# Misericordia University
# Occupational Therapy Department
# Essential Functions for Occupational Therapy Students

Misericordia University is committed to offering students with disabilities an opportunity to fully participate in all curricular and extra curricular programs for which they are otherwise qualified.

Misericordia University through the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) coordinates its efforts to serve students with disabilities into all areas of campus life. Academic support services/accommodations are coordinated by the OSD. To access these services students must have a documented disability and provide appropriate documentation.

According to the University catalog: "The University, through the dean of students and the Assistant Director Student Success Center/Office for Students with Disabilities, coordinates its efforts to integrate students with disabilities into all areas of campus life. All academic support services/accommodations needed for classroom/clinical/field experiences are coordinated through the Office for Students with Disabilities. Services from the OSD are provided based on provision and acceptance of specific documentation requirements."

If you have any special learning needs, please be aware it is your responsibility to contact the University's Office for Students with Disabilities in order to identify any needed accommodations. Before accommodations are provided, approval for accommodations must be given by the OSD. Faculty cannot provide accommodations until written documentation in the form of a POA (Program of Accommodation) or AP (Accommodation Plan) is received from the OSD.

Please be aware that no accommodations will be provided unless the appropriate documentation is completed. If needed, please talk to the instructor about specific cognitive, emotional, and physical demands involved in the classroom activities and assignments. When considering accommodations, it is also important that the student refer to the latest version of the OT Department Essential Functions document.

Please refer to the University Catalog under "Student Success Center" and "Office for Students with Disabilities" for additional information.

In order to meet the needs of our students, we are asking that each student carefully and thoroughly review the following document. This document is designed to give each student a better understanding of some of the physical, emotional, and cognitive skills that are required to complete all of the course work in this program. We would like to point out that the document may change, as instructors revise course content, assignments and examinations.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTION WITH OR WITHOUT ACCOMMODATION PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The student is required to meet all objectives related to coursework and fieldwork experiences. Physical, emotional, cognitive and environmental demands will vary throughout the curriculum and fieldwork experiences.

Refer to ACOTE Standards: https://acoteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2018-ACOTE-Standards.pdf

Objectives for each course are documented within course syllabi.

### Intervention Series and Fieldwork

The student is required to perform these motions as needed to transfer clients, set up equipment, prepare the client for treatment and engage and maintain the client in treatment. Please note: the student may have to perform these motions within a short period of time depending on the needs of each client.

#### Physical Demands

- Bending & Stooping
- Squatting/kneeling
- Standing
- Crawling
- Sitting on floors
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed

**All Courses and Fieldwork**
The student is required to position and transfer infants, children, & adults independently and safely. Position and perform min, mod, max assist transfers to/from a variety of surfaces with adults and children independently and safely.

Perform upper and lower extremity ROM and strengthening exercises on adults and children.

Lift and carry intervention and therapeutic equipment- swings, balls, splint pans, prostheses, tub seats, portable commodes, etc. within the OT department classroom & lab settings, and fieldwork sites.

Please note: the student may have to perform these motions within a short period of time depending on the needs of each client or the case examples used for testing and lab practical exams.

The student is required to design and develop splinting patterns for clients; cut out the pattern; cut, manipulate, and mold various types of thermoplastic materials and outrigger wires and lines.

Physical Demands

- Physical strength necessary to position and transfer infants, children and adults independently, safely and in a timely fashion (or the cognitive ability to instruct an assistant to perform these activities).
- Please note that lifting may involve 10-25 pounds, 50 pounds, 100 pounds
- Carrying with one and two hands
- Pushing and Pulling
- Perform upper and lower extremity ROM and strengthening exercises on adults and children.
- Lift and carry intervention and therapeutic equipment - swings, balls, splint pans, prostheses, tub seats, portable commodes, etc. within the OT department classroom & lab settings, and fieldwork sites
- Push/pull adults and children in wheelchairs. Distances will vary depending on the needs of the patients and/or the type of setting or facility .
- Physical demands: grasp–firm/strong and light, finger dexterity to work with splinting materials; reaching forward

**Intervention Series and Fieldwork**

Physical Demands

- Physical strength to maintain sitting postures while supporting or assisting clients during treatment sessions.

