

# Polk State College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Essential Requirements List



Admission to Polk State’s Health Sciences Programs is based on academic achievement and additional program-specific, non-academic criteria, as referenced in the *Polk State College Catalog/Student Handbook*. The *OTA Program’s Essential Requirements List* identifies the occupation-specific technical standards that are required of students training for this career. The decision to enroll in the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program should be made after careful consideration of the Program’s *Essential Requirements*.

It is the OTA Program’s responsibility to be concerned with the rights of patients and clinical sites; the program can only place students who are capable of providing safe, high-quality healthcare within clinical sites. The following list represents reasonable expectations for the student enrolled in the OTA Program. It is the responsibility of each applicant to carefully review the *Essential Requirements List* and ask questions if unfamiliar with the standards and skills listed. Certain chronic or recurrent illnesses, and problems that interfere with patient care or safety, may be incompatible with occupational therapy training or clinical practice. Conditions that may lead to a high likelihood of student absenteeism should be carefully considered. Deficiencies in knowledge, judgment, integrity, character, professionalism, or demeanor that may jeopardize patient care can result in course or clinical rotation failure and possible dismissal from the OTA Program. Each Program applicant must have the ability to meet the standards and skills listed below to complete the academic objectives, physical actions, and professional training needed for the Associate in Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant degree program.

If a student cannot demonstrate the standards and skills without accommodation, it is his or her responsibility to request an appropriate accommodation with the College’s Coordinator for Disability Services before the beginning of the school term. The College is committed to the principle of equal opportunity (as defined in the *Polk State College Catalog/Student Handbook*), and provides reasonable accommodations as long as these do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered, and if the accommodations do not compromise patient safety, impose an undue program hardship (e.g., those that require significant expense), or unduly disrupt the educational process.

## MOBILITY AND MOTOR SKILLS

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| KNEEL or STOOP FREELY           | The ability to kneel or stoop to the floor to adjust patient positions, assist with equipment, inspect feet, or apply shoes or prosthetics. |
| KNEEL, HALF-KNEEL, and CRAWL    | The ability to assist with patient activities on an exercise table.   |
| REACH ABOVE the HEAD            | The ability to reach above the head while standing to adjust and position equipment.  |
| LIFT, PULL, GUIDE, and TRANSFER | The ability to lift, pull, guide, and transfer a patient of up to 150 lbs.  |



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| LIFT, PULL, GUIDE, and TRANSFER                                     | The ability to lift, pull, guide, and transfer a patient of up to 250 lbs. using a two-man technique.   |
| BEND, STAND, KNEEL, SIT, WALK, or CRAWL FOR 90 MINUTES WITHOUT REST | The ability to administer emergency care (e.g., CPR), perform the physical demands required of lab activities, and administer patient interventions.  |
| GUIDE, RESIST, and ASSIST   | The ability to guide, resist, and assist while working with adult patients (or classmates) during occupational therapy transfer, ambulation, intervention, and exercise activities; the ability to use one's arms, legs, or trunk to provide the necessary stabilization for a patient during therapy.  |
| PUSH and PULL   | The ability to push and pull large, wheeled equipment, whirlpools, tilt tables, and patients on stretchers or in wheelchairs.   |
| WALK  | The ability to walk for extended periods of time to all areas of a hospital.  |
| CLIMB   | The ability to climb stairs and inclines while safely guarding an unstable patient.   |
| DEMONSTRATE BILATERAL DEXTERITY                                     | The ability to adjust and fine-tune controls on electrical and heat modalities; the ability to demonstrate Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and exercises to patients; the ability to carry out stretching, massage, and exercise programs; the ability to adjust and use occupational therapy devices (e.g., goniometers, crutches, canes, walkers); the ability to carry out splinting techniques and guard patients from injury. |
| DEMONSTRATE COORDINATION  | The ability to perform different tasks with different limbs simultaneously.   |
| INCORPORATE SPEED and AGILITY                                       | The ability to protect an unstable patient from falling while he or she is walking or moving.   |
| ASSUME A WIDE BASE OF SUPPORT and BALANCE                           | The ability to guard, maintain, and correct the balance of an unstable patient while on a flat surface, incline, or stairs.   |
| PERFORM PATIENT ASSISTANCE SAFELY                                   | The ability to use safe and proper body mechanics while performing patient physical assistance.   |
| DEMONSTRATE WORK CAPACITY   | The ability to perform all essential skills and standards to complete the eight-hour days and the 40-hour study weeks required during the OTA Program.  |



