

**DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY***

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

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***Unanimously ratified by the Department of Occupational Therapy Faculty
September 18, 2009**

Section 1

Policy on Professional Behavior

The faculty of the Duquesne University Department of Occupational Therapy expect students accepted into the professional phase of the program to behave in accordance with standards of the profession. Using the American Occupational Therapy Association documents *Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics*, *Standards of Practice for Occupational Therapy*, *Core Values and Attitudes of Occupational Therapy Practice*, and the *Standards for Continuing Competence* the department has determined six *essential behaviors* required for successful completion of the Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy degree. These behaviors are: integrity, respect, responsibility, competence, maturity, and communication. A detailed description of these behaviors is included in the *Description of Professional Behaviors* section of this document.

Our goal is to foster students' progress in their professional development as they enter and proceed through the professional phase of the curriculum and move on to clinical practice. We expect that all students will be successful in all parts of their education, including academic, behavioral, and clinical. Just as there are standards and protocols established for students who require remediation for academic issues, we have established a similar process for professional behavior, as represented in this document. The following procedure outlines the identification of a professional behavior issue, a plan for remediation, and the process leading to further action.

Identification of Professional Behavior Issue

Standards for professional behavior are described in the *Description of Professional Behaviors* section of this document. Students are expected to behave according to these standards during academic and clinical learning experiences. If an academic or clinical faculty member identifies and documents a serious problem with a student's professional behavior or inability to maintain a standard within the realm of acceptable professional behavior, the following protocol will be followed:

1. The faculty member will meet with the student to identify the behavior and counsel the student to demonstrate behavior consistent with the professional standard.
2. If the faculty determines that the student has a recurrence of an unprofessional behavior prior to the completion of their professional program, both the student and faculty member will meet with the *Professional Behavior Committee* (consisting of the department chair, occupational therapy faculty mentor, and 1 Rangos School of Health Science faculty member who does not teach in the occupational therapy program) to determine a remediation plan and contract for the student.

3. The remediation plan and contract will include the following items:
 - A description of the specific behaviors that the student is expected to demonstrate.
 - The specific tasks that the student is expected to accomplish.
 - Time frames related to accomplishing the tasks and behaviors.
 - Repercussions for unsuccessful remediation or inability to meet the terms of the contract.
 - Who will monitor the terms of the terms of the contract.
 - How the terms of the contract will be monitored.
4. The committee will meet again, at a time stated in the contract, to determine if the student has successfully completed the remediation plan and has met the terms of the contract.
5. The following are the repercussions resulting from unprofessional behavior.
 - a. Immediate dismissal: In addition to felony conviction or pleading no contest for behaviors that would prohibit the granting of an occupational therapy license other behaviors may be determined to be non-remediable.
 - b. Probation: Behaviors that the committee has determined are remediable. The terms of the probation and remediation will be outlined in the contract.
 - c. Dismissal: Behaviors that the committee has determined are remediable; however, the student has been unable or unwilling to remediate, as defined in the remediation plan and contract.

Section 2

Description of Professional Behaviors

The American Occupational Therapy Association has developed the *Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice for Occupational Therapy, Core Values and Attitudes of Occupational Therapy Practice* and the *Standards for Continuing Competence*, documents that define specific abilities and behaviors that a graduate of a Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy program should demonstrate. The core values include: altruism, equality, freedom, justice, dignity, truth and prudence. The standards for continuing competence include: knowledge, critical reasoning interpersonal abilities, performance standards, and ethical reasoning. The following represents six *essential behaviors* that integrate items from these documents with a focus on the academic environment.

1. Integrity: Represents one's own and others' abilities honestly; is truthful and sincere; accepts responsibility for one's actions; able to reflect on one's personal reactions to encounters with others.
2. Respect: Adheres to confidentiality and professional boundaries; works toward conflict resolution in a collegial way, demonstrates consideration for the opinions and values of others; shows regard for diversity.
3. Responsibility: Present and punctual for all learning experiences; able to cope with challenges, conflicts, and uncertainty; recognize one's limits and seeks help; recognizes the needs of others and responds appropriately; demonstrates willingness to discuss and confront problematic behavior of self and others.
4. Competence: Takes responsibility for one's own learning; participates equally and collegially in groups; demonstrates self-reflection and accurate self-assessment; able to identify personal barriers to learning; works with faculty to manage learning difficulties.
5. Maturity: Demonstrates emotional stability; appropriately confident yet humble; demonstrates appropriate professional dress, demeanor and language; accepts constructive criticism and applies it in a useful way; inspires confidence in others; displays appropriate emotions; is not hostile, disruptive confrontational, aggressive or isolated; does not engage in behavior that endangers or threatens self or others.
6. Communication: Able to communicate effectively with others; demonstrates courteous and respectful communication, even in difficult situations; uses active listening; communicates with empathy and compassion.