**All Courses and Fieldwork**
Community Service Project

Physical Demands

Mobility Skills include:

- Mobility skills required to assist with and/or transport infants, adults, children and equipment. Transportation distances will vary depending on the needs of the client
- Mobility required to move from one building to another or within buildings on college campus and fieldwork sites. Transportation distances will vary depending on the needs of the client.
- Mobility may be needed if doing home health visits to different settings and home environments during fieldwork experiences.

**Intervention Series and Fieldwork**
The student is required to demonstrate sufficient endurance and balance to perform therapeutic interventions with infants, children and adults with physical and psychosocial disabilities.

**All Courses and Fieldwork**
The student is required to participate in classroom lecture activities; watch videos & DVDs; view pictures and written print on wall screens and handouts; take written and lab practical examinations.
The student is required to participate and engage in lab activities using various therapeutic modalities and equipment; evaluate clients and implement intervention strategies – classroom examples, lab activities, fieldwork experiences. The student is required to perform these functions within a timely fashion.

Physical Demands

- Hearing and visual acuity
- Depth Perception
- Color Vision

- Sensation
- Hearing and visual acuity sufficient to respond independently to an emergency situation signaled by a change in an individual's appearance, pulse, blood pressure, and/or by an individual's verbal or physical communication of distress.
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTION WITH OR WITHOUT ACCOMMODATION ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS

**All courses, Community Service Projects, Intervention Series and Fieldwork**

The student may be required to work in different environments that expose the student to a variety of environmental factors.

Environmental Demands

- Exposure to hot and cold temperatures
- Working at different heights
- Exposure to vibration
- Working in confined spaces
- Exposure to noise
- Exposure to dust, fumes, smoke, gases, acids, chemicals, detergents, solvents, odors, and communicable diseases.
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTION WITH OR WITHOUT ACCOMMODATION EMOTIONAL DEMANDS

**The student is required to meet all objectives related to coursework and fieldwork experiences.**

Emotional Demands include:

- Ability to focus on multiple tasks simultaneously in a timely fashion
- Ability to work on tasks with frequent distractions
- Ability to work on frequent and multiple demands at one time
- Ability to initiate interpersonal contact with all personality types
- Ability to respond to negative feedback in a professional manner
- Ability to respond appropriately and effectively to psychotic behavior that may be exhibited by patients
- Ability to respond appropriately and effectively with threatening inappropriate or aggressive behavior
- Ability to remain objective and empathetic toward patients
- Be available to work irregular hours adapt to increased or unexpected workload
- Ability to adapt to unpredictable situations
- Ability to control emotions
- Ability resolve conflicts
- Ability to adapt to environmental factors: lack of space, lack of privacy, etc.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTION WITH OR WITHOUT ACCOMMODATION COGNITIVE DEMANDS

**All Courses and Fieldwork**

The student is required to demonstrate problem solving and clinical reasoning skills to design and implement an intervention/treatment program for clients with physical and psychosocial dysfunction. This can include lab practical exams and other timed assignments that require performance with a designated time frame.

The student is required to demonstrate the ability to select and administer appropriate assessment tools, evaluations and forms of measurement for case study assignments.

The student is required to demonstrate the ability to accurately interpret and report the results of the evaluation.

Please note: the student may have to perform these essential functions within a short period of time depending on the course and/or level fieldwork setting.

Please note: Accommodations for situations that require "on-the-spot" problem solving and "think on-your-feet" problem solving may not be possible depending on the course, fieldwork setting and types of clients/patients.

Cognitive demands include:

• Demonstrates problem-solving ability throughout course work, spontaneously, and "on the spot" situations and "think-on-your-feet" situations. This will include in-class assignments and exams as well as fieldwork experiences.

Example of timed assignments within Intervention Course:

• Due to the ongoing changes that are occurring in clinical practice, it is essential that students practice analyzing case studies and developing intervention plans within a short time frame.

