

THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENT'S JOB DESCRIPTION

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Overview: Occupational therapy students must successfully perform functions associated with a variety of lecture and laboratory experiences. Essentially, they must demonstrate the professional, ethical, and competent behaviors that are required in the various settings in which occupational therapists practice.

Occupational therapy lectures require that students process, retain, and integrate information from a variety of sources such as oral delivery, live demonstrations, and the use of printed materials. Students must participate in activities and discussions, present oral reports, and take and pass tests and practical examinations given in various formats. These functions demand both interpersonal skills and cognitive skills such as reading, writing, decision-making, problem-solving, and using sound judgment. The physical demands associated with these functions include the demands to walk, lean, stand, stoop, sit, hear, touch, speak, and see. The demand to lift, carry, and manipulate a variety of objects is sometimes also present.

Occupational therapy laboratories simulate clinical experiences that require the application of clinical reasoning and therapeutic skills. Labs require many of the same functions and demands as lectures, but they also demand that the student evaluate occupational performances (work, play, and activities of daily living), use evaluative data, implement individual and group treatments, document aspects of the treatment process, demonstrate competence in team-related activities, and demonstrate knowledge of a variety of frames of reference for practice. Labs require a higher level of interpersonal and cognitive functioning than lectures. The physical demands associated with labs are also more intense, with the expectation for physical activity approaching 100% in some labs.

As students progress through the academic curriculum toward their clinical affiliations, they can anticipate greater demands for synthesis, integration, and professional behaviors such as assuming personal responsibility, respecting others, and handling frustrations in a constructive manner. A comprehensive job description is available to any student who needs more detailed information than that given in this overview or who wants to investigate ways in which to accommodate to these demands.

LECTURE

Essential Functions

1. Process, retain, and integrate information from the following from the following types of sources:
 - a. oral delivery/reading, instructor (s) or students (s)
 - b. blackboard/whiteboard data and diagrams
 - c. printed material (handouts, manuals, texts)
 - d. projected images to screens or video display
 - e. film and video segments
 - f. audio recordings
 - g. live demonstrations
 - h. computerized records
2. Respond to questions asked or problems formulated. Ask questions.
3. Participate in large and small group discussions and tasks.
4. Complete in-class exercises/activities that may require:
 - a. recording personal opinions, knowledge, or ratings
 - b. following written or oral instructions
 - c. simulating a daily living task
5. Present oral reports (planned or impromptu) or do role plays in the group.
6. Take and pass tests in a variety of formats, both written and computer-generated.
7. Demonstrate the following professional behaviors:
 - a. arrive punctually
 - b. notify faculty if circumstances prevent attendance
 - c. satisfactorily make up missed assignments in a time frame agreed upon with the instructor of the course
 - d. assume responsibility for personal actions
 - e. demonstrate functional level of self confidence and assurance
 - f. demonstrate the ability to be a cooperative and contributing member of the group
 - g. tolerate the views of others
 - h. state own opinions assertively and respectfully
 - i. establish priorities relative to assignments
 - j. demonstrate honesty and personal integrity
 - k. manage personal feelings (including anxiety) in a mature and professional manner
 - l. respect the rights of others
 - m. handle multiple assignments and responsibilities simultaneously, in a timely way

Demands Associated With These Functions (Lecture):

Occasional (Occ.) 1 - 33%, Frequent (Freq.) 34 - 66%, Continuous (Cont.) 67 - 100%

Physical Demands

Standing: Occ., 15 - 30 min. without a break

Sitting: Cont., 60 min. without a break
Walking/Independent mobility:
 10 yds or less - Occ.
 10 - 99 yds - Occ.
Crouching/squatting: Occ.
Stooping/bending: Occ.
Kneeling: Occ.
Crawling: Occ.
Lifting/carrying:
 Under 10 lbs. - Occ.
Handling/fingering:
 Gross grasp - Occ.
 Fine grasp - Occ. to Cont.
 Working with arms held in space - Occ.
 Speed repetition - Occ.
Feeling : Freq.

Sensory Demands

Coordination:
 Gross motor - Occ. to Cont.
 Fine motor - Occ. Cont.
 Eye-hand - Occ. to Cont.
 Eye-foot - Occ.
 Bilateral - Occ.
Tactile discrimination: Cont.
Seeing: Occ. to Cont.
 Visual memory - Occ. to Cont.
 Visual discrimination - Occ. to Cont.
 Spatial Relations - Occ. to Cont.
 Figure Ground - Occ.
 Position in Space - Occ.
 Color discrimination - Occ.
Hearing: Cont.
 Auditory memory - Cont.
 Auditory discrimination - Cont.
Talking: Occ.