Section 3

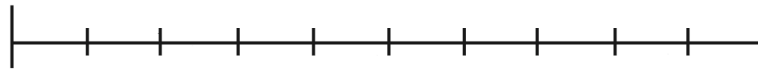
Professional Behavior Continuum

The *Professional Behavior Continuum* is a self-reflective tool for students to use to evaluate their professional behavior during their progression through the professional phase of the occupational therapy program. Students are encouraged to meet with their mentors to review their progress and to seek guidance as needed.

1. Integrity:

Lacks honesty
Lacks personal responsibility
Lacks self-reflection

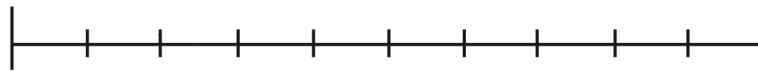
Always honest
Accepts responsibility for actions
Exceptional self-reflection



2. Respect:

Lacks respect for confidentiality/
professional boundaries
Does not resolve conflict in respectful/collegial way
Does not respect others' opinions/ values
Does not respect diversity

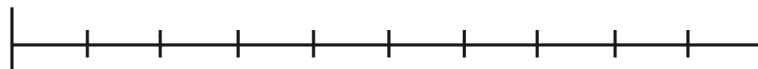
Respects confidentiality/
professional boundaries
Resolves conflict in respectful/collegial way
Respects others' opinions/ values
Respects diversity



3. Responsibility

Is not present/ punctual for learning
Does not cope w/ challenge/ conflict/ uncertainty
Does not recognize limits/ seek help
Does not recognize others' needs
Does not confront problematic behavior

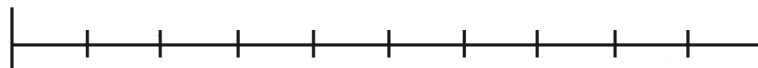
Present/ punctual for learning
Copes w/ challenge/ conflict/ uncertainty
Recognizes limits and seeks help
Recognizes/ responds to others' needs
Confronts problematic behavior



4. Competence

Does not take responsibility for learning
Lacks self-reflection
Unequal/ non-collegial participation
Does not identify learning barriers
Does not manage learning difficulties

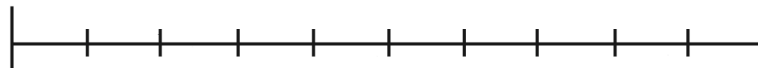
Takes responsibility for learning
Self-reflective
Equal/ collegial participation
Identifies learning barriers
Manages learning difficulties



5. Maturity

Lacks emotional stability
Lacks confidence/ humility
Lacks professional dress/ language
Does not use constructive criticism
Inappropriate behavior (hostile, aggressive...)

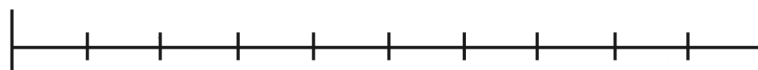
Demonstrates emotional stability
Confident and humble
Professional dress/language
Excellent use of constructive criticism
Appropriate behavior



6. Communication

Ineffective communication w/ others
Lacks respect/ courteousness
Lacks empathy/ compassion
Lacks active listening skills

Communicates effectively w/ others
Respectful/ courteous communication
Communicates w/ empathy/ compassion
Uses active listening skills



Section 4

Behavioral Expectations During Learning Activities

Students enrolled in the Duquesne University Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy program are expected to demonstrate professional behavior as determined by the American Occupational Therapy Association and the Department of Occupational Therapy of Duquesne University. Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate professional behavior during all learning activities, including classroom, laboratory, experiential, group, community and clinical experiences. These professional behaviors include integrity, respect, responsibility, competence, maturity, and communication.

The following behaviors are expected in the academic setting.

