

Technical Standards for Admission and Continued Enrollment to Arkansas Colleges of Health Education School of Occupational Therapy

The Arkansas Colleges of Health Education School of Occupational Therapy (ACHE OT) is committed to the admission and matriculation of all qualified students and does not discriminate on the basis of any protected class status, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

In addition to meeting academic standards required for admission, retention, and graduation from the program, students must also maintain minimum technical standards. These standards are the non-academic skills and abilities necessary for the successful completion of the course of study. ACHE School of Occupational Therapy has adopted the following non-academic criteria for admission and continued program participation. ACHE OT expects minimal technical standards be met by all applicants and students as set forth herein.

To facilitate the attainment of optimum care and safety, students enrolled in the ACHE OT must:

1. Behave in a manner exhibiting high moral and behavioral standards reflecting the position and status of an occupational therapy professional.
2. Demonstrate respect for individuals and groups with consideration to the diversity of race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.
3. Meet minimal technical and ability standards. Students must have the ability to learn, process, and utilize a great deal of knowledge and experience. Students must have the ability to see, hear, and touch independently to optimally assess the physical, mental, and emotional status of patients.

ACHE OT expects its applicants and students to meet certain minimum technical standards as outlined below. Every applicant and student of ACHE OT is expected to possess those intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence. An occupational therapy professional must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of client care and services. Reasonable accommodations will be made as required by law; however, the candidate and student must be able to meet all technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation. ACHE OT has adopted these standards with due consideration for the safety and well-being of the those for whom its graduates will eventually care and serve. The specific technical standards are set forth below.

Observation and Visual Integration

Applicants and students must have sufficient visual capabilities to acquire information as presented through educational experiences in a variety of settings such as

classroom, labs, community experiences, and clinical or fieldwork experiences. The applicant and student must also be able to obtain a level of defined information from various sources such as oral presentations, printed material, visual media, live demonstrations, client observations, non-verbal communication, and the environment in which the instruction occurs. Further, students must demonstrate adequate functional use of visual, tactile, auditory, and other sensory and perceptual capacities to enable observations and information acquisition necessary for academic and performance in the field.

Communication

Effective communication is critical for students to build relationships with faculty, advisors, mentors, fellow students, and patients/clients and their families. Students must be able to obtain, understand, use, and disseminate information effectively, efficiently, and according to professional standards. Students are required to communicate in the English language both verbally and in writing, using grammar and vocabulary proficiently at a level consistent with professional standards. They must be able to elicit information, gather information, and describe findings verbally and in writing understandable by faculty, peers, patients/clients, professionals, and laypersons.

Students must be able to communicate effectively and with sensitivity with patients/clients, colleagues, classmates, faculty, and administrators including individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds; this includes, but is not limited to, the ability to establish rapport with patients/clients and effectively communicate clinical reasoning and decision making. They should also be able to observe, recognize, and interpret non-verbal communication, including body language demonstrated by others. Students should be able to also recognize non-verbal communication and body language of themselves, recognize the effect it has on others, and adjust it as needed to meet professional standards and facilitate effective relationships with others.

Motor and Sensory Function

Applicants and students should have the necessary motor and sensory function to participate in basic diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers and procedures. Motor function must be sufficient to fully execute movements required to provide client care. Students must be able to navigate in client care environments and be able to move in settings such as the classroom, a health care facility, other educational environments, and the community. Students must be able to move in a timely way to various classrooms and locations required for class/field experiences; and maintain self in class or the field for extended periods of time. Sensory function must be sufficient to monitor and assess health needs and process sensory information from people and the environment. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine motor movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses.