Cognitive Demands

Writing: Occ. to Cont.
Reading: Occ. to Cont.
Judgment: Occ. to Cont.
Simple decision making: Occ. to Cont.
Complex decision making: Occ. to Cont.
Problem solving: Occ.
Mathematical skills: Occ.

Interpersonal Demands

Number of surrounding people: from 12 to 40 freq.; up to 250 occ.
Working with groups: Occ. to Cont.
Working with partner: Freq.
Supervisory skills: Occ.

Environmental Conditions

Schedule: 2 to 8 hrs. a day , 5 days a week; 10 hrs. a day occ.

High pressure: Occ. for exams, reports, group work

Physical stress: Occ.

Exposure to uncomfortable room temperature: Occ.

Exposure to humidity: Occ

High noise level - Occ.

LABORATORY

Essential Functions

CORE COURSES:

All of the lecture-related functions, with the addition of the following:

Observe and manipulate laboratory equipment and human partners and/or client educators.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COURSES:

All of the lecture-related functions, with the addition of the following simulations of clinical functions:

1. Evaluate an individual's occupational performances (work, self-care, leisure and/or performance components (cognition, sensory integration, neuromuscular functioning, social interaction, psychological functioning). Such simulated evaluation may require that the student:
 - a. engage the individual in a discussion of personal values, interests, environmental challenges, lifestyle preferences, and perceptions of performance
 - b. make observations of the individual
 - c. process written or printed data
 - d. interact with the individual using verbal and nonverbal means of communication
 - e. administer a variety of evaluation tools
 - f. manipulate and monitor objects, evaluative instruments, machinery, assistive technology, and teach the use of these to others
 - g. observe the individual's responses and adjust evaluative requests accordingly
 - h. measure behaviors accurately and completely
 - i. record results using a wide variety of formats (narrative, checklists, grids, scales, computer etc.)

2. Use evaluative data to formulate a plan of treatment that will prevent or treat an individual's occupational performance problems. This process may require that a student:
 - a. identify a variety of theoretical frames of reference that will guide clinical reasoning
 - b. formulate and verify hypotheses about performance
 - c. interpret evaluation results and assess problems and assets relative to normative performances
 - d. establish priorities in collaboration with the individual's consideration of needs, values, and environmental context
 - e. formulate realistic goals
 - f. document the final plan in a variety of formats

The formulation of a treatment plan may also require that a student:

- a. articulate the theoretical basis for treatments
- b. exercise judgment in identifying potential resources, procedures, and interactions
- c. analyze and modify activities and modalities to provide maximum benefit to the individual
- d. articulate professional/clinical reasoning

3. Implement individual and group treatment(s). Simulated treatment sessions may require that the student:
 - a. use a variety of modalities correctly
 - b. explain procedures clearly to the individual (s) receiving treatment
 - c. teach skills to others
 - d. identify potential hazards for patients
 - e. exercise judgment in monitoring treatment
 - f. use interpersonal skills to maintain therapeutic rapport with individual(s) being treated
 - g. apply the principles of group process
 - h. interpret findings to appropriate individuals
 - i. document results of treatment sessions
 - j. demonstrate facilitation and leadership of group activities

4. Document various aspects of the treatment process. Documentation efforts, written and computerized, may require that the student produce the following in a wide variety of formats:
 - a. responses to referrals
 - b. treatment plans
 - c. evaluation summaries
 - d. progress notes
 - e. discharge summaries
 - f. departmental records
 - g. incident reports

5. Demonstrate competence in team-related functions. Simulated team functions may require that the student:
 - a. consult others as necessary
 - b. interpret occupational therapy findings to appropriate persons
 - c. present data for peer-professional review
 - d. demonstrate interpersonal skills that foster collegial relationships
 - e. exercise judgment in supervising others
 - f. instruct others to facilitate mastery of knowledge and skills
 - g. carry an equitable share of the team workload
 - h. demonstrate team leadership

6. Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of practice arenas. This may require that the student:
 - a. identify community resources that associate with occupational therapy
 - b. describe basic organizational, management, and systems principles
 - c. identify legal guidelines and ethical parameters for practice
 - d. identify accrediting bodies that affect occupational therapy practice
 - e. describe the standards of practice universal to all settings
 - f. identify differences in the occupational process across a variety of settings
 - g. identify current trends and issues in practice
 - h. identify the various personnel with whom therapists work

