an OTA. The student must be able to use equipment, fabricate and use adapted devices, fabricate splints and utilize motor activities in client treatment as required by the work site. The student must also be able to position, transfer and transport clients, provide physical assistance and demonstrate physical endurance adequate for the workplace.

**Hearing:** The OTA student should possess auditory skills sufficient to monitor and assess client needs. The student must be able to hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, auscultatory sounds (breath and heart sounds) and cries for help.

**Visual:** The OTA student should possess visual skills sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in OTA practice. The student must be able to observe patient/client responses to treatment, see a change in skin color and read assessment instruments.

**Tactile:** The OTA student should possess tactile skills sufficient for physical assessment. The student must be able to perform palpation, physical examination, such as manual muscle testing, and/or tactile functions related to therapeutic intervention.

**Emotional:** The OTA student should possess emotional stability sufficient to maintain composure in stressful situations. The student must be able to interact appropriately with peers, clients and supervisors at all times, including during high stress, and to receive corrective feedback calmly.

**Environmental:** The OTA student should be able to tolerate environmental stressors. The student must be able to adapt to variations in work schedule, work with clients who may have open wounds, or be soiled or unbathed, work with chemicals and materials required for OT practice, and work in areas that are close or crowded.

*I verify that I have read and fully understand the Essential Requirements for OT Practice. I also understand that if I have a disability requiring accommodation in any of the above skill areas, that it is my responsibility to contact the personnel listed above before beginning the program, to determine whether a suitable accommodation can be made that would enable me to effectively provide OT services.*

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Program of Study \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_