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## SENSORY ABILITIES AND OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

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| DEMONSTRATE DEPTH PERCEPTION                              | The ability to judge distances, surface changes, and level changes while ambulating patients.  |
| SEE (with or without corrective lenses)                   | The ability to observe the patient's skin and discriminate color changes; the ability to note facial expressions, perceive nonverbal communication, detect normal and abnormal patterns of movement, observe the environment in detail for up to 20 feet, and read and set parameters for occupational therapy equipment while also detecting small calibrations on measuring instruments. |
| FEEL  | The ability to discriminate small and large temperature differences, palpate the pulse, assess body-segment contour, and assess muscle tone and joint movement; the ability to discriminate sharp and dull, as well as light-touch and deep-pressure sensations.   |
| HEAR  | The ability to appropriately perceive soft voices, masked voices, patient-call systems, alarms, timers, and blood pressure sounds (using a stethoscope); the ability to use active-listening skills in patient-care and professional settings.   |
| SMELL   | The ability to detect odors related to patient assessment.   |
| INCORPORATE POSITIONING, MOVEMENT, and BALANCE SENSATIONS | The ability to feel where the individual body segments are located and to know when and how they are moving even when these cannot be seen.  |

## COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

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| SPEAK and EXPRESS | The ability to speak and express one's thoughts clearly and understandably in the English language; the ability to clearly communicate information to peers, faculty members, healthcare providers, and patients and their families; the ability to explain conditions and procedures and to teach home programs. <b>[Note: The student is expected to use professional electronic communication, as well as verbal and written communication.]</b> |
| READ              | The ability to read typed, handwritten, and computer-generated documents, including chart data, in the English language; the ability to read at a level of competency that facilitates safe and timely execution of essential tasks or assignments.   |



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| UNDERSTAND and INTERPRET             | The ability to assess, interpret, and understand medical terminology and healthcare information that is given to the student regarding the status, progress, and safety of a patient; the ability to follow simple and complex instructions (i.e., oral or written) given by an Occupational Therapist regarding patient care, and interpret and respond to non-verbal communication and behaviors from patients and others.   |
| FOLLOW DIRECTIONS                    | The ability to accurately and efficiently follow directions, and to seek clarification where necessary.  |
| WRITE                                | The ability to produce legible handwritten or computer-based word processor documents and to use correct medical terminology, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; the ability to organize and express thoughts in written form in the English language and prepare accurate, thorough, legally defensible patient documentation; the ability to consistently access (and utilize technology for) the learning management system and basic Microsoft Office software (e.g., PowerPoint, Word, Excel) in order to be successful in face-to-face as well as distance-learning program components. |
| APPLY EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS | The ability to work collaboratively, interact professionally, and establish rapport with patients, colleagues, and classmates; the ability to resolve conflicts with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds; the ability to maintain confidentiality in all interactions.   |

## COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS

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| THINK CRITICALLY | The ability to identify and solve problems; the ability to link cause-and-effect relationships; the ability to apply information from readings, lectures, and laboratory experiences to case study preparations, and to employ effective teaching, learning, and test-taking strategies for success within program coursework. |
| COMPREHEND       | The ability to comprehend relevant information regarding patient diagnoses, as well as occupational therapy interventions, indications, and contraindications; the ability to recognize human pathologies and impairments from textbooks, medical records, and professional literature.  |
| PRIORITIZE       | The ability to prioritize events to provide for patient safety; the ability to determine patient interventions, order multiple tasks, integrate information, and make appropriate  |



