

Job Task Analysis

Department of Education Occupational Therapist

General Role Description		Working Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of occupational therapy supports to students to access and participate in learning, including supporting inclusion education systems and environments that can accommodate reasonable adjustments. Support to schools and teachers to facilitate inclusive environments for all students on both global and individual levels. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): 38 hours per week (7.60 hours/day, Monday – Friday) Employees are entitled to meal breaks and rest pauses in accordance with the provisions of the applicable industrial award or agreement. School operations are structured across 4 terms per year, with each term running for approximately 10 weeks. May vary between schools, operational demands and funding.
Work Activities Summary (Refer to the task descriptions section for detailed information)		
1	Setting up/packing up learning and therapy environments (indoor and outdoor)	Medium work
2	Administrative tasks	Sedentary work
3	Driving	Sedentary work
4	Meetings (professional development/staff meetings/case conferences/performance reviews)	Sedentary work
5	Individual student supports including assessment and intervention (indoor and outdoor)	Heavy work
6	Student behavioural supports	Heavy work
7	Transitioning students	Heavy work
8	Provide support and demonstration of student hygiene and self-care support	Heavy work
9	Whole of school support and focussed supports	Light work
10	Facilitate and conduct planning for access to school events (athletics, cross country etc)	Medium work
11	Asset management	Medium work
12	Participate in lockdowns/fire evacuations (planned drills and unplanned occurrences)	Light work
Work Environment		Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School environment – stairs, ramps, slope, grass, lifts Community environment – paths, grass, slopes, stairs, uneven ground, transport/ driving Outdoor work – heat, UV exposure, cold, wet, weather conditions Indoor - Generally climate-controlled (air conditioning/ fans), with variation between classrooms Noise – classroom noise, including low pitch ambient noise and high pitch from students Chemical/biological exposure - Low-level exposure to dust, aerosols (coughing/sneezing), body fluids (e.g. sweat), cleaning products, hand sanitiser and potential environmental contaminants (e.g. mould, asbestos in older settings) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational Therapists typically work across multiple schools (up to 5), with allocations based on school funding and regional models. They receive professional supervision from a clinical lead and may access a hub or base school for collaboration and shared resources. Working in a multidisciplinary team – aligned closely with Physiotherapist and Speech Pathologist teams Role works closely with various stakeholders including school leadership teams, teachers, teacher aides, external allied health providers, government agencies and families.
		Tools and Equipment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desktop computer or laptop, monitors, keyboard, mouse Various therapy resources and equipment (e.g. hoists, swings, seats, blankets)
		Manual Handling Devices
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trolley Roller bag for resources (individually supplied)
		Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunscreen, wide brimmed hat for outdoor work

FREQUENCY % OF SHIFT	Rare (R)	Occasional (O)	Frequent (F)	Constant (C)	Repetitive (Rep)
	0% – 5%	6% – 33%	34% – 66%	67% - 100%	Performed more than twice per minute for several minutes
TIME EXAMPLE	0 – 23 min	24 min – 2.5 hrs	2.6 - 5 hrs	5.1 – 7.6 hrs	

Physical Demands Summary

Weighted (Kg)	R	O	F	C	Rep	Comments
Waist to overhead		Up to 7.5				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laptop/ tablet books/ files <5kg
Waist to shoulder – Medium forces (M)		Up to 10 (M)			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources/ therapy equipment <10kg
Floor to waist - Medium to High forces (M-H)		Up to 10 (M-H)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting toileting/ dressing/ hygiene depending on student compliance (M)
Carrying – unilateral/ bilateral			Up to 10			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transferring students with variable compliance levels/ using hoists (M-H)
Push/Pull (Kg-force)			Up to 6 (M-H)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trolley Pushing students in wheelchairs, strollers etc/ using hoists (M-H)
General and Trunk	R	O	F	C	Rep	Comments
Sit		✓				Breaks, meetings and admin outside of therapeutic intervention, small chair/stool when supporting student movement
Stand			✓			Can be sustained (with ability to change as required) depending on task
Walk – even and uneven surfaces			✓			Movement across school and community grounds on even and uneven surfaces. Agility required to quickly respond to situations involving student safety
Kneel/squat			✓			Position will depend on student and classroom (ability to change as needed) and can be sustained for periods of 20-40 minutes
Bend forwards/stoop			✓			Position will depend on task/student ability (ability to change as needed)
Bend backwards	✓					May be required on occasion depending on student movement/ needs
Trunk twist/side bend			✓			Movement will depend on task and student needs (ability to change as needed) Can be unpredictable when in response to student movements
Neck flexion – look down			✓			Movement depends on task/student needs (ability to change as needed)
Neck extension – look up		✓				Movement depends on task/student needs (ability to change as needed)
Neck rotation			✓		✓	Movement depends on task/student needs (ability to change as needed) Can be unpredictable when in response to student movements
Upper Limb	R	O	F	C	Rep	Comments
Forward reach			✓			Resources and objects. Can be sustained (e.g. support student to maintain a posture or position)
Side reach			✓			Depends on student and classroom (ability to change as needed)
Overhead reach		✓				Resources and objects. Can be sustained (e.g. supporting student in posture or movement)
Wrist movement			✓		✓	Ability to take breaks as needed (e.g. writing, typing)
Finger/thumb manipulation			✓		✓	Ability to take breaks as needed (e.g. writing, typing)
Grip/grasp			✓		✓	Ability to take breaks as needed.

