



# SUNY DOWNSTATE Health Sciences University

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

# MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND CONTINUATION

**Read this information sheet carefully and retain for your records**

## Introduction

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University's services, programs or activities or be subjected to discrimination by SUNY Downstate. The term "qualified individual with a disability" means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or for participation in programs or activities. The Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. Students must be able to perform the essential functions of the program in order to meet certain minimum academic and technical standards. In carrying out their functions, the Committee will be guided by the technical standards set forth in this proposal as standards necessary for admissions, continuance and successful completion of the program. This information is used in conjunction with the policies and procedures as delineated in the *Policy and Procedure Manual for the Master of Science Program in Occupational Therapy*.

## Technical Standards

The candidate for M.S. Degree in Occupational Therapy must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical, community, and/or educational environments and to provide a wide spectrum of occupational therapy interventions. In order to perform the essential functions required of the profession, the student must be able to learn, evaluate, integrate, and synthesize information quickly, accurately and consistently.

A candidate for the MS degree in Occupational Therapy must have abilities, attributes and skills in five major areas:

- Observation
- Communication
- Motor Coordination
- Intellectual, including conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities and
- Behavioral/Social

Note: In this document, we use the term "client" to refer to recipients of occupational therapy services. In various treatment settings, these recipients of services may also be called "patients", "students", or "consumers".

### 1. Observation

Students must have sufficient vision to be able to observe demonstrations, experiments and laboratory exercises in the basic sciences. To participate in the clinical component of the curriculum, students must be able to observe a client accurately at close range and at a distance, be able to obtain an appropriate medical, social and activity history directly from the client, guardian or caregiver, and observe digital readings and other graphic images to determine a client's condition. In addition, students must be able to plan and modify treatment in response to subtle observations of movement skills and clients' cognitive and emotional responses to therapeutic interventions. Such observation necessitates the functional use of vision, hearing and other sensory modalities.

## **2. Communication**

Students must be able to communicate, understand and observe clients in order to elicit information, evaluate function, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. They must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with clients. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. They must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team to convey information for safe and effective care.

## **3. Motor Coordination and Strength**

Students must demonstrate sufficient mobility, motor coordination, strength and stamina required to perform assessments and interventions with clients who may have cognitive, emotional, sensory, and/or mobility impairments. Students should be sufficiently mobile to provide assessments and interventions related to balance, posture, movement, endurance, sensory processing, and performance of daily activities. Students must also demonstrate sufficient fine motor coordination and motor planning skills to design and fabricate orthotics, positioning devices, and adaptive equipment that facilitates performance of daily activities. In addition, students should demonstrate sufficient motor abilities to provide emergency treatment, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

## **4. Intellectual—conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities**

Students must demonstrate intellectual abilities necessary for attention, comprehension, measurement, calculation, memorization, integration, analysis, and synthesis of conceptual and clinical information. Spatial reasoning requires the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships between structures in the human body and to assess the physical environment to determine appropriate therapeutic strategies for occupational therapy clients. Clinical reasoning, a core skill for occupational therapists, requires critical thinking, problem solving, judgment, and planning. In addition, students should be able to identify and interpret emotional affect, nonverbal cues, and response to intervention by individual clients and groups of clients.

## **5. Behavioral and Social**

Students must demonstrate the ability to organize and manage their time, in order to complete educational and clinical responsibilities. Students must demonstrate sufficient emotional health to be able to fully utilize their intellectual abilities and exercise appropriate judgment in a variety of settings with teachers, fellow students, clients, families and colleagues. Students must be capable of adapting their physical presentation and interaction style, to be appropriate in a variety of educational and clinical settings. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility in different clinical situations, and learn to function in the presence of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of clients. Students must demonstrate the ability to use professional touch in interactions with students, faculty and clients of both genders. This must be demonstrated in coursework and fieldwork. Several laboratory classes require that students practice evaluation or intervention techniques with classmates. It is expected that students will wear specified clothing and/or manually interact with fellow students and teachers of both genders when participating in these practical learning experiences. Students must be prepared to honestly answer questions on applications for certification and licensure about any previous history of conviction of a crime. Students must demonstrate compassion, ethical behavior, integrity, empathy, and concern for individuals from all facets of society.

## Conclusion

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Occupational Therapy Program and its sponsoring institution will attempt to develop creative ways of opening the Program to competitive, qualified individuals with disabilities. In doing so, however, the Program and sponsoring institution must maintain the integrity of the curriculum and preserve those elements deemed essential to the education of an occupational therapist. The Program and sponsoring institution cannot compromise the health and safety of patients. An applicant or student who is unable to meet the minimum academic and technical standards is not qualified for the practice of the profession.

## Signature

I have read, understand and agree to the technical standards as published above.

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Signature

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Date