

## Essential Skills and Functions Expected of Students in the OTA Program

Raritan Valley Community College provides the following list of essential skills and abilities to inform prospective students of the performance required to complete lecture, lab, and fieldwork in the OTA program. **Students admitted to the OTA program are expected to be able to perform/complete curriculum requirements which require these cognitive, physical/motor, sensory, and behavioral/social core competencies with or without accommodation.** Fieldwork settings vary, but students will likely encounter the need for any or all of these skills and abilities in a given placement.

**Students who are unsure if they can meet these criteria because of disability, or know they will need help in meeting them, should contact RVCC's Center for Accessibility coordinator in the Academic Center to discuss the use of reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids.** With appropriate documentation submitted by the student, the college will provide accommodations that are deemed reasonable. However, the College and OTA Program is not required to alter the Program requirements, nature of, rigor, or outcomes of the OTA Program.

Should a student's ability to meet the essential skills/essential functions change at any point in the academic program due to change in medical status, pregnancy, or other health/disability circumstances, it the student's responsibility to report such change to the disability accommodations coordinator or advisor as soon as such change is known if the student wishes to request accommodations going forward.

**\*\*\*Any student who cannot perform the essential skills and functions described below, with or without reasonable accommodations, may not be permitted to continue in the program. \*\*\***

### Cognitive Skills and Functions

- ☐ Use sustained attention to focus on one specific task for a continuous amount of time without being distracted. Able to sustain attention and alertness without a break (i.e. 1.5 hours in classroom), as delegated or expected.
- ☐ Use alternating attention as required to switch focus back and forth between tasks that require different cognitive demands.
- ☐ Use divided attention as required to process two or more responses or react to two or more different demands simultaneously (often referred to as multi-tasking).
- ☐ Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data, including written information, verbal information, as well as information through observation.
- ☐ Problem-solve and think critically in order to apply knowledge and skill within time constraints.
- ☐ Cognitively negotiate client care environments to ensure safety, function, and productivity.
- ☐ Clearly and accurately convey, receive, and interpret relevant information with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds, in the manner that is most accessible to them.
- ☐ Exchange information in oral, written, and electronic form effectively, accurately, reliably, and intelligibly.

#### ***Examples of learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:***

- Process information thoroughly and quickly to prioritize and implement occupational therapy interventions.
- Observe client performance and behavior and identify noteworthy data and information.
- Report client data verbally and in writing to members of the treatment team.

- Make and communicate reasoned recommendations based on client data, treatment objectives, safety precautions, ethics, role delineation, scope of practice, treatment models, frames of reference, and scientific research.

### **Physical/ Motor Skills and Functions**

- ☐ Transfer the equivalent of an adult human's body weight (i.e. from bed to chair, wheelchair to commode).
- ☐ Lift and hold 25 pounds for 30 seconds.
- ☐ Use grasp, strength, bilateral coordination to safely support and maneuver people and objects.
- ☐ Repeatedly bend, stoop, kneel, crouch, crawl, reach and manipulate.
- ☐ Move efficiently enough to meet the needs of clients in a safe and timely fashion.
- ☐ Maintain balance from any position and while moving.
- ☐ Maneuver in small areas and physically negotiate client care environments.
- ☐ Maintain sufficient stamina for long periods (1-2 hours before a break) of sitting, standing, and/or moving.

#### ***Examples of learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:***

- Fully/partially support weight of client during transfers to and from various surfaces (bed, chair, wheelchair, mat, toilet, tub, car, etc.) and when assisting client in functional tasks/activities.
- Support, turn, and position clients.
- Control a falling client by slowly lowering him/her to the floor.
- Engage in mat activities with clients.
- Carry weights and other heavy therapeutic equipment.
- Manipulate, maneuver, and adjust equipment and devices (e.g. wheelchairs, hospital beds, swings, balls, splint pans, tub seats, portable commodes).

### **Sensory Skills and Functions**

- ☐ Perceive, interpret, and use sensory information via seeing, hearing, touching, and smelling.
- ☐ Visually negotiate client care environments.
- ☐ Utilize all senses to recognize safety concerns.
- ☐ Observe, recognize, and attend to relevant behaviors and non-verbal communication, of clients.

#### ***Examples of learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:***

- Detect changes in skin color or condition (pale, ashen, grey, sweat, swelling, inflammation, atrophy).
- Observe and collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in client care.
- Detect alarms generated by mechanical systems such as those that monitor vital signs, fire alarms, etc.

### **Behavioral and Social Skills and Function**

- ☐ Maintain emotional stability and composure to function safely and effectively under stress.
- ☐ Quickly adapt to social and task changes within environments (healthcare, academic, and community)
- ☐ Self-regulate and modify sharing, interaction, and behavior based on self-awareness, insight, client needs, protocol, procedure, principles of effective helping and interaction, instructor or fieldwork educator feedback/instruction to best support the learning objectives and flow of the class.
- ☐ Communicate effectively, timely, and professionally, consistent with protocols, policies, and norms of academic, community, educational, and health care environments.
- ☐ Adhere to established timelines, start times, and deadlines.
- ☐ Exhibit social skills necessary to interact effectively with clients, families, supervisors, students, teachers, co-workers and community members of the same or different cultures with respect, compassion, tact, collaboration, teamwork, responsibility, timeliness, and discretion.
- ☐ Maintain personal hygiene and appearance (including skin and piercing practices) consistent with close personal contact in client care in healthcare settings.

- ☐ Establish and maintain professional and therapeutic relationships and communicate in a supportive, clear, and effective manner, recognizing appropriate and professional parameters that serve the best interests of clients, colleagues, fellow students, and teams/groups.
- ☐ Contribute as a cooperative, collaborative, equal member of a diverse group to complete projects or tasks.

***Examples of learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:***

- Critically and accurately assess and articulate behavioral, attitudinal, performance, and reasoning strengths and deficits using a professional self-assessment.
- Actively and productively participate in supervision, self-assessment, and professional development planning.
- Engage in role play scenarios and clinical experiences demonstrating appropriate behaviors, performance, communication, and social skills.
- Learn, understand and follow protocols of clinical sites for attending, reporting, and completing responsibilities.
- Apply core values and ethical standards of the occupational therapy profession (altruism, equality, client freedom, justice, dignity, truth, prudence) to everyday relationships, interactions, and activities within the classroom, clinical and community settings.