Other	R	O	F	C	Rep	Comments
Climb - steps/stairs/ ladder			✓			Ladder use is rare. Access may involve stairs, ramps, or lifts. May support mobile students on stairs or use ramps/lifts depending.
Balance			✓			Balance required on uneven surfaces etc. Agility required to quickly respond to situations involving student safety
Vibration – whole body or upper limb		✓				Vibration exposure may occur during travel on uneven surfaces between schools
Voice projection				✓	✓	With classroom and playground, responding to students with various forms of physical and intellectual needs

Psychosocial Demands Summary		
High job demands	Constant	Duty of care to students, staff and others in the workplace. Fast pace, multiple competing special needs of students, moving between classrooms, students and different schools
Emotional demands	Constant	Supporting students with frequently high level emotional and learning needs
Low job demands	Rare	
Low job control	Rare	Must follow curriculum and individual school structures and processes however there is flexibility on how content is delivered
Low support	Occasional	Inter-team support can be inconsistent depending on schools and therapists. High workload impacts availability of senior supporting staff
Remote or isolated work	Occasional	Predominantly school-based, collaborative environment. Can work in isolation depending on school and team structure
Traumatic events, including vicarious trauma	Frequent	Increased frequency of medical events/ emergencies due to complex student conditions. Exposure to vicarious trauma through working with vulnerable students and families
Violence/aggression – student behaviour	Frequent	Could range from disruption, non-compliance to verbal and physical intimidation or aggression
Violence/aggression – parent interactions	Occasional	Exposure may be increased due to complex student needs driving family psychosocial pressures
Poor role clarity	Occasional	Role may vary depending on individual student needs. Often overlap between occupational therapist and physiotherapist roles, can create further role confusion depending on structure of team, school needs, individuals in the roles
Communication/team work/interaction with colleagues	Constant	Occupational Therapists engage with multiple stakeholders frequently, requiring strong communication skills

Cognitive Demands Summary		
Attention	Constant	When working directly with students, constant attention required
Memory	Constant	Direct student support requires recall of strategies, medical conditions, procedures and individual approaches for each student. Frequently moving through different tasks requires high levels of memory to ensure consistency and efficient completion of tasks.
Concentration	Constant	The unpredictable environment requires constant multitasking and task switching. A lapse in concentration could compromise student safety and wellbeing
Vision	Constant	Moving between short and long-distance vision, computer and screen work, as well as visual integration skills required with visual scanning, figure ground discrimination, visual memory.
Hearing	Constant	Hearing in variable environments
Decision making	Constant	Constant decision making, problem solving, prioritisation of needs, safety decision making, unpredictable variables, integration and collaboration of decisions within a larger environment. Case load planning and prioritisation within time and environmental constraints
Situational awareness	Constant	Working with high needs students requires constant awareness about behaviours, and varying personal schedules, working across different environments and provision of therapy interventions in safest possible way for all stakeholders

This job task analysis is also available online. The QR code provides direct access to the full document and the associated work capabilities checklist.



Work Activities - Task description details

Task 1 – Setting up/packing up learning and therapy environments (indoor and outdoor)

Total time/shift: Variable - up to 1 hour, depending on number of sessions per day

Task duration: Variable - 10 to 15 minutes at a time

Physical demand level – Medium work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up and pack down of therapy environments – indoor and outdoorPreparation for therapy tasks and activitiesCollating, cleaning and packing of resources and equipmentWiping or mopping spills/ food/ bodily fluids	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sitting (O)Standing (F)Walking on various surfaces (F)Finger/thumb manipulation (C)Carrying, lifting floor to waist, waist to shoulder, above shoulder (F) up to 10kgCrouching, forward bending, reaching, twisting (F)Neck rotation and movement (O)

