

# TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND RETENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS

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The Doctor of Occupational Therapy education programs in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions at Creighton University prepare occupational therapists to serve as primary providers of occupational therapy care. In order to function as a clinical occupational therapist, an individual must be able to meet certain physical, emotional, intellectual and communication expectations for performance. Occupational therapy education requires the accumulation of scientific knowledge as well as the simultaneous acquisition and demonstration of psychomotor skills, cognitive skills and professional attitudes and behaviors. The faculty is committed to an educational environment where students may develop emotionally, spiritually, socially, and cognitively.

Technical standards must be met with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The School is committed to enabling students with disabilities to complete the course of study of the OTD Programs by means of reasonable accommodations consistent with the ADA. Technical standards are necessary to create specific expectations for student performance in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical education environments. The purpose of technical standards is to delineate the psychomotor skills, cognitive skills and professional attitudes and behaviors deemed essential for matriculation into, continuation in, and completion of the educational program.

1. **Observation/Sensory:** Students must have sufficient visual abilities to be able to observe and interpret patients/clients accurately. They should also possess functional tactile and proprioceptive skills and abilities necessary to perceive and synthesize inputs during patient/client interaction, evaluation, and treatment.
2. **Communication:** Students must demonstrate effective verbal and written communication with patients, family members/caregivers, faculty/staff, fieldwork preceptors, payers, elected officials, members of the healthcare team and others. They must demonstrate appropriate communication with people of different ages and genders, with diverse physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities, and from different cultural, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds and lifestyles. Students must demonstrate the ability to use therapeutic communication and a client centered approach. They must display adequate English language skills in written and oral communication.
3. **Motor:** Students must display adequate motor skills to provide safe, efficient, and effective occupational therapy treatment. Examples of skills requiring motor ability include sitting tolerance, splint or assisted technology fabrication, computer usage, performing transfers and assisting with bed mobility, and providing range of motion and strengthening activities. The motor abilities required include adequate gross and fine motor function, vestibular function, strength, and functional usage of the sensory system.
4. **Intellectual/Conceptual:** Students must demonstrate problem solving throughout the didactic and experiential components of the program. This includes the ability to interpret information from multiple sources (written, verbal, environmental, interpersonal, etc.), carry out instructions in a timely manner, and understand and follow

written instructions such as policies and procedures. Therefore, the student must be able to read complex material, and write in a way that is accurate, descriptive, free from errors and consistent with guidelines or standards. Further, students must be able to apply critical thinking processes in order to gather information, identify problems and identify alternative plans of action. They must be able to make decisions spontaneously in "on the spot" situations, pressure situations from high workload demands, and variable time and environmental demands.

5. **Behavioral/Social Skills/Professionalism:** Students must possess sufficient emotional health to fully utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, adhere to ethical standards, complete patient care responsibilities promptly, and relate to others with courtesy, compassion, maturity, and respect for their dignity. Because occupational therapy education and practice takes place in a large variety of settings, students must have the ability to participate collaboratively as a (professional) team member, must be able to modify behavior in response to feedback, and display emotional health when faced with changing environments, clinical uncertainties, and stressful workloads that include multiple concurrent demands and short deadlines. This requires the ability of students to be aware of and appropriately react to their own emotional responses. In addition, students must at all times maintain personal appearance and hygiene that is appropriate for professional and classroom settings.

## Attainment of Technical Standards

Inability to comply with these technical standards may result in course failure. Applicants are encouraged to voluntarily discuss their disabilities with the Director of Admissions and the Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the School in order to consider and prepare for the accommodations that may be needed. After enrollment, a student with a disability who wishes to request reasonable accommodations may directly contact the Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the School or the Creighton University Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA). Verification and documentation of the disability by a qualified professional, such as a physician or psychologist, will be needed before reasonable accommodations are made. Accommodations will not be considered reasonable if they affect the substance of the occupational therapy educational program, compromise the School's educational standards, and/or negatively affect the safety of students and/or other people, including patients, with whom they may come into contact in the course of their studies. If accommodations are provided, this information will be kept in strict confidence.

All occupational therapy applicants must review the technical standards described in this document and perform a self-evaluation to determine if they are able to maintain compliance with them. A signed copy of this form should be returned to the SPAHP Office of Admissions signifying the standards have been read and certifying compliance.

Signing this document will serve as testimony that the student is in compliance with these standards and understands the responsibilities it outlines. A student who is dismissed from the program and subsequently reinstated must re-sign this document as testimony that the student is in compliance with these standards.