

University of Arkansas and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program Technical Standards

For Program Admission and Continued Enrollment

## Introduction

The University of Arkansas Fayetteville (UAF) and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Occupational Therapy Doctoral (OTD) Program's Technical (core performance) standards establish the expectations and requisite abilities necessary for professionals in the field of occupational therapy. Graduate students in the UAF/UAMS OTD program are expected to achieve the level of competency required for graduation and entry-level practice.

The stated mission of the Occupational Therapy (OT) Department at UAF/UAMS is to prepare future practitioners who will be:

- **Change agents**, by challenging the boundaries of current occupational therapy practice through purposeful exploration of new practice domains and models of care;
- **Innovators**, by identifying unmet needs in their practice settings and communities and by creating dynamic interventions and programs to meet those needs;
- **Collaborators**, by working at the top of their license in integrated interprofessional teams to effectively meet society's needs;
- **Advocates**, by being global citizens and champions for occupational justice and improved quality of life for all people;
- **Stewards**, by practicing conscious care for themselves, the people they serve, and the profession's distinct value to society; and
- **Scholars**, by demonstrating (and maintaining) deliberate habits of rigorous lifelong inquiry.

In order to meet this mission and satisfy professional requirements for entry-level practice, students are expected to achieve the Technical Standards as defined in this document.

Applicants who feel they may not be able to acquire the Technical Standards set forth are encouraged to contact the OT Department [otd@uark.edu](mailto:otd@uark.edu). Any applicant or student who may require academic accommodations to fulfill the Technical Standards due to a disability, is encouraged to contact UAF's Center for Educational Access (CEA) at [ada@uark.edu](mailto:ada@uark.edu) or (479) 575-3104. Applicants who have been accepted for admission to the OTD program will be required to verify they understand and meet these Technical Standards.

## Technical Standards

To be successful in the entry-level OTD program and perform the technical standards of occupational therapy professionals, a student must consistently meet general, observational, communication, motor, critical thinking, interpersonal abilities as defined below. Students must

also demonstrate requisite behavioral and social attributes and ethical standards as defined below in an accurate, safe, and efficient manner to the satisfaction of the faculty, with or without reasonable accommodation.

**General Abilities:** To provide quality health care, students must possess functional sensorimotor, process, and social interaction skills. All data received must be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized consistently, accurately, and efficiently to engage in meaningful interaction and ensure patient and peer safety. In addition, the individual must possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, equilibrium, and movement and react to changes in an efficient and adaptive manner to keep clients, colleagues, and themselves safe.

Essential skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to:

### **Observe**

Participate in and observe demonstrations and experiments including those in which biologicals (e.g. cadaver, living human beings) are manipulated.

Achieve required competencies in classroom, lab, clinical, and community settings from a variety of educational experiences.

Accurately observe human performance of occupation, discriminate between safe/unsafe environments, effective/ineffective performance, and therapeutic/non-therapeutic behaviors and contexts from a distance and up-close.

Demonstrate adequate functional visual, tactile, auditory, and other sensory and perceptual modalities to acquire information through observation in an efficient and adaptive manner.

### **Communicate**

Communication skills are the foundation from which students build relationships with faculty, fellow graduate students, coworkers, clients, communities, and other student roles as learner, advocate, innovator, collaborator, scholar, change agent, and steward.

Effectively and efficiently communicate verbally, non-verbally, and in writing.

Accurately observe, recognize, and understand non-verbal behavior.

Effectively and efficiently elicit information, accurately describe verbal and non-verbal responses, and demonstrate cultural and social sensitivity.

Gather, comprehend, utilize, synthesize, and disseminate information effectively and efficiently following ethical standards.

Read, write, and effectively communicate using the English language.

Actively participate in group, face-to-face, and online discussions and presentations using clear, organized, and professional practices.

## **Psychomotor Performance**

Perform or effectively direct others to perform gross and fine motor movements required in the provision of occupational therapy services, including equipment operation and care delivery.