Task 2 - Administrative tasks

Total time/shift: Variable - up to 1 hour

Task duration: Variable - depending on how individual structures their day/week

Physical demand level – Sedentary work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Completing clinical notes, session summaries, and required departmental documentation following assessments or interventions.Reviewing reports, student files, and relevant background information to support clinical decision-making and planningCompletion of documentation, paperwork from school in relation to caseload and school focusChecking emails and responding to general administrative correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sitting (F)Standing (O)Neck rotation and movement (O)Walking (O)Finger/thumb manipulation (F)Wrist movement (F)

Task 3 – Driving

Total time/shift: Variable

Task duration: Variable - up to 1 hour per trip

Physical demand level – Sedentary work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Driving between multiple school sites as required for service deliveryNavigating varied traffic conditions, road environments and parking constraints while adhering to road safety regulationsLoading and unloading work materials such as assessment kits, therapy resources or portable equipment into and out of the vehicleMaintaining awareness of surroundings, road conditions and potential hazards to ensure safe travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sitting (C)Neck rotation (F)Neck flexion/extension (O)Forward reach (F)Gripping (C)

Task 4 – Meetings (PD/staff meetings/case conferences/performance reviews)

Total time/shift: Variable - up to 3 hours

Task duration: Variable - up to 2 hours at a time

Physical demand level – Sedentary work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending meetings with parents, teachers, leadership teams, student services, and multidisciplinary teams to discuss student needs, progress, adjustments and collaborative planning • Participating in phone or virtual conversations with school staff, families, or external professionals regarding student communication needs and service coordination • Attend required meetings as directed by school leadership • Preparing agendas, gathering supporting documents, and organising follow-up actions from meetings • Prepare materials and information for relevant meetings (e.g. performance reviews) • Respond to any assigned actions from meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting (C) • Forward reach (O) • Finger/thumb manipulation (C) • Lifting and carrying light materials (O) • Wrist and hand movement, manipulation (F) • Neck flexion – looking down (F) • Visual focus (C) • Hearing (C)
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Task 5 – Individual student supports including assessment and intervention (indoor and outdoor)

Total time/shift: Variable – up to 1.5 hours

Task duration: Variable - 30 to 40 minutes, highly dependent on needs of student

Physical demand level – Heavy work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of students in various environments • Provision of assessment of students where applicable and required – including observation, interaction • Provision of therapeutic intervention such as supporting transfer, movement, physical strengthening activities within various environments • Includes demonstration of in-classroom supports and capacity building of teacher and teacher aides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting (O) • Standing (F) • Walking on various surfaces (F) • Finger/thumb manipulation (C) • Carrying, lifting floor to waist, waist to shoulder, above shoulder (F) – med to high forces • Crouching, forward bending, reaching, twisting (F) • Neck rotation and movement (O)

Task 6 – Student behavioural supports

Total time/shift: Variable – up to 2 hours

Task duration: Variable - 15 to 45 minutes, highly dependent on needs of student

Physical demand level – Heavy work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing education, support and demonstration to stakeholder regarding behaviour management strategies for a student including clinical holds and mechanical restraints • Applying relevant behaviour strategies when working with students • Moderate to high forces depending on size of student and types of behavioural supports required for situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing (C) • Sitting (F) (wheeling stool) • Forward reach (F) • Stooping/crouching/kneeling/squatting (F) • Wrist, hand movement and manipulation (F) • Neck rotation and movement (F) • Push/pull medium to high force through shoulders if demonstrating or applying clinical hold or mechanical restraint

Task 7 – Transitioning students

Total time/shift: Variable – up to 45 minutes

Task duration: Variable - 15 to 20 minutes at a time

Physical demand level – Heavy work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating and supporting student movement between environments Facilitating and supporting student transition and mobilising between equipment Pushing students in wheelchairs, including up or down ramps, in and out of lifts and over uneven surfaces Assisting students with low to moderate mobility needs including walking frames (e.g. holding hand/ guiding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing (C) Walking (C) Neck rotation and movement (F) Climb (stairs) (O) Lifting floor to waist (O) Carrying (O) Push/pull medium forces (F)
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Task 8 – Provide support and demonstration of student hygiene and self-care support

Total time/shift: Variable – up to 45 minutes

Task duration: Variable - 15 to 20 minutes at a time

Physical demand level – Heavy work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transferring students from floor/ chair to hoist/change table/toilet Using slings/ hoist if required Dressing or assisting with changing clothes and self-hygiene for students of low, moderate or high needs Moderate to high forces depending on student physical needs, cooperation or compliance levels Demonstrating transfers and process for teachers/teacher aides Movement of equipment between environments depending on needs of student and equipment location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing (C) Forward reach (F) Overhead reach (O) Stooping/crouching/kneeling/squatting (F) Wrist, hand movement and manipulation (F) Neck rotation and movement (F) Lifting – floor to waist, waist to shoulder (O) Push/pulling (F)

