

**East Carolina University
Occupational Therapy Department**

**Occupational Therapy Essential Functions and Technical Standards
For Program Admission and Continued Enrollment**

The Essential Functions and Technical Standards for admission and continued enrollment establish the expectations and requisite abilities considered necessary for professionals in the field of occupational therapy (MSOT). Graduate students in the entry-level graduate Occupational Therapy program at East Carolina University (ECU), College of Allied Health Sciences are to achieve the level of competency required for graduation and practice as applicable. It is recognized the degrees of ability vary widely among individuals, but all students must be able achieve competency in the Essential Functions and Technical Standards in areas such as cognition, critical thinking, physical and emotional demands, ethical standards, communication, safety, etc. needed to evaluate and treat those with physical and mental disabilities and analyze medical data to determine realistic rehabilitation goals for patients/clients.

Admission candidates who feel they may not be able to acquire the Essential Functions and Technical Standards set forth are encouraged to contact the Occupational Therapy Department. Any admission's candidate, who may require academic accommodations to fulfill the Essential Functions and Technical Standards, due to a disability, is encouraged to contact ECU's Office of Disability Support Services at 252-737-1016 or dssdept@ecu.edu. ECU's Occupational Therapy Department seeks to ensure that qualified persons with disabilities are not denied admission or subject to discrimination in the admission to the Program. The Occupational Therapy Department is committed to enabling students, by any reasonable means or accommodations, to complete the entry-level master's degree in occupational therapy.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

To be successful in the entry-level graduate Occupational Therapy program and perform the essential functions of these professionals, a student must consistently:

1. Utilize appropriate and effective spoken, written, and nonverbal communication with clients/patients, caregivers, and other professionals from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
2. Possess the intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and achieve the levels of competence required by the Occupational Therapy program.
3. Have the cognitive ability to learn complex information, be able to perform clinical problem-solving, and synthesize and apply information from the discipline of occupational therapy and related disciplines to formulate diagnostic and treatment judgments.
4. Possess sufficient motor, sensory, memory, and gross/fine motor coordination abilities to perform routine client/patient care and ensure patient safety.

5. Have the capacity to maintain composure and emotional stability during periods of high stress and emergency situations.
6. Demonstrate affective skills and appropriate demeanor and rapport that relate to professional education and quality client/patient care.
7. Demonstrate flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in an academic or clinical environment.
8. Have the ability to reliably and critically self-evaluate professional, technical, and personal skills that contribute to positive patient/client outcomes.
9. Have the ability to accept constructive criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

The Technical Standards for admission to and continued enrollment in the entry-level graduate Occupational Therapy program reflect the essential qualities and abilities needed for a student's successful academic and/or clinical performance. The ability to meet these Technical Standards is required for admission and must be maintained throughout a student's progress in the entry-level Occupational Therapy graduate degree program. Characteristics of an occupational therapist include having integrity, adaptability/flexibility, concern for others, dependable, and self-control even in very difficult situations. Students should carefully review the Technical Standards below to determine if accommodation is needed in order to successfully perform any of the required academic and/or clinical skills.

Intellectual/Cognitive Abilities

A student must possess adequate intellectual, ethical, emotional, and cognitive skills to:

- Achieve academic and clinical knowledge and lifelong learning skills.
- Participate in clinical, community-based, and/or other settings and achieve the competence levels required by the academic and off-campus clinical supervisors.
- Critically think using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- Critically solve problems by identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions for successful patient/client outcomes.
- Self-evaluate, identify, and communicate limits of one's own knowledge and skills.
- Accept constructive written and/or verbal feedback from faculty, supervisors, colleagues, and peers in order to improve skills and abilities.
- Identify and utilize resources in order to increase knowledge and skills.
- Utilize detailed written and oral instruction in order to independently make decisions.

- Measure, calculate reason, analyze, judge, and synthesize, as needed, in the academic and clinical settings.
- Write in a concise and accurate manner; and, when in the clinic, document evaluation and treatment sessions in a timely and accurate manner.
- Manage one's own time and others effectively and efficiently.
- Develop specific goals and plans to prioritize, organize and accomplish your work in a timely manner.
- Understand through active learning the implications of new information of both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
- Ability to determine when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong, and then be able to act before there is a negative consequence.
- Ability to be creative about a given problem or situation including developing, designing, or creating new applications, ideas, relationships, assistive technology to assist with patient/client positive outcomes.
- Conduct research to increase knowledge base and add to current evidence-based practice.

Motor Skills

A student must possess adequate motor skills in order to actively participate in classroom, community, and clinical activities which include:

- Considerable use of arms and legs.
- Moving one's body to stand, walk, climb, bend, reach, stoop, balance, kneel, crouch/squat, crawl, twist, and handle materials.
- Lifting (i.e., Floor to mid-thigh 20 - 50#; Mid-thigh to shoulder level 10 - 50#; Shoulder level and above: 10 - 50#).
- Pushing/Pulling (i.e., Floor to mat 10 - 100#; Mid-thigh to Shoulder level: 10 - 100#; Shoulder level and above: 10 - 100#).
- Carrying with both hands more than 10 feet at least 10 or more pounds.
- Sufficient gross/fine motor coordination to execute movements reasonably required during classroom, community, and/or clinical activities, in general care, and emergency treatment for all patients/clients such as:
 - Evaluations (i.e., muscle palpation, range of motion, sensory processing, etc.)
 - Reaching and manipulating equipment in all required positions
 - Finger dexterity when performing precise measurements or splint/assistive technology fabrication
 - Documenting needs
 - Planning and implementing intervention sessions

