

Samuel Merritt College
Master of Occupational Therapy Program
ADA Guidelines

Definitions

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides comprehensive civil right protections for “qualified individuals with disabilities.” An “individual with a disability” is a person who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a “major life activity,” or
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

The ADA Handbook published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Justice states: “examples of physical or mental impairments include, but are not limited to, such contagious and noncontagious diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments; cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, specific learning disabilities, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), tuberculosis, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Homosexuality and bisexuality are not physical or mental impairments under the ADA.”

“Major life activities” include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Individuals who currently engage in the illegal use of drugs are not protected by the ADA when an action is taken on the basis of their current illegal use of drugs.

“Qualified” individuals are defined as follows:

- A “qualified” individual with a disability is one who meets the essential eligibility requirements for the program or activity offered.
- The “essential eligibility requirements” will depend on the type of service or activity involved.
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The stated mission of the Department of Occupational Therapy at Samuel Merritt College is to prepare entry-level occupational therapists who can evaluate, manage, and treat the general population of acute care and rehabilitation patients/clients, in a variety of health care settings. Potential occupational therapists are expected to complete the academic and clinical requirements of the professional MOT program before they can sit for the registration examination and practice. The purpose of this document is to delineate the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills deemed essential to completion of this program and to perform as a competent generalist in occupational therapy.

If a student cannot demonstrate the following skills and abilities, it is the responsibility of the student to request an appropriate accommodation. The College will provide reasonable accommodation as long as it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered and does not impose an undue hardship such as those that cause a significant expense, difficulty or are unduly disruptive to the educational process.

Cognitive Learning Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

1. Conceptualize a sequential progression of tasks and/or standardized testing and make objective conclusions based on the test results.
2. Apply critical thinking in the creation, development, generalization and implementation of adaptations to normative methods of behavior and function.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic anatomical structures and physiological mechanisms that underlie conditions of human dysfunction and occupational performance.
4. Analyze the sequential steps, cognitive skills and motor performance of specific functional tasks relevant to the safety, environment and developmental life tasks of a patient/client. This analysis should also take into account ethnic background, gender and cultural variables.
5. Select constructive activities suited to an individual's current physical capacity, intelligence level, and interest, so as to upgrade the individual to maximum independence, prepare for activities of daily living and appropriate life tasks, assist in restoration of functions and/or aid in adjustment to disability.
6. Assess and identify cognitive and functional deficits, and determine adaptive or compensatory methods of functioning.
7. Apply critical reasoning and independent decision-making skills.
8. Assess patient/client safety and maintain or create safe environments during specific tasks, to enhance patient/client independence in a variety of potential environments.

Psychomotor Skills

The student must demonstrate the following skills:

1. Sitting: Maintain upright posture.
2. Standing: Student-controlled activity employable during lecture, clinical instruction and laboratory time.
3. Locomotion ability to:
 - a. Get to lecture, lab and clinical locations, and move within rooms as needed for changing groups, partners and work stations.
 - b. Physically maneuver in required clinical settings, to accomplish assigned tasks.
4. Manual tasks:
 - a. Lifting ability sufficient to maneuver an individual's body parts effectively to perform evaluation and treatment techniques.
 - b. Manipulate common tools used for screening tests and therapeutic intervention of the individual.
 - c. Demonstrate the ability to safely and effectively guide and facilitate patient/client movement skills and motor patterns through physical facilitation and inhibition techniques (including ability to give time-urgent verbal feedback).
 - d. Manipulate or guide another person's body in transfers, ambulation, positioning and assisted or facilitated trunk, head and limb movement.
 - e. Manipulate bolsters, pillows, plinths, mats, assistive/adaptive devices, and other supports or chairs to aid in positioning, moving, or treating a patient/client effectively.
 - g. Competently perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (C. P. R.) using guidelines issued by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross.
5. Gross motor ability to participate in recreational or movement activities that may involve tossing, catching, weight shifts, reaching, balancing on equipment, etc.
6. Small motor/hand skill usage ability to:
 - a. Legibly record/document evaluations, patient care notes, referrals, etc. in standard medical charts in hospital/clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
 - b. Demonstrate or complete activities or tests with adequate degree of fine motor dexterity.
 - c. Sense changes in an individual's muscle tone, skin quality, joint play, kinesthesia, and temperature to gather accurate objective evaluative information

- in a timely manner and sense that individual's response to environmental changes and treatment.
- d. Legibly record thoughts for written assignments or tests.
7. Visual acuity to:
 - a. Read patient/client charts or histories in hospital/clinical setting.
 - b. Observe even the slightest aberrations of patient/client motor performance during tasks/tests.
 8. Hearing or ability to receive and:
 - a. Effectively respond to oral requests/instructions from patients and team members.
 - b. Interpret the language used to communicate lectures, instructions, concepts, narratives, questions and answers.
 - c. Auscultate for internal body sounds, e.g., heart, bowel, lungs.
 9. Communication ability to:
 - a. Effectively communicate with team members.
 - b. Articulate detailed instructions to patients, caretakers, family or other clinical personnel.
 10. Self care ability to:
 - a. Maintain general good health and self care in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical settings.
 - b. Arrange transportation and living accommodations for/during off-campus clinical assignments to foster timely reporting to classroom and clinical center.

Affective learning skills

The student must be able to:

1. Demonstrate appropriate, affective behaviors and mental attitudes to ensure the emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral safety of the patient/client in compliance with the ethical standards of the American Occupational Therapy Association.
2. Sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program in occupational therapy that includes academic and clinical components that occur within set time constraints, and often concurrently.
3. Acknowledge and respect individual values and opinions in order to foster harmonious working relationships with colleagues, peers, and patients/clients.