1. Attend and participate in all scheduled learning activities at the scheduled times. Students who are unable to attend class due to personal illness or emergency are required to notify the course faculty prior to the scheduled class time. Respect your faculty and your classmates; be on time.
2. Optimal use of time during learning experiences. Students are expected to complete readings and assignments according to assigned dates/times in order to be prepared for learning experiences. Active participation is expected and students are to engage in fair and collegial group activities.
3. Recognize learning problems and seek faculty guidance. Students are expected to recognize learning difficulties and ask the course faculty for guidance. Students should develop a plan of learning that may include additional learning strategies, tutorial assistance, and use of University and external resources.
4. Integrity. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form and under any circumstance. Issues of academic improprieties will be addressed according to the guidelines outlined in the RSHS Student Handbook.
5. Professional Attire. Students are expected to portray the appearance of a responsible health care professional. Classroom guidelines include that clothing must be worn that does not expose the abdomen, chest, or buttocks. Hats and clothing with unprofessional wording or pictures are prohibited. In the laboratory portion of some courses, students will be required to wear clothing that permits the exposure of portions of the body as appropriate for the practice of clinical skills. Professional dress is required for activities that include guest speakers or clients and learning activities external to the University. Professional dress includes: (men) dress pants and shirt, dress shoes; (women) dress pants or skirts, tailored tops, dress shoes. Tattoos and body piercings must be concealed. Facial and tongue piercings must be removed. Long hair must be tied back for learning experiences that involve clients. Duquesne University Student Occupational Therapist name tags are required for all external learning experiences.

Section 5

Professional Behavior Committee

The Professional Behavior Committee consists of the department chair, occupational therapy faculty mentor, and one Rangos School of Health Science faculty member who does not teach in the occupational therapy program.

Current Members:

Patricia A. H. Crist, PhD, OTR

Department Chair/Program Director

OT Faculty Mentor

RSHS Faculty Member

Section 6

AOTA Supporting Documentation

AOTA Standards for Continuing Competence

“Continuing competence is a process involving the examination of current competence and the development of capacity for the future. It is a component of ongoing professional development and lifelong learning” (AOTA, 2005c)

Standard

Definition

1. Knowledge

Demonstrating understanding and comprehension of the information required for the multiple roles and responsibilities assumed as an OTR. The individual must demonstrate

- mastery of the core of occupational therapy into the multiple responsibilities assumed
- expertise associated with primary responsibilities
- the ability to integrate relevant evidence, literature, and epidemiological data related to primary responsibilities and to the consumer population(s) served; and
- application of Association documents, and legislative, legal, and regulatory issues related to practice.

2. Critical Reasoning

Employ reasoning processes to make sound judgments and decisions.

- application of deductive and inductive reasoning in making decisions specific to roles and responsibilities;
- problem-solving skills necessary to carry out responsibilities;
- the ability to analyze occupational performance as influenced by environmental factors;
- the ability to reflect on one's own practice;
- management of information from a variety of sources in support of making decisions; and
- application of evidence, research findings, and outcome data in making decisions.

3. Interpersonal Abilities

Develop and maintain their professional relationships with others within the context of their roles and responsibilities. The individual must demonstrate

- use of effective communication methods that match the abilities, personal factors, learning styles, and therapeutic needs of consumers and others;
- effective interaction with people from diverse backgrounds;
- use of feedback from consumers, families, supervisors, and colleagues to modify one's professional behavior;
- collaboration with consumers, families, and professionals to attain optimal consumer outcomes; and
- the ability to develop and sustain team relationships to meet identified outcomes.

4. Performance Standards

Demonstrate the expertise, aptitudes, proficiencies, and abilities to competently fulfill their roles and responsibilities. The individual must demonstrate expertise in

- practice grounded in the core of occupational therapy;
- the therapeutic use of self, the therapeutic use of occupations and activities, the consultation process, and the education process to bring about change;
- integrating current practice techniques and technologies;
- updating his or her performance based on current research and literature; and
- quality improvement processes that prevent practice error and maximize client outcomes.

5. Ethical Reasoning

Identify, analyze, and clarify ethical issues or dilemmas to make responsible decisions within the changing context of their roles and responsibilities. The individual must demonstrate

- understanding and adherence to the profession's Code of Ethics, other relevant codes of ethics, and applicable laws and regulations;
- the use of ethical principles and the profession's core values to understand complex situations
- the integrity to make and defend decisions on ethical reasoning

AOTA: Core Values & Attitudes of Occupational Therapy Practice

In 1985, the American Occupational Therapy Association funded the Professional and Technical Role Analysis Study (PATRA). This study had two purposes: to delineate the entry-level practice of OTs and OTAs through a role analysis and to conduct a task inventory of what practitioners actually do. Knowledge, skills, and attitude statements were to be developed to provide a basis for the role analysis. The PATRA study completed the knowledge and skills statements. The Executive Board subsequently charged the Standards and Ethics Commission (SEC) to develop a statement that would describe the attitudes and values that undergird the profession of occupational therapy (Kanny, 1993).

Seven core values were identified that further defined the critical elements that comprise professionalism. They are stated as follows.

