**Technical Standards for Orientation and Mobility Program**

This document describes technical standards specific to the Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Programwhich is accredited through the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired’ s Higher Education Accrediting Committee. An objective of the O&M program is to prepare graduates to enter a variety of employment settings (e.g., schools, rehabilitation centers, state government positions). The technical standards provided by the O&M Program provide students with the necessary skills for entry-level positions. As of September 1, 2020, the ability to meet these technical standards is required for admission to the graduate program and must be maintained throughout the time a student is enrolled in the program. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory academic standing but also on non-academic factors that serve to ensure that students can meet the technical standards of the O&M program required for graduation.

These technical standards must be maintained throughout a student’s program and may change over time. Applicants to the O&M program will be required to verify that they understand and meet these technical standards, or that they believe with reasonable accommodations they can meet the technical standards. A reasonable accommodation cannot fundamentally alter the academic and clinical requirements of the programs, pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others, or present an undue burden to the institution.

In keeping with laws regarding disabilities, we are committed to making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to enable them to successfully meet all technical standards. Students with a disability who are accepted to the O&M program and anticipate the need for accommodations should contact the Student Disability Services office and complete the university approved process for establishing eligibility for accommodations.

**Certification Requirements**

To successfully complete the O&M program, a student must meet the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) competencies located at <https://www.acvrep.org/certifications/coms-bok>. Graduates of the O&M Program are qualified to sit for the national certification examination through ACVREP*.* Successful completion of the O&M Certification examination is required for an individual to be certified in many states and can vary from state to state. Weadhere to the standards set by this organization as well as a Code of Ethics from ACVREP. **Code of Ethics for Orientation and Mobility Specialists (***Revised: June 11, 2013)* *URL:* **https://www.acvrep.org/certifications/coms-code**

To acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the practice of O&M to function in a variety of situations and to successfully complete the O&M program, students must have multiple abilities and skills divided into the following areas: communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive, sensory-observational, and social-behavioral. The following technical standards reflect the applicable sub-set of abilities that are required under each skill:

**Communication**

Prospective and current students must possess adequate communication skills to:

* Communicate effectively with individuals and groups in person, by phone, and in written form while considering the communication needs and cultural values of the listener at a level which will support competent professional practice.
* Communicate proficiently in oral and written English.
* Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly to meet demands required as part of coursework and during clinical work to ensure student safety (e.g., medical information, O&M reports, assessment).
* Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.
* Possess sufficient speech/vocal productions for provision of O&M services.

**Physical and Mental Demands/Environment Factors**

Prospective and current students must possess adequate physical and mental skills to:

* Sustain necessary physical activities for the defined workday.
* Efficiently select and use materials, equipment and environment to complete O&M assessments and education/rehabilitation programs.
* Access technology and equipment for O&M documents (e.g., assessments, reports).
* Regular travel to multiple teaching sites as assigned (e.g., classroom, education/rehabilitation setting, and in the community).
* Access various forms of transportation to attend academic courses and internship placement(s).
* Safely manipulate student-utilized equipment (e.g., GPS, canes, low-vision devices, wheelchairs, scooters).
* Provide a safe environment for students when responding to emergency situations (e.g., fire, choking, or other medical emergencies) and in the application of universal precautions.
* Maintain emotional control under stress.
* Frequent standing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, bending, reaching, pulling, pushing, heavy lifting, and moderate carrying.
* May be required to lift and transfer students to and from wheelchairs or assist with positioning students with physical disabilities.
* Must be able to lift and/or move up to a minimum of 25 pounds.
* Teach in rain, cold, heat and other inclement conditions.

**Intellectual/Cognitive**

Prospective and current students must possess adequate intellectual/cognitive skills to: Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate, and apply large amounts of written and verbal information from various sources and disciplines in a short period of time sufficiently to meet O&M program requirements.

* Read, comprehend, record, and interpret information accurately from equipment, medical and student records to develop and implement an O&M program, and ensure student safety.
* Analyze and solve problems, reason, and make sound judgments in student assessment, planning and implementation of an O&M program.
* Accurately identify and communicate limits in one’s own professional knowledge and skills and utilize resources to increase one’s knowledge and skills.
* Use technology to meet requirements of courses and internship (e.g., internet access, records).

**Sensory/Observation**

Prospective and current students must possess adequate sensory skills to:

* Identify normal and disordered characteristics in motor planning that affects orientation and mobility (e.g., gait patterns, posture).
* Observe students’ activity and behavior accurately during an O&M assessment and implementation of a program.
* Monitor students’ responses and use of equipment and materials to ensure their safety while traveling.
* Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments (e.g., eye reports, audiograms).
* Recognize and interpret the student’s and a family/caregiver’s understanding of the student’s eye conditions and individualized O&M program.

**Immediate Dismissal**

Success in the O&M program consists of more than grades. Work habits and attitudes play a major role in the success of any O&M student. Any of the following actions are considered just cause for immediate dismissal from the O&M Program:

1. Violations of the rules, regulations, and principles in the *Code of Ethics* for Orientation and Mobility Specialists and *Texas Tech Code of Student Affairs*.
2. Interns who fail in the internship are required to show reasonable cause why they should not be excluded from the O&M program. Interns who successfully show cause and can re-enroll in the internship course will be required to complete the full internship again.
3. Failure to maintain an overall GPA of 2.5 or higher.
4. Willful submission of false information or alteration of any official records, O&M reports, papers, or examinations.
5. Willful conduct that may cause injury to self or others.

**I understand and acknowledge that I must meet the technical standards required for this O&M certification/degree program to complete the program, with or without accommodations.**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**