

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

- 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