• Each student will be given a case study and a designated time frame to answer the questions related to each case and/or to develop an intervention plan. The purpose of this assignment is to provide the student with the opportunity to develop clinical reasoning skills. Requirements for this assignment will include the following:

a. The student will develop and document an intervention plan based on data provided in the case study within a 15-20 minute time frame
b. The student will provide a rationale for clinical decisions
c. The student will discuss the impact of pathologies, impairments, disabilities, and role dysfunction on the occupational performance of adults
d. The student will write a progress note related to the case study
e. The student will apply and integrate knowledge from all of the prerequisite courses to case studies that focus on conditions commonly seen in the adult population.

**The student is required to demonstrate these skills in order to complete all course work throughout the curriculum and during fieldwork experiences.**

Cognitive Demands include:

• Interpreting written and verbal instruction

• Following written and verbal instructions

• Carry out written and verbal instructions in a timely manner and/or according to facility guidelines

• Demonstrate the ability to make decisions in stressful situations

• Demonstrate the ability to calculate descriptive statistics and frequency measures; collecting, computing, analyzing, and interpreting data.

**The student is required to demonstrate the skills in order to complete all course work throughout the curriculum and during Level I and Level II Fieldwork Experiences.**

Cognitive Demands include:

• Reading Skills: demonstrates ability to read chapters, texts, and journal articles, and client records related to OT and apply the concepts and facts to previously learned information as well as new topics.

• Writing Skills: demonstrates ability to write in a manner that is accurate, free of errors, easy to follow, conforms to guidelines or standards, and achieves its intent (e.g. client assessment, progress note, discharge summary; class assignment; research paper).

Documentation

• Reports must be done in a timely fashion. The student will be required to follow all guidelines and policies for each fieldwork setting.

• Example of patient DAILY documentation requirements:

• Respond to OT referral within 24 hours.

• Complete patient evaluation and document entire evaluation in chart within 48 hours of receiving initial referral.

• Complete OT treatment plan and staffing sheet within 48 hours.

• Complete daily progress notes on all patients. Case load may be 10-12 patients per day.

• Complete progress report for physician or orthopedic surgeon.

• Complete daily charges before 3:00pm.

• Complete interdisciplinary treatment plan.

**References:** American Occupational Therapy Association. (1997), Educating College Students With Disabilities, AOTA, Bethesda, MD.
American Occupational Therapy Association. (2004). Reference Manual of the Official Documents of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Bethesda, MD: AOTA; Wells, S.A. & Hanebrink, S. (1998). A Guide to Reasonable Accommodation for Practitioners with Disabilities: Fieldwork to Employment. Bethesda, MD: AOTA.

*Revised May 2022*

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

# Essential Functions Document: Agreement Statement

**As a student in the Occupational Therapy program, I agree to the following:**

- I have reviewed the essential functions document.
- I agree with the contents; and I am committed to the policies.
- I understand my rights with respect to accommodations and that if I seek such accommodations, it is my responsibility to disclose the disability for which I am seeking accommodations through Misericordia Office of Disability Resources.
- I understand that once the Office of Disability Resources notifies the program and/or faculty of my need for accommodations, the program in which I am enrolled will provide reasonable accommodations in the classroom, laboratory and clinical setting.
- I may be advised to discontinue the program should I fail to demonstrate all of the essential functions despite reasonable accommodations and reasonable levels of support from the faculty.
- The OT program may be unable to make accommodations due to cognitive or physical disabilities that preclude participation in skill required coursework, testing, laboratory or clinical activities.
- In the event reasonable accommodations cannot be made due to cognitive or physical disabilities that preclude participation in skill required coursework, testing or clinical I may be advised to discontinue the program.
- I am responsible to communicate necessary accommodations to my assigned clinical site; however, such accommodations in the clinical environment may not be feasible. Clinical accommodations are beyond the University's control and when not feasible may preclude clinical placement and prohibit me from completing the program.
- I understand that Misericordia University's Occupational Therapy Department accepts but cannot guarantee clinical placement requests.

☐ **If you believe that you may have difficulty performing one or more of the essential functions, please print the "Essential Functions Addendum", fill it out and send prior to the start of the semester to:**

Dr. Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L
Misericordia University
Occupational Therapy Department
301 Lake Street
Dallas, PA 18612

**If my status related to this Essential Functions document should change ANY time while I am an Occupational Therapy student, I agree that I will notify my Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and OT Faculty Advisor as soon as possible.**