Possess adequate motor functions, including physical strength and coordination, to safely handle or provide direct instruction for clinical assistants to safely handle clients in a variety of settings, under a variety of conditions.

Safely perform physical activities requiring considerable gross and fine motor skills such as lifting, turning, climbing, getting up and down from the floor, balancing, walking, bending, stooping, handling of materials and people, and utilizing tools/ activities, as required in the practice setting.

Tolerate being in close proximity and in physical contact with others and in groups.

Effectively assist with procedures, treatments, managing equipment, and emergency interventions.

Maintain consciousness, equilibrium and have physical strength and stamina to perform satisfactorily in classroom, lab, clinical, and community experiences.

## **Learn**

Attend all classes and labs each week as described in each specific semester schedule.

Participate in all clinical rotations, both integrated clinical experiences and full-time clinical experiences, which corresponds to the operating hours of the sites.

Operating hours during full-time clinical experiences can be 40 hours or more per week.

Move from place to place and position to position at a speed that permits safe handling of classmates and patients, unless enacting official accommodations.

Administer CPR unless enacting official accommodations.

Manipulate very small equipment, palpate body structures, handle injured body parts without causing injury to the subject and safely guide a patient's movement.

Perform physical tasks while maintaining awareness of external factors; including patient response, monitor displays, equipment function and/or surroundings.

## **Think Critically**

Develop the following problem solving/clinical reasoning skills: ability to measure, calculate, integrate, process, apply, retain data, analyze and synthesize objective and subjective data, and make decisions using evidence-based, sound clinical judgement.

Employ ingenuity, creativity, and imagination to solve novel, complex real-world occupation centered issues.

Comprehend complex relationships between individuals, objects, environments, and contexts (e.g. spatial, interpersonal, and societal).

### **Maintain Interpersonal Relationships**

Exercise sound judgment during interpersonal interactions, including accepting and providing productive/constructive feedback.

Accurately complete assessments, employ therapeutic interventions, responsibly supervise others, and participate productively in interdisciplinary teams.

Inspire trust, respect, and employ therapeutic use of self.

Maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with individuals, families, groups, and communities from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.

Be adaptive and function effectively under stress while maintaining professionalism, concern for others, integrity, accountability, interest, and motivation.

### **Self-Regulate**

Exercise sound judgment, promptly complete duties as assigned, develop mature relationships with clients, and effectively employ therapeutic use of self.

Tolerate and function under rigorous physical, mental, and emotional academic and clinical workloads.

Adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and effectively function despite uncertainties inherent to academic, clinical, and community settings.

Be self-reflective, able to self- correct, and demonstrate open and responsive reactions to feedback.

Demonstrate compassion, integrity, concern for others, effective interpersonal skills, interest, motivation, and commitment without bias or prejudice to meet the occupational needs of all people.

Work cooperatively and collaboratively with other students, faculty, clinical educators, and community partners. Willingly participate in supervisory processes involving evaluation of others and themselves and constructively provide and receive feedback.

**Practice Ethical Standards:**

Develop and exhibit professional ethical behavior, recognize pertinent legal and ethical standards, and apply these appropriately.

Adhere to policies of the university, the program, and clinical sites, including professional dress, behavior, and attendance.

Demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics, and behavior that reflects a sense of right and wrong.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply to the program. Applicants or students who require reasonable accommodations to meet the Technical Standards described above must contact the Center for Educational Access (CEA) and complete the registration procedures outlined on the CEA [website](#) before any accommodations can be implemented. While applicants or students should engage in discussion with the OT Program Director, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs in the College of Health Professions at UAMS, and the Associate Dean of Academic & Student Affairs in the College of Education and Health Professions at UAF about the need for accommodations, conversations should be focused on: barriers in the academic environment, how they might be reduced, and if requested accommodations could impact clinical rotations and future employment options. Applicants or students do not have to disclose their disability or provide any supporting documentation to anyone other than the CEA.

Due to the time required to properly evaluate students' needs and implement reasonable accommodations, it is recommended that students contact the CEA to register and request accommodations as early as possible, preferably prior submitting your program application.