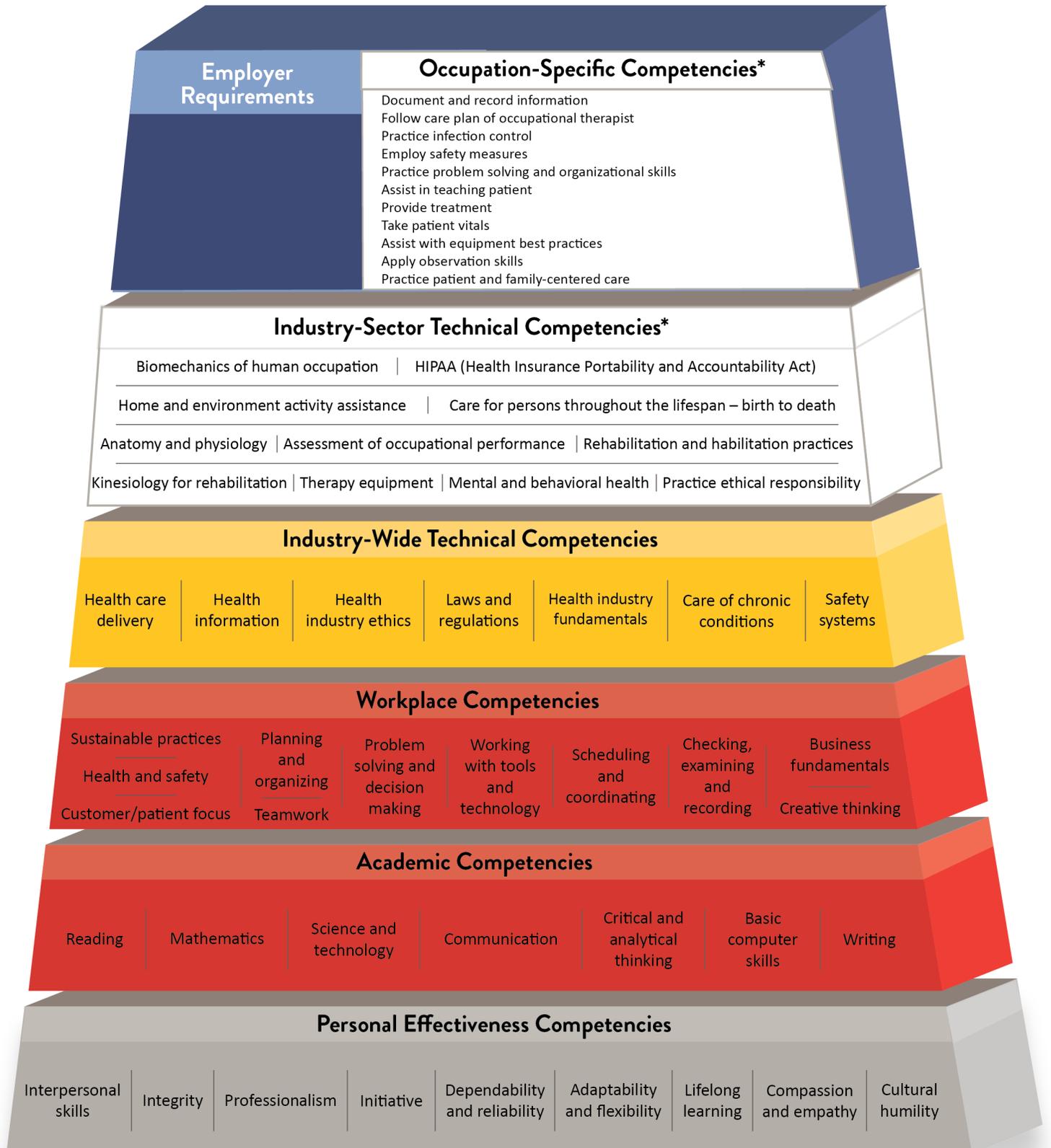


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline

Competency Model for Health Care Services

Occupation: Occupational Therapy Assistant



Based on: Fundamentals of Health Care Competency Model, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/health-care-services.