Observation Skills

A student must demonstrate the ability to:

- Possess visual acuity, depth-perception, accommodation, color discrimination, and peripheral vision in order to observe others movements and body language.
- Observe a person accurately-- at a distance or close-up, with and/or without instrumentation.
- Acquire necessary and relevant information from written documents and for written documents.
- Visualize information presented in images from various formats.
- Interpret evaluation results.
- Perform formal and informal evaluations and treatment sessions including use of visual acuity, accommodation, and vision to discern differences and variations of movements, dexterity, functional performance, muscle integrity, etc..
- Interpret and, translate or explain what the observations mean in relation to a person's performance and/or capabilities.

Interpersonal, Emotional, and Social Attributes

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes in order to:

- Display mature, empathetic, and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.
- Manage high stress in both the academic and clinical setting, and, if needed, recognize the need to ask for help.
- Have emotional stability to function effectively under stress and the ability to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning or in unpredictable ways.
- Recognize and show respect for individuals of different ages, genders, races, religions, sexual orientations, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and disability levels.
- Recognize when others (i.e., students, faculty clients, family members) do or do not understand his/her written and/or oral communication.
- Manage apprehensive patients/clients presenting with a range of moods and behaviors in a tactful, congenial manner, so as not to alienate or antagonize.
- Maintain emotional and mental health to fully utilize her/his intellectual abilities and exercise good judgment including prompt completion of all academic and clinical responsibilities.
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, professionalism, and ethical behavior as set forth by the American Occupational Therapy Association and North Carolina Board of Occupational Therapy.
- Maintain confidentiality of student/client/patient information via all forms of communication (i.e., verbal, computer, and social media).
- Be socially perceptive of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- Encourage and build mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among team members.

Communications Skills

A student must demonstrate the ability to:

- Speak, hear, and observe others for the purpose of eliciting and/or perceiving information.
- Provide information to others (i.e., faculty, classmates, supervisors, patients, caregivers) by telephone, in written format, email, and/or in-person. Confidentiality is considered at all times.
- Communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written English formats with classmates, patients/clients, family members, and all members of the health care team, during both emergencies and non-emergency situations.
- Modify her/his communication style to meet diverse communicative needs.
- Ensure confidentiality of all patient/client related information in verbal or written format.
- Fluently communicate ideas related to a specific goal, topic, etc. for a positive patient/client outcome.
- Resolve conflicts and negotiate with others; provide consultation and advice to others; communicate with person outside the organization; and, guide, direct and motivate subordinates.
- Effectively communicate and schedule events, programs, activities, work responsibilities.
- Educate and train other students, professionals, patients/clients, and caregivers in a verbal or non-verbal manner that is at an appropriate level of understanding.

Fieldwork (FW) Accommodations:

A student must follow ECU's policy and guidelines regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) if she or he wants ADA accommodations while on his/her Fieldwork I or Fieldwork II internships. Students requesting accommodations during FW must contact the University Student's Disability Services for assistance. Please recognize FW accommodations may be different than academic accommodations, and may require a different accommodation letter from the University's Disability Support Services. The student should consult with the University's Disability Support Services for assistance in identifying appropriate fieldwork accommodations. Once the student receives this fieldwork accommodation letter, s/he will consult with the AFWC and provide both verbal and written approval for the AFWC to contact a FW II site(s) to determine if the FW II site(s) would be able to provide reasonable accommodations for the student in order to successfully complete his/her FW II.

Occupational Therapy Program's Student Essential Functions and Technical Standards

Candidates for the entry-level graduate Occupational Therapy program who have been accepted for admission will be required to verify they understand and meet these Essential Functions and Technical Standards. Admission decisions are made on the assumption that each candidate can meet and fulfill the Essential Functions and Technical Standards with or without reasonable accommodation(s).

The ECU Disability Support Services office will review a student's request for accommodation, and confirm the stated condition qualifies as a disability under applicable laws.

If an applicant states s/he can meet the Essential Functions and Technical Standards with accommodation(s), the Program will determine whether it agrees with the applicant; this includes a review of whether the accommodations(s) would jeopardize patient/client safety or the educational process of the student, other students, or the institution, including all course work and internship/practicum placements deemed essential to graduation. At any time in the course of a student's enrollment in the program, should her/his needs change; the student may request accommodation through the Disability Support Services office.

ECU's Disability Support Services and the Occupational Therapy Department will jointly decide what accommodations are suitable and possible in terms of reasonable accommodation(s) in the classroom and fieldwork environment, which will render the applicant as a student capable of performing all Essential Functions and Technical Standards established by the Program.

I certify I have read and understand the Essential Functions and Technical Standards of admission to ECU's entry-level graduate Occupational Therapy Department, and I believe to the best of my knowledge I meet each of these standards without accommodation.

Applicant Signature

Date

Alternative statement for students requesting accommodations:

I certify I have read and understand the Essential Functions and Technical Standards of admission to ECU's entry-level graduate Occupational Therapy Department, and I believe to the best of my knowledge I meet each of these standards with certain accommodation(s). I will contact ECU's Office of Disabilities Support Services to determine what accommodations are available.

Applicant Signature

Date