Brenau University
School of Occupational Therapy
Typical Essential Functions: Occupational Therapy*

Occupational therapy practitioners in the United States, and thus occupational therapy students at Brenau, are expected to demonstrate professional competencies which inherently require:

Observation skills
• functionally use visual, tactile, auditory and other sensory and perceptual abilities to observe in a variety of situations
• perceive, assimilate, and integrate information from a variety of sources

Intellectual skills
• learn, retain and apply facts, concepts, and data relevant to health care
• focus on tasks for a prolonged periods of time
• measure and calculate
• comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of anatomic structures
• maintain a high level of alertness and responsiveness to individuals and their performance settings
• creatively solve problems
• understand abstract ideas, including theoretical knowledge and research
• synthesize and apply information gained from multiple sources
• generate responses to ill structured problems

Communication skills & cultural competency
• gather, comprehend, use and disseminate information effectively
• efficiently communicate in verbal, non-verbal, written and electronic modes
• establish rapport and relate effectively with clients and colleagues from varied cultural and social backgrounds
• communicate in the English language sufficiently to meet the demands of professional practice
• vary modes and complexity of communications to respond to client needs
• communicate to colleagues and other relevant individuals using professionally appropriate language and terminology
• use technology such as computers to search, record, store, and retrieve information

Behavioral and social skills
• regulate personal emotions in a professional manner
• engage in effective and appropriate interpersonal relationships with colleagues
• demonstrate professional behavior in physically and emotionally demanding settings
• display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments

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• manage personal biases in order to meet the needs of people from diverse cultures, age groups, and socioeconomic levels
• interact professionally with clients and other individuals who have severe medical problems or who exhibit extreme or atypical behaviors that may elicit aversive reactions
• respond with integrity in ethically challenging situations
• demonstrate empathy towards clients

Physical/motor skills
• sufficient motor abilities, including physical strength and coordination to operate equipment as well as physically move and support clients,
• use gross and fine motor skills including but not limited to, the ability to walk, balance, bend, climb, stoop, kneel, crouch, rotate, coordinate arms, and reach overhead.
• use multiple grasp and pinch patterns, including dexterity for writing and keyboard function, and firm grasp for sustained hand/arm use as in lifting, push/pull, twisting, transferring and carrying
• frequently lift and/or move objects up to 10 pounds, occasionally lift and/or move objects at 25-50 pounds, and rarely lift/move objects at greater than 50 pounds

Environmental demands
• tolerate wet or humid internal environments and exposure to outdoor weather conditions
• tolerate proximity to moving mechanical parts, fumes or airborne particles,
• implement appropriate protocols to deal with hazardous materials, blood borne pathogens,
• safely handle equipment with risk of electrical shock, objects of hot/cold temperature, or vibration

Other professional skills
• respond to unpredictable challenges of health/medical situations that require a high level of alertness and readiness for immediate and appropriate response (ie, CPR, infection control problems)
• recognize and adhere to policies relevant to educational and practice settings (ie, professional dress and demeanor, timely attendance and work performance)
• tolerate up to 90 minutes of travel to and from academic and clinical sites
• give and receive feedback in an appropriate manner,
• self-assess own academic and professional progress and competencies, and direct own learning in response to assessment by self and others

*Adapted from The University of South Dakota, American International College, and the University of Tennessee

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