Competency Model for Occupational Therapy Assistant

Occupational Therapy Assistant – An individual who assists occupational therapists in providing occupational therapy treatments and procedures. This person may, in accordance with state laws, assist in development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, direct activity programs, and document the progress of treatments.

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Biomechanics of human occupation** – Understand the interrelationship between the human muscular and skeletal systems producing movement and engagement in daily activities. In depth understanding of how the influence muscle attachment, length, and relationship to joint axes can change movements, thus impacting occupational performance.
- **HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)** – Understand the law that provides data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding patient medical information.
- **Home and environment activity assistance** – Understand how to assist with interventions that will improve life skills related to day-to-day activities at home and in the community. Also know how to assist with interventions to improve overall social participation.
- **Care for persons throughout the lifespan – birth to death** – Understand how to help individuals across the lifespan engage in activities they want and need to do through therapeutic practice of daily activities also known as occupations.
- **Anatomy and physiology** – Know the foundation in normal physiology, pathophysiology, histology, integumentary, skeletal, muscular, nervous, and sensory systems.
- **Assessment of occupational performance** – Knowledge of how to identify functions of behavior, how to observe, collect, and analyze patient/client data, and how to identify and conduct approaches for physical and behavioral functional assessment.

- **Rehabilitation and habilitation practices** – Understand a set of interventions designed to optimize functioning and reduce disabilities in individuals with health conditions in interaction with their environment as well as clients looking to gain certain new skills, abilities, and knowledge.
- **Kinesiology for rehabilitation** – Understand the study of the body’s movement as it relates to recover a patient’s mobility and improve their lives through exercise.
- **Therapy equipment** – Understand the applications of various equipment and how to safely use a variety of tools and instruments to assist in the performance of occupational therapy rehabilitation with the patient.
- **Mental and behavioral health** – Understand that mental health pertains to a person’s psychological state and behavioral health entails a person’s physical condition as well as their state of mind and that these may impact the work of occupational therapy.
- **Practice ethical responsibility** – Know that medical ethics allow for people, regardless of race, gender, or religion to be guaranteed quality and principled care.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Document and record information** – Know how to enter, transcribe, record, store, and/or maintain information in written or electronic/magnetic form.
- **Follow care plan of occupational therapist** – Understand how to follow the care plan as laid out by the occupational therapist and perform the necessary activities and tasks with the patient in accordance with the occupational therapist’s plan.
- **Practice infection control** – Demonstrate adherence to OSHA and CDC guidelines to minimize infections. Understand the standards required for quality decontamination processes and knowledge of how to maintain and effectively clean occupational therapy equipment and accessories.
- **Employ safety measures** – Understand facility safety procedures and proficiency in basic First Aid and CPR. Be able to identify signs of cardiac distress and arrest.
- **Practice problem solving and organizational skills** – Assist in preparing equipment and supplies to prevent backtracking prior to care delivery.

- **Assist in teaching patient** – Able to assist the occupational therapist in teaching techniques and best practices for care to help meet developmental occupational outcomes.
- **Provide treatment** – Able to assist in rehabilitative therapy to build or restore vocational, homemaking, and daily living skills to patients as directed by occupational therapist.
- **Take patient vitals** – Know how to do preliminary intake of patient and conduct patient vital statistics for the occupational therapist.
- **Assist with equipment best practices** – Assist in setting up, using, and cleaning specific equipment including ramps, resistance exercise bands, electrotherapy, ultrasound, hydrotherapy, and various gym equipment.
- **Apply observation skills** – Be able to provide support in using observation skills to track patient progress.
- **Practice patient and family-centered care** – Demonstrates an approach to assist in the delivery and evaluation of health care that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among health care professionals, patients, and families.

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