- Altruism
- Equality
- Freedom
- Justice
- Dignity
- Truth
- Prudence

The AOTA provides a working definition of each core value as follows.

<u>Core Value</u>	<u>Definition</u>
1. Altruism	the unselfish concern for the welfare of others. This concept is reflected in actions and attitudes of commitment, caring, dedication, responsiveness, and understanding.
2. Equality	requires that all individuals be perceived as having the same fundamental human rights and opportunities. This value is demonstrated by an attitude of fairness and impartiality. We believe that we should respect all individuals, keeping in mind that they may have values, beliefs, or life styles that are different from our own. Equality is practiced in the broad professional arena, but is particularly important in day-to-day interactions with those individuals receiving occupational therapy services.
3. Freedom	allows the individual to exercise choice and to demonstrate independence, initiative, and self-direction. There is a need for all individuals to find a balance between autonomy and societal membership that is reflected in the choice of

various patterns of interdependence with the human and nonhuman environment. We believe that individuals are internally and externally motivated toward action in a continuous process of adaptation throughout the life span. Purposeful activity plays a major role in developing and exercising self-direction, initiative, interdependence, and relatedness to the world. Activities verify the individual's ability to adapt, and they establish a satisfying balance between autonomy and societal membership. As professionals, we affirm the freedom of choice for each individual to pursue goals that have personal and social meaning.

4. Justice

places value on the upholding of such moral and legal principles as fairness, equity, truthfulness, and objectivity. This means we aspire to provide occupational therapy services for all individuals who are in need of these services and that we will maintain a goal-directed and objective relationship with all those served. Practitioners must be knowledgeable about and have respect for the legal rights of individuals receiving occupational therapy services. In addition, the occupational therapy practitioner must understand and abide by the local, state, and federal laws governing professional practice.

5. Dignity

emphasizes the importance of valuing the inherent worth and uniqueness of each person. This value is demonstrated by an attitude of empathy and respect for self and others. We believe that each individual is a unique combination of biologic endowment, sociocultural heritage, and life experiences. We view human beings holistically, respecting the unique interaction of the mind, body, and physical and social environment. We believe that dignity is nurtured and grows from the sense of competence and self-worth that is integrally linked to the person's ability to perform valued and relevant activities. In occupational therapy we emphasize the importance of dignity by helping the individual build on his or her unique attributes and resources.

6. Truth

requires that we be faithful to facts and reality. Truthfulness or veracity is demonstrated by being accountable, honest, forthright, accurate, and authentic in our attitudes and actions. There is an obligation to be truthful with ourselves, those who receive services, colleagues, and society. One

way that this is exhibited is through maintaining and upgrading professional competence. This happens, in part, through an unfaltering commitment to inquiry and learning, to self-understanding and to the development of an interpersonal competence.

7. Prudence

is the ability to govern and discipline oneself through the use of reason. To be prudent is to value judiciousness, discretion, vigilance, moderation, care, and circumspection in the management of one's affairs, to temper extremes, make judgments and respond on the basis of intelligent reflection and rational thought.

AOTA Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2005a)

This Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association sets forth principles for the ethical practice of occupational therapy. All occupational therapists are responsible for maintaining and promoting ethical practice. To this end, the occupational therapist shall act in the best interest of the client. This Code of Ethics shall be binding on all occupational therapists.

- Principle 1 *Beneficence*: Demonstrate a concern for the safety and well-being of the recipients of their services.
- Principle 2 *Nonmaleficence*: Take measures to ensure a recipient's safety and avoid imposing or inflicting harm.
- Principle 3 *Autonomy, Confidentiality*: Respect recipients to assure their rights.
- Principle 4 *Duty*: Achieve and continually maintain high standards of competence.
- Principle 5 *Procedural Justice*: Comply with laws and Association policies guiding the profession of occupational therapy.
- Principle 6 *Veracity*: Provide accurate information when representing the profession.
- Principle 7 *Fidelity*: Treat colleagues and other professionals with respect, fairness, discretion, and integrity.

AOTA (2005a) Occupational therapy code of ethics. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 59, 639-642

AOTA (2005b) Standards of Practice for occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 59, 663-665.

AOTA (2005c) Standards for continuing competence. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 59, 661-662.

Kanny, E. (1993). Core values and attitudes of occupational therapy practice. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 47, 1085-1086.

Section 7

Signature Page

This confirms that I have read and fully understand the Duquesne University Department of Occupational Therapy *Professional Behavior* document. I have been given the opportunity to discuss this document with my faculty mentor in the occupational therapy department.

Student _____

Mentor _____

Date _____