



# University of Pittsburgh

*School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
Department of Occupational Therapy*

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS / ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

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Students in the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) Program at the University of Pittsburgh must possess essential skills (sensorimotor, process, social interaction) to perform all educational (classroom, laboratory and clinical), fieldwork, and experiential preceptorship tasks in an accurate, safe and efficient manner, to the satisfaction of the faculty, with or without reasonable accommodation. These essential skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to:

### **Sensorimotor Skills**

1. Complete comprehensive OT evaluations and conduct intervention sessions which may include measuring range of motion, strength, endurance, muscle tone, pain level, activities of daily living skills, instrumental activities of daily living skills, fine motor skills, transfer skills, functional mobility, balance, response to sensation, cognitive status, and home management skills.
2. Assume a variety of body postures (i.e., sitting, standing, walking, bending, squatting, kneeling, stair climbing, reaching forward, reaching overhead, twisting of the trunk and neck in all directions).
3. Execute appropriate psychomotor movements required for manual handling and manipulation of various object/person sizes and weights including lifting and transferring clients, guarding clients during functional ambulation on level surfaces/uneven surfaces/ramps/stairs, pushing and pulling to provide resistance and to assist in maneuvering and transitioning clients (i.e., dressing, toileting, bed mobility).
4. Demonstrate postural control, neuromuscular control, eye/hand coordination, strength and integrated function of the senses of vision, hearing, tactile sense, vestibular and proprioception to manipulate and use common occupational therapy equipment, devices, materials and supplies, and demonstrate competency in the use of these objects.
5. Demonstrate sufficient endurance to prepare the educational and clinical environment, effectively manage client care, and complete an episode of care within a reasonable time and adhering to best practice guidelines.
6. Demonstrate a high degree of coordination of motor skills and vigilance to respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately to provide clients a safe environment, including performance of CPR.
7. Attend and actively participate in all lecture and application sessions.
8. Tolerate sitting for up to 2 hours at a time, over an 8-10 hour period.
9. Tolerate periods of physical activity for up to 8-10 hours per day.
10. Access transportation to didactic and clinical education sites.

### **Process Skills**

1. Acquire, retain and apply knowledge through instructional methods (i.e., written material, oral delivery, visual demonstration, laboratory experience, clinical experience, and independent learning).

2. Comprehend, retain, assimilate, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and problem solve complex concepts.
3. Apply knowledge and judgment required to administer, interpret, modify, and prioritize evaluation, intervention, and outcome methods to meet the specific needs of the client.
4. Formulate written and verbal evaluations (reports) using sound therapeutic judgment to meet didactic, laboratory, and clinical demands in a reasonable time frame.
5. Apply knowledge and judgment required to demonstrate ethical reasoning.
6. Apply knowledge and judgment required to demonstrate safe performance.

### **Social Interaction Skills**

1. Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills such as collaboration, cooperation, flexibility, tact, empathy, and confidence.
2. Demonstrate respect for individuals with disabilities and those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, races, religions, and/or sexual orientations.
3. Engage successfully in supervisory and instructor-student relationships, in particular, accepting feedback positively and adjusting performance in a timely manner.
4. Communicate in the English language effectively in oral and written forms with all stakeholders (i.e. instructors, clients, classmates, fieldwork educator) using proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.
5. Exhibit professional demeanor, that is, language, dress, level of assertiveness and respect appropriate to the situation
6. Demonstrate effective organization, prioritization, time management and stress management.
7. Demonstrate consistent professional behaviors such as initiative, preparedness, dependability and punctuality.

OTD students should review the essential skills for the OTD program carefully and identify if additional supports are needed for any portion (didactic and clinical) of the OTD program. Students are encouraged to contact the University's Disability Resources and Services Office (412-648-7890) to arrange an individualized consultation to discuss any support services or accommodations they may need.