TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The Southern California University of Health Sciences (SCU) Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) Program is dedicated to the education of students who strive to become competent and caring providers of primary healthcare services. The student must be able to achieve and maintain certain technical standards of knowledge and skill to become a skilled and effective practitioner. The technical standards stated in this document apply to satisfactory performance in all academic and clinical course work, as well as fulfillment of "non-academic" essential functions of the curriculum involving physical, cognitive, and behavioral factors that are essential to a professional healthcare practitioner and are requisite for program completion.

SCU shall provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities otherwise qualified to complete the essential functions of the curriculum and the profession. The safety and welfare of a patient shall never be put in jeopardy because of an effort to reasonably accommodate a disability. The OTD Program does not adjust allocated time for clinical practicums, fieldwork or capstone experiences.

Candidates for successful completion of the OTD Program will achieve and maintain adequate abilities and skills in the following

Observation

The student must be able to observe clients/patients in the natural environment as well as clinical settings. A student must be able to observe a client/patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities. A student must be able to integrate all information visually and through the other senses.

Communication

A student must be able to communicate effectively, sensitively, and rapidly in English with patients and members of the healthcare or relevant service team. A student must be able to elicit information from clients/patients; perceive nonverbal communications; and describe changes in mood, activity, and posture. Communication not only includes speech, but also writing, reading, interpreting tables, figures, graphs, and computer literacy.

Sensory, Motor Function, and Performance

The student must have sufficient sensory and motor function to elicit information from clients/patients by palpation and other evaluation/diagnostic maneuvers. The student will be required to coordinate both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of hearing, touch, and vision.

More specifically, the student must be able to exercise such fine motor skills as to adequately perform splint or adaptive device fabrication and check for client/patient safety. The student must exercise such level of dexterity, sensation and visual acuity as to accurately complete such processes as obtaining joint range of motion, manual muscle testing, obtaining measurements for wheelchair and related mobility devices for determining a client/patient's gross and fine motor functional ability. Additionally, making fine measurements of angles and size, measuring blood pressure, respiration and pulse, performing therapeutic procedures such as oral exams, feeding, swallowing assessment and evaluation of client/patient's overall pain and other sensory perception is expected. The student must be able to hear sufficiently to accurately appreciate auditory findings, including but not limited to, heart, lung, and abdominal sounds, as well as discern normal and abnormal findings using instruments such as stethoscopes, and sphygmomanometers.

A student must be able to transport him or herself in a manner that provides a timely response in both general and emergency care situations. Moving clients/patients from bed to commode or wheelchair and engaging in some procedures such as CPR will require a necessary level of strength, stamina, and dexterity.

All students may be required to stand for prolonged periods of time (e.g., 8 hours or more depending upon the clinical assignment). Students are expected to complete all performance examinations within the program specified time allocations without exception.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

A student must have the intellect necessary to quickly analyze and resolve problems quickly. These intellectual abilities include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning, analysis, judgment, and synthesis. The student must be able to identify and document significant findings from the client/patient's history; observational and occupational therapy assessment data; provide a reasonable explanation for likely interpretation and choose appropriate course of intervention or, referral as relevant.

The ability to incorporate new information from many sources in formulating treatment plans is essential. Good judgment in client/patient assessment, data interpretation, and therapeutic planning is essential. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others.

Behavioral, Mental, and Social Attributes

A student must possess the emotional, mental, and behavioral health that is required for full use of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all duties needed for the diagnosis and care of patients. The development of mature, sensitive, effective, and professional relationships with patients and members of the healthcare team is essential. Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent to the clinical problems of many clients/patients and the clinical as well as natural environment. Compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are desired in a healthcare professional and assessed during the admissions and education processes.