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|  | decisions about the sequence and progression in which to perform activities based on greatest need.   |
| CALCULATE                              | The ability to collect and interpret accurate patient data.   |
| MAKE CLINICAL DECISIONS                | The ability to respond quickly and appropriately to changes in a patient's status; the ability to analyze written, observed, or verbal data about a patient and make decisions based on this information to modify progress or cancel the patient's treatment; the ability to act safely and ethically in the occupational therapy lab and clinic.  |
| ACCESS SHORT-TERM and LONG-TERM MEMORY | The ability to accurately and quickly remember data from a patient's chart and information relayed in verbal exchanges with the Occupational Therapist and other members of the healthcare team; the ability to access knowledge such as diagnoses, weight-bearing status, indications and contraindications for interventions, safety precautions, subjective reports of patients, emergency procedures, and safety procedures; the ability to participate successfully in program learning and in the evaluation of knowledge within the Occupational Therapy Assistant curriculum. |
| THINK QUICKLY and CLEARLY              | The ability to execute all duties unimpaired by any condition or substance that alters mental processing or its speed, or the quality of thought processes or judgment.   |

## BEHAVIORAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

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| DEMONSTRATE FLEXIBILITY | The ability to adjust to a constantly changing and very demanding full-time schedule.  |
| DEMONSTRATE COMPASSION  | The use of behaviors and actions that demonstrate respect and empathy for patients and their families, and for people of all personality types, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and races, including (but not limited to) those with neurological disorders, physical disfigurements, mental health issues, complex medical problems, and others within the broad spectrum of care-giving. |
| USE COOPERATION         | The ability to work as a team member, and to develop positive and effective relationships with faculty members, clinicians, peers, and patients.   |
| RECOGNIZE LIMITATIONS   | The willingness to request assistance when needed, accept correction and constructive suggestions when provided, assume responsibility for personal development, and utilize resources effectively.  |



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| DEMONSTRATE TOLERANCE         | The ability to tolerate close physical contact with patients, peers, and classmates during the provision of interventions and while in the lab; the ability to tolerate the close proximity and physical contact that is required when working with patients who require the use of standard precautions during therapy and treatment due to open wounds, incontinence, or other situations with potential exposure to bodily fluids or pathogens.  |
| DEMONSTRATE WILLINGNESS       | The willingness to wear the assigned uniform scrub tops and pants for clinical rotations and the required lab attire to allow for visualization of body contours and exposure of all major joints and muscles; the willingness to participate in lab activities that require palpation, measurement, massage, and other forms of therapeutic touching of joints, muscles, and bony landmarks; the willingness to serve as both the patient model and the clinician during patient simulations, allowing other classmates to practice and perfect occupational therapy skills. |
| PROVIDE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE   | The ability to demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm, and appropriate peer and patient interactions.   |
| DEMONSTRATE WORK ETHIC        | The commitment necessary to attend class and clinical activities promptly and regularly, and to remain focused and engaged during lecture and laboratory instructional time; the commitment necessary to submit work products promptly, display consistently industrious behavior, and adhere to all classroom and clinical rules and policies; the professional demeanor necessary to demonstrate respect for other healthcare providers and the occupational therapy field, while complying with all legal and ethical standards of practice.                               |
| DEMONSTRATE STRESS MANAGEMENT | The ability to demonstrate coping skills for fast-paced clinical situations; the ability to manage multiple academic deadlines; the ability to effectively contend with the psychosocial issues of catastrophic illness, disability, and death; the ability to consistently and appropriately respond within stressful environments and during impending deadlines; and the ability to manage personal matters outside of class and the workday.  |
| SHOW PREPAREDNESS             | The ability to arrange transportation and living accommodations to facilitate off-campus clinical assignments to foster timely reporting to the classroom and clinical center.  |
| INCORPORATE PERSONAL CARE     | The ability to maintain general good health and hygiene so as not to jeopardize one's personal health and safety, and also to protect other individuals within the academic and clinical settings utilized.   |



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