Strength and Activity Tolerance

Students must be able to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study required. Long periods of sitting, standing, or activity are often required. Students must be able to tolerate as much as eight or more hours of activity with a range of physical and energy demands from light to heavy activities with occasional rest breaks. Treatments often require upright posture with sufficient overall body strength, mobility, and activity tolerance.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

Applicants and students must demonstrate critical thinking skills so they can problem-solve creatively, master abstract ideas, and synthesize information presented in academic, laboratory, and fieldwork settings. They must be able to concentrate, analyze and interpret data, and make decisions within areas in which there is a reasonable amount of visual and auditory distraction. They must perform these functions under a time limitation and do so under a reasonable amount of stress, as occupational therapists are expected to be able to perform such duties in diverse settings where others may be present and where there is a certain degree of noise. Applicants and students must be able to accurately write notes, accurately perform basic mathematical functions, and accurately and quickly read charts with minimal error in areas where there may be distractions. They must meet productivity expectations of various settings by completing tasks in a timely manner. They must demonstrate the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships, and to understand spatial relationships of structures. Students must develop and exhibit a sense of professional ethics; and recognize and apply pertinent legal and ethical standards.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Applicants and students must possess the emotional health and capability of developing mature and effective interpersonal relationships with other students, faculty, clients, and other health care providers. Applicants and students must be able to tolerate physically and emotionally taxing workloads, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.

Students must exhibit the ability and commitment to work with individuals, groups, and populations in an intense setting to meet the needs of people of diverse cultures, age groups, socioeconomic groups, and challenges without bias. These individuals may be severely injured; they may be limited by cognitive, emotional, and functional deficits; and their behavior may create at times an adverse environment. The ability to interact with these individuals with impairments and dysfunctions without being judgmental or prejudiced is critical in establishing one's professionalism and therapeutic relationship. Compassion, integrity, empathy, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the

admissions and educational processes. An ability to demonstrate the emotional health necessary for the delivery of quality and safe care is mandatory throughout school.

Professional Skills and Responsibility

Students are expected to develop a professional identity focusing both on the acquisition of occupational therapy knowledge and skills as well as internalization of values and attitudes of the profession. Furthermore, they should exhibit a commitment to professional engagement, continuing competency, and professional development which are part of socialization into the profession. Expected behaviors include ethical conduct, commitment to professional service, responsibility for ongoing professional development, and competency with intellectual and cultural humility.

Student Participation in Special Environments

Education at ACHE OT takes place in special environments such as the anatomy lab, healthcare settings, educational settings, and clinical facilities (when applicable) that may contain hazardous physical, chemical, and high stress environments. Working and studying in these special environments may require the student to make an informed decision concerning continued participation because failure to participate in required classes could result in dismissal. The student must decide upon their ability to participate prior to beginning school.

Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ACHE will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities, unless doing so would pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the OT program. The table below is not an all-inclusive list but is intended to provide examples of essential functions.

Category	Definition	Examples including, but not limited to:
Observation Skills	Ability to acquire relevant information within various environments.	Observe and recognize abnormalities or changes in one’s affect, behavior, position, posture, movements, skin condition, and appearance. Recognize potential safety hazards. Read equipment dials, graphs, medical records, professional literature, and notes from clients, physicians, and other health professions.
Critical Thinking	Ability for sufficient clinical thinking and judgement.	Identify cause-effect relationships. Develop patient/client goals/plans. Respond to emergencies. Apply standard precautions. Recognize red flags and issues related to safety. Apply teaching and learning theories in health care. Design appropriate clinical questions. Analyze and interpret information, data, and literature.