7. Describe the importance of contributing to the profession's knowledge base. This may require that the student:
 - a. describe the manner in which practitioners can contribute to research
 - b. interpret the results of research articles
 - c. distinguish between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies

- d. describe the importance and contributions of professional organizations
8. Demonstrate the professional behaviors required for lectures, with the addition of the following:
- a. demonstrate the ability to problem solve by logically evaluating narrative and factual data
 - b. demonstrate the ability to be flexible with unexpected situations
 - c. recognize and handle personal and professional frustrations in a non-disruptive and constructive manner
 - d. demonstrate the ability to modify behavior in response to feedback
 - e. demonstrate the ability to give constructive feedback
 - f. describe and demonstrate ethical behaviors in practice
 - g. share personal feelings with others
 - h. demonstrate patience

Demands Associated With These Functions (Laboratory courses):

Occasional (Occ.) 1 - 33%, Frequent (Freq.) 34 - 66%, Continuous (Cont.) 67 - 100%

Physical Demands

Standing: Occ. to Cont., 20 - 30 min. without a break

Sitting: Occ. to Cont., 60 min. without a break

Walking/Independent mobility:

10 yds or less - Occ.

10 - 99 yds - Occ.

Stair climbing: Occ.

Balance:

Flat surfaces - Freq.

Slippery surfaces - Occ.

Crouching/squatting: Occ.

Stooping/bending: Occ.

Kneeling: Occ.

Crawling: Occ.

Lying on back: Occ.

Climbing: Occ.

Lifting/carrying:

Under 10 lbs. - Occ.

11 - 25 lbs. - Occ. to Freq.

26-50 lbs. - Occ.

51 - 75 lbs. - Occ.

76-100 lbs. - Occ.

Over 100 lbs. - Occ., pt. transfers

Pushing/pulling: Occ., using total body movements

Handling/fingering: Cont.

Gross grasp - Occ.

Fine grasp - Occ. to Cont.

Working with arms held in space - Occ.

Speed/repetition - Occ.

Feeling: Freq.

Foot force: Occ.

Sensory Demands

Coordination:

Gross motor - Occ. to Cont.

Fine motor - Occ. to Cont.

Eye-hand - Occ. to Cont.

Eye-foot - Occ.

Bilateral - Occ.

Tactile discrimination: Cont.

Seeing: Freq.

Visual memory - Occ. to Cont.

Visual discrimination - Occ. to Cont.

Spatial Relations - Occ. to Cont.

Figure Ground - Occ. to Cont.

Position in space - Occ. to Cont.

Color discrimination - Occ.

Hearing: Freq.

Auditory memory - Occ. to Cont.

Auditory discrimination - Occ. to Cont.

Talking: Occ.

Cognitive Demands

Writing: Occ.

Reading: Occ. to Cont.

Judgment: Occ. to Cont.

Simple decision making: Freq. to Cont.

Complex decision making: Occ. to Cont.

Problem solving: Cont.

Mathematical skills: Occ.

Interpersonal Demands

Number of surrounding people: from 1 to 40

Working with groups: Freq. to Cont.

Working with partner: Freq. to Cont.

Supervisory skills: Occ.

Environmental Conditions

Schedule: 2 to 6 hrs. a day, 5 days a week

High pressure: Occ. for leading groups, practical exams

Physical stress: Occ., for endurance testing and exercise

Repetition: Occ.

Fatigue: Occ.

Exposure to uncomfortable room temperature: Occ.

Exposure to humidity: Occ.

High noise level: Occ.

Hazards:

Exposure to dust, fumes, or vapors - Occ.

Exposure to risk of electrical shock - Occ.

Exposure to hazardous materials - Occ.

Proximity to moving parts - Occ.

LEVEL I FIELDWORK

Essential Functions

All of the lecture and lab-related functions, with the addition of the following:

1. Demonstrate responsible professional behaviors:
 - a. respect the rights and freedoms of others
 - b. seek supervision when needed
 - c. accept constructive criticism of performance
 - d. initiate efforts to upgrade personal skills and knowledge
 - e. articulate the contributions of occupational therapy
 - f. demonstrate universal precautions
 - g. apply principles outlined in the AOTA's Code of Ethics.
2. Demonstrate beginning skill in professional communication processes to:
 - a. establish rapport with patients and other professionals
 - b. demonstrate satisfactory interviewing and documentation skills
 - c. use appropriate terminology
 - d. communicate the purpose of occupational therapy to others
 - e. document therapy services
3. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the focus and scope of occupational therapy:
 - a. articulate the value of occupation as treatment means and outcome
 - b. describe a variety of treatment procedures used in occupational therapy
 - c. describe treatment programs in different areas
 - d. communicate the purpose of occupational therapy to others
 - e. describe the value of person-centered OT services
4. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the occupational therapy process:
 - a. develop beginning data collection skills
 - b. perform evaluation techniques with supervision
 - c. develop basic skill in formulating treatment/management plans
 - d. perform, with supervision, occupational therapy treatment/management procedures
 - e. identify the role of re-evaluation in treatment
 - f. articulate the importance of discharge planning and follow-up
 - g. articulate application of basic theoretical concepts to practice
5. Develop an awareness of self and the impact one has on others:
 - a. identify personal strengths and weaknesses
 - b. identify personal attitudes toward disease and disability
 - c. articulate the impact of cultural and socioeconomic differences on the treatment/management process

Demands Associated With These Functions (Level I Fieldwork):

Occasional (Occ.) 1 - 33%, Frequent (Freq.) 34 - 66%, Continuous (Cont.) 67 - 100%

Physical Demands

Standing: Freq greater than 1 hour without a break

Sitting: Freq., 30 to 60 min. without a break

Walking/Independent mobility:

10 yds or less - Freq.
10 - 99 yds - Freq.
Over 99 yds - Occ.
Stair climbing: Occ.
Balancing: Cont.
Crouching/squatting: Occ.
Stooping/bending: Occ.
Kneeling: Occ.
Lifting/carrying:
Under 10 lbs - Occ.
11 - 25 lbs - Occ.
26 - 50 lbs - Occ.
51 - 75 lbs - Occ.
76 - 100 lbs - Occ.
over 100 lbs - Freq
assist with transfer of pts. weighing up to 400 lbs - Occ.
Pushing/pulling:
Under 10 lbs - Occ.
11 - 25 lbs - Occ.
26 - 50 lbs - Occ.
51 - 75 lbs - Occ.
76 - 100 lbs - Occ.
over 100 lbs - Occ.
Reaching:
0 - 20" - Occ.
20 - 36" - Occ.
37 - 54" - Occ.
55 - 72" - Occ.
Over 72" - Occ.
Handling/fingering:
Gross grasp - Occ.
Fine grasp - Occ.
Working with arms held in space – Freq.
Feeling: Freq.

Sensory Demands

Coordination:
Gross motor - Occ.
Fine motor - Occ.
Eye-hand - Occ.
Eye-foot - Occ.
Bilateral - Occ.
Tactile discrimination: Occ.
Seeing: Cont.
Near vision - Cont.
Far Vision - Cont.
Field of vision - Cont.
Visual memory - Freq.
Visual discrimination - Freq.
Color discrimination - Occ.
Hearing: Cont.
Auditory memory - Freq.

Auditory discrimination - Freq.
Talking: Cont.

Cognitive Demands

Writing: Freq.
Reading: Occ.
Judgment: Freq.
Simple decision making: Occ.
Complex decision making: Occ.
Problem solving: Occ.
Risk assessment: Occ.

Interpersonal demands

Working with groups: Occ.
Co-treating with other staff: Cont.

Environmental Conditions

Work schedule: 4 - 8 hrs. a day, 1 - 5 days a week
High pressure: Freq.
Time pressure: Freq.
Physical stress/fatigue: Occ.
Exposure to cold/heat: Occ.
Exposure to weather: Occ.
Exposure to humidity/wet: Occ.
Vibration: Occ.
Hazards:

- High noise level - Occ.
- Exposure to fumes, dust, or vapors - Occ.
- Exposure to risk of electrical shock - Occ.
- Exposure to infectious materials - Freq.
- Exposure to hazardous materials - Occ.
- Proximity to moving mechanical parts - Occ.

Level II Fieldwork

Essential Functions

All of the previously identified functions with the addition of the following:

1. Apply skills in data collections:
 - a. obtain adequate and appropriate historical information from the client
 - b. consult other sources of information
 - c. obtain information by means of appropriate and thorough evaluation

2. Demonstrate skill in recording, maintaining, and reporting data:
 - a. record and maintain important patient information
 - b. record data accurately, clearly, and promptly
 - c. organize record so that multiple problems can be identified
 - d. present data for professional review
 - e. articulate the value of peer review
 - f. protect the client's right to privacy

3. Demonstrate competence in defining the client's problems:
 - a. identify all aspects of the client's problems
 - b. establish priorities with the client
 - c. articulate the client's strengths

