

Occupational Therapy Assistant Technical Standards for OTA Students

Technical Standards and Essential Functions

Raritan Valley Community College Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program has established technical standards and essential functions to insure that students have the abilities required to participate and potentially be successful in all aspects of the program. Students are required to meet technical standards and essential functions for the OTA program as indicated below.

The following technical standards and essential functions outline reasonable expectations of a student in the OTA Program for the performance of common safe therapeutic functions. The OTA student must be able to apply the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a variety of classroom, lab and clinical situations while providing the essential competencies of occupational therapy intervention. These requirements apply for the purpose of admission and continuation in the program.

The student must demonstrate the following abilities:

A. MOTOR/PHYSICAL

Sufficient strength and gross and fine motor ability and coordination to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective therapeutic intervention and emergency treatment as necessary.

- Demonstrate stability, mobility, balance, strength and agility to assist and safeguard clients during transfers and daily, relevant, meaningful activities (bed, chair, wheelchair, mat, toilet, tub, car, etc.).
- Be able to safely lift up to 25 lbs. and pushing and pulling 50+ lbs.
- Safely support, turn and position clients, control a fall by slowly lowering client to the floor, engage in mat activities with clients, manipulate, maneuver, and adjust equipment and devices (e.g. wheelchairs, hospital beds, swings, ball, splint pans, tub seats, portable commodes).
- Provide emergency treatment and follow emergency protocol both in academic and clinic settings when necessary.
- Stand or sit for sufficient periods of time to actively engage in academic, lab, and clinical activities (may be up to 8 to 10 hours per day).
- Demonstrate manual dexterity and coordination necessary to manipulate equipment and perform therapeutic procedures in such therapeutic interventions as splinting, wheelchair adjustment, feeding, or orthotics and prosthetics.

B. COGNITION/INTELLECTUAL

Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, process, integrate, synthesize, retain, and apply facts, concepts, and data related to the art and science of health care. This may require comprehension of three-dimensional relationships and an understanding of the spatial relationships of structures. Students must have the cognitive capacity to appropriately utilize technology in the classroom and in clinical or community settings. Sound judgment, ethical reasoning, and clinical reasoning are essential.

- Process information thoroughly and quickly to prioritize and implement occupational therapy intervention.
- Report client data verbally and in writing to members of the treatment team.
- Read, comprehend, and retain relevant information in textbooks, class presentations, medical records and professional literature.

C. SENSORY/OBSERVATION

Students must be able to perceive, assimilate, and integrate information from a variety of sources including oral presentations, printed materials, visual media, and hands-on demonstrations. Students must demonstrate adequate functional use of visual, tactile, auditory, and other sensory and perceptual modalities to enable such observations and information acquisition necessary for academic and clinical performance. Students must be able to perceive and appropriately interpret nonverbal communications.

- Sufficient visual acuity, such as observation necessary for administering patient care and reading/recording equipment gauges, measurements and settings used in treatments.
- Detect changes in skin color or condition (pale, ashen, grey, sweat, swelling, inflammation, atrophy, etc.)
- Detect and hear soft voices, masked voices, alarms generated by mechanical systems such as those that monitor vital signs, fire alarms, etc.
- Palpate a pulse and detect changes or abnormalities of surface texture, skin, muscle tone, and temperature.
- Palpate and manipulate bony landmarks of upper and lower extremities in preparation for activity engagement.
- To detect odors related to patient assessment
- To feel where your individual body segments are located and to know when and how they are moving even when you cannot see them.

D. COMMUNICATION

Ability to communicate effectively in English using verbal, non-verbal and written formats with academic and clinical faculty, students, clients, families and all members of the healthcare team.

- Sufficient communication skills (speech, reading, writing) to interact with patient and to communicate their needs promptly and effectively, as may be necessary in the patient's interest.
- The ability to read and comprehend written material at a college level including, but not limited to: texts; journals; articles; and electronic healthcare records.
- Effective interpersonal skills necessary for productive classroom discussion and respectful interaction with classmates, faculty, fieldwork educators and clients. These skills include, but are not limited to: expressing ideas and feelings clearly, being able to exchange information effectively and communicating with others in a respectful confident manner.
- To work collaboratively; interact professionally; to establish rapport with patients, colleagues and classmates; to resolve conflicts; with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds; maintain confidentiality in all interactions.

E. BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

Possess the emotional health and stability necessary to exercise sound clinical judgment and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, their families, and other members of the health care team.

Possess the ability to tolerate taxing workloads, function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical settings with patients.

- Manage time, energy, and flexibility within heavy academic schedules and deadlines in academic, clinic and home environments.
- Demonstrate emotional health needed to sustain professional behavior under physical and emotional stress.
- Emotional health and stability required for exercising good judgment, full use of intellectual abilities and prompt completion of all academic and fieldwork responsibilities as well as the ability to be flexible and to adapt to changing environments.

Reasonable Accommodations

Raritan Valley Community College is committed to creating and promoting accessible learning environment for all students. "Reasonable accommodation" refers to ways in which the College addresses any barriers to full participation in the academic and co-curricular experience. While reasonable accommodation does not mean that students will be exempt from required tasks, it does mean that the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program desires student success and is committed to working with all students giving every opportunity for success.

RVCC does not discriminate in its educational programs or activities regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital status, veteran status, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identification and expression, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, disability or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state and local laws. For inquiries regarding Title IX or Section 504, contact Nancy Moore, Vice President for Human Resources & Labor Relations at 908-526-1200 x8345.

Raritan Valley Community College is committed to providing equal and integrated access for individuals with disabilities to all courses, programs, and activities it offers. Our commitment is consistent with legal requirements, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.