Category	Definition	Examples including, but not limited to:
Reflection	Ability to self-assess behaviors and actions.	Assess effectiveness of one's own performance, communication, and reactions before, during, and after all interactions & interventions. Establish action plans for self-based reflections.
Interpersonal Skills	Ability to interact appropriately with a variety of individuals, groups, and populations from a variety of backgrounds. (cultural)	Establish rapport with peers, classmates, faculty, patient/clients, and interprofessional colleagues. Recognize psychosocial impact of dysfunction/disability. Integrate the needs of patients/clients and family into plan of care.
Communication	Ability to communicate in verbal and written form as well as convey appropriate and understand non-verbal communication.	Perform active listening, explain procedures. Initiate health teaching. Display positive therapeutic presence. Document and interpret occupational therapist actions and patient/client responses. Disseminate and convey information. Participate in group and individual discussions, present oral and written reports, and provide/receive constructive feedback. Recognize and interpret nonverbal behaviors and their effect on communication. Communicate effectively and professionally in written communication using correct spelling and grammar.
Mobility	Physical ability sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces	Move around in classrooms, clinical spaces, treatment spaces, and community spaces. Administer CPR/AED procedures. Respond to emergencies.
Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor skills sufficient to provide safe and effective occupational therapy services.	Attend classes 30 or more hours per week. Participate in fieldwork experiences 40 or more hours per week on a schedule that corresponds to the operating hours of the fieldwork site and/or educator. Actively lift, carry, pull push, reach, stand, walk, kneel, bend, climb, and balance. Position clients. Guard and assist with functional activities. Perform a full-body movement, and CPR/AED. Calibrate and operate equipment and use physical agents.
Hearing Skills	Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.	Detect and monitor alarms, emergency signals, cries for help, client's needs, and respond to a timer.

Category	Definition	Examples including, but not limited to:
Visual Skills	Visual ability sufficient to monitor, assess, and respond to client needs.	Observe clients' health status and response to care. Read equipment dials, graphs, medical records, professional literature, and written notes from clients, physicians, and other health professionals. Assess environment for safety.
Tactile Skills	Tactile ability sufficient to complete physical and sensory assessments.	Perform palpation, physical examination, and intervention.
Timeliness and Productivity	Produce desired outcomes in a timely manner.	Perform evaluations, treatment planning, treatments, analysis, documentation, etc. in compliance with professional norms.
Coping Skills	Ability to perform in stressful environments or during impending deadlines.	Maintain professionalism under time and situational constraints. Recognize the need for assistance with complex and changeable patient care situations and respond appropriately.
Behavioral & Social Skills	Emotional stability and acceptable communication skills.	Tolerate emotionally and physically stressful workloads. Function under pressure.
Professional Skills & Responsibilities	Ability to seek out and engage in professional activities and responsibilities in addition to classroom and clinical experiences.	Practice safely, ethically, and legally. Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for one's actions, learning, professional growth, and development. Attend professional development opportunities outside normal class and/or clinical times without interfering in programmatic expectations. Demonstrate intellectual and cultural humility.

The School of Occupational Therapy is committed to providing reasonable accommodations that support equal access to the OTD program while maintaining the essential academic, clinical, and professional requirements necessary for entry-level occupational therapy practice.

Reasonable accommodations:

- a) Are intended to provide access, not to ensure success or modify outcomes, and are designed to remove barriers to participation in the OTD program while upholding the academic, clinical, and professional competencies required of all students.
- b) Support a student's ability to learn, perform, and demonstrate required competencies, in compliance with ACHE's ADA Accommodations Policy as

outlined in the ACHE Policy Manual (APM), and are determined on an individualized basis.

- c) Will not fundamentally alter the nature of the OTD curriculum, including academic, clinical, or professional expectations, nor compromise the integrity of the program or the rights and learning experiences of other students.
- d) Do not exempt students from meeting essential academic, technical, clinical, or professional standards, including the demonstration of competencies required for progression, graduation, and readiness for entry-level occupational therapy practice.
- e) Do not include reliance on another individual to perform essential program tasks. Students must be able to demonstrate required knowledge, skills, behaviors, and professional judgment independently, with or without reasonable accommodations. When functional limitations exist, students must demonstrate alternative means or abilities to acquire essential information and perform essential tasks without compromising professional standards.
- f) Are determined by designated ADA Coordinators, in consultation with School of Occupational Therapy faculty as appropriate, to ensure accommodations are reasonable, effective, and consistent with ACOTE standards and the essential requirements of the OTD program.

Students are responsible for initiating the accommodations process and for meeting all essential program requirements.

For complete information regarding the reasonable accommodations process, students should refer to the [ACHE Policy Manual \(APM\)](#). Additional guidance may be obtained through the [ACHE Office of Academic Affairs](#).