4. Demonstrate judgment in formulating a treatment/management plan:
 - a. identify potential resources
 - b. communicate with significant others about the client
 - c. establish realistic goals
 - d. apply occupational therapy principles in formulating a management plan
 - e. consider the client's needs, interests, and context

5. Apply skill and judgment in implementing treatment/management plans:
 - a. apprise own level of competency and professional skills
 - b. seek information, suggestions, resources, and assistance to improve personal skills and knowledge
 - c. utilize the occupational therapy process
 - d. use a variety of modalities correctly
 - e. explain procedures clearly to the client
 - f. exercise judgment in monitoring treatment
 - g. interpret findings to appropriate persons
 - h. demonstrate universal precautions

6. Demonstrate administrative and educational abilities:
 - a. apply basic principles of supervision
 - b. apply basic principles of organization and administration
 - c. communicate effectively with personnel and students
 - d. apply basic instructional principles to facilitate the mastery of new skills

7. Assume a professional role as an occupational therapist:
 - a. practice self-management procedures
 - b. acknowledge the need for maintaining competency
 - c. participate in extra-curricular educational activities
 - d. maintain an attitude of inquiry
 - e. communicate effectively with other professionals
 - f. interpret occupational therapy to the public
 - g. act as a resource for community agencies
 - h. recognize the importance of contributing one's professional skills to the community
 - i. articulate the importance of maintaining one's health
 - j. articulate the importance of contributing to the profession's knowledge

Demands Associated With These Functions (Level II Fieldwork):

Occasional (Occ.) 1 - 33%, Frequent (Freq.) 34 - 66%, Continuous (Cont.) 67 - 100%

Physical Demands

Standing: Freq., greater than 1 hour without a break

Sitting: Occ., 30 to 60 min. without a break

Walking/Independent mobility:

10 yds or less - Freq.

10 - 99 yds - Freq.

Over 99 yds. - Occ.

Stair climbing: Occ.

Balancing: Cont.

Crouching/squatting: Freq.

Stooping/bending: Freq.

Kneeling: Occ.

Crawling: Occ.

Climbing: Occ.

Lifting/carrying:

Under 10 lbs. - Freq.

11 - 25 lbs - Freq.

26 - 50 lbs - Freq.

51 - 75 lbs - Occ.

76 - 100 lbs - Occ.

Over 100 lbs – Freq.

assist with transfer of pts. weighing up to 400 lbs - Occ.

Pushing/pulling:

Under 10 lbs - Freq.

11 - 25 lbs - Freq.

26 - 50 lbs - Freq.

51 - 75 lbs - Occ.

76 - 100 lbs - Occ.

Over 100 lbs – Freq.

Reaching:

0 - 20" - Occ.

20 - 36" - Freq.

37 - 54" - Freq.

55 - 72" - Freq.

Over 72" - Occ.

Handling/fingering:

- Gross grasp - Freq.
- Fine grasp - Freq.
- Working with arms held in space - Freq.
- Speed/repetition - Freq.

Feeling: Freq.

Sensory Demands

Coordination:

- Gross motor - Freq.
- Fine motor - Freq.
- Eye-hand - Freq.
- Eye-foot - Occ.
- Bilateral - Freq.

Tactile discrimination: Freq.

Seeing: Cont.

- Near vision - Cont.
- Far vision - Cont.
- Field of vision - Cont.
- Visual memory - Cont.
- Visual discrimination - Freq.
- Color discrimination - Occ.

Hearing: Cont.

- Auditory memory - Freq.
- Auditory discrimination - Freq.

Talking: Cont.

Cognitive Demands

Writing: Cont.

Reading: Freq.

Judgment: Freq.

Simple decision making: Freq.

Complex decision making: Freq.

Problem solving: Freq.

Mathematical skills: Occ.

Interpersonal Demands

Working with groups: Occ.

Co-treating with other staff: Freq.

Supervisory skills: Occ.

Environmental Conditions

Work schedule: 8 - 10 hrs. a day, 5 days a week

High pressure: Freq.

Time pressure: Cont.

Physical stress/fatigue: Freq.

Exposure to cold/heat: Occ.

Exposure to weather: Occ.

Exposure to humidity/wet: Occ.

Vibration: Occ.

Hazards:

- High noise level - Occ.

Exposure to fume, dust, or vapors - Occ.
Exposure to risk electrical shock - Occ.
Exposure to infectious materials - Freq.
Exposure to hazardous materials - Occ.
Proximity to moving mechanical parts - Occ.