Task 9 – Whole of school support and focused supports

Total time/shift: Variable – up to 45 minutes

Task duration: Variable – 30 to 45 minutes

Physical demand level – Light work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with school leadership teams to determine and develop whole of school programs, interventions or training depending on school needs Developing and delivering professional learning to upskill teachers, teacher aides and other school staff in supportive strategies, and inclusive practices. Creating or preparing training resources, visual supports, handouts, demonstration materials and digital content. Meeting with staff to build knowledge and confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sitting (F) Standing (O) Voice projection (O) Neck rotation and movement (O) Walking (O) Forward and side reach (O) Bending/stooping (O) Finger/thumb manipulation (F) Gripping/handling materials (F) Wrist movement (F) Neck flexion – looking down (F)

Task 10 – Facilitate and conduct planning for access to school events (athletics, cross country etc)

Total time/shift: Variable – up to 45 minutes

Task duration: Variable - 30 to 60 minutes at a time

Physical demand level – Medium work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review student needs through observation and case discussion as required Develop student access plans for any school event that requires additional input Work with school leadership teams to determine and develop access plans and resourcing required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sitting (F) Standing (O) Neck rotation and movement (O) Walking (O) Finger/thumb manipulation (F) Wrist movement (F)

- Upskill teachers, teacher aides and other school staff in strategies and access plans
- Creating or preparing resources, visual supports, handouts, demonstration materials and digital content required to implement access plan for student

Task 11 – Asset management

Total time/shift: Up to 30 minutes

Task duration: Variable - 15 to 30 minutes at a time

Physical demand level – Medium work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing equipment that is managed by allied health team available within different schools • Managing loaned equipment and ensuring it is returned • Storing equipment such as wheelchairs, transfer stands, chairs, wobble stools etc • Charging and maintaining equipment when not in use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting (F) • Waling (F) • Standing (O) • Bending, stooping, reaching (O) • Pushing/pulling (F) • Lifting floor to waist, waist to shoulder (O)

Task 13 – Participate in lockdowns/ fire evacuations (planned drills and unplanned occurrences)

Total time/shift: One per term total planned – can be additional unplanned in response to emergent situations

Task duration: 30 to 60 minutes, variable when unplanned

Physical demand level – Light work

Task description details	Key physical demands (frequency related to task)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in both planned and unplanned evacuation drills in accordance with site emergency procedures • Communicate and follow directions from fire wardens and emergency services personnel as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing (F) • Walking (F) • Kneeling, crouching, forward bending (O) • Neck rotation and movement (F) • Stairs (F)

Appendix

- U.S Department of Labour (1991) Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Fourth Edition Appendix C, Components of the definition trailer, section IV. Physical Demands – Strength Rating / O*NET online
- Hazardous Manual Task Code of Practice, Safe Work Australia 2018
- Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work, SWA 2022

PHYSICAL DEMANDS	Definition: Strength rating represents the strength requirements which are considered to be important for average, successful work performance
Sedentary work	Manual handling <4.5kg of force occasionally and/or <1kg frequently. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time but may involve walking or standing briefly occasionally.
Light work	Manual handling <9kg of force occasionally, and/or <4.5kg frequently, and/or <1kg constantly to move objects. A job should be rated Light Work: (1) walking or standing to a significant degree; or (2) sitting most of the time but entails using arm or leg controls; and/or (3) constant pushing and/or pulling of materials
Medium work	Manual handling 9-22kg of force occasionally, and/or 4.5-9kg frequently, and/or <4.5kg constantly to move objects.
Heavy work	Manual handling 22-44kg of force occasionally, and/or 9-22kg of force frequently, and/or 4.5-9kg constantly to move objects.
Very heavy work	Exerting >44kg of force occasionally, and/or >22kg of force frequently, and/or >9kg of force constantly to move objects.

FREQUENCY CLASSIFICATIONS	Rare (R)	Occasional (O)	Frequent (F)	Constant (C)	Definitions: Sustained > 30 secs at a time Long duration > 30 mins at a time Repetition
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% time	1 - 5	6 - 33	34 - 66	67 - 100	<i>> 2 per minute Static - body area remains in stationary, fixed position Exposure - time spent completing task over whole shift Intermittent - when there is a repeated physical demand but with significant intervals between cycles.</i>
Reps per day	1	2 - 100	101 - 500	500+	
Reps per hour		0 - 12	12 - 63	>63	
Reps per minute		1 every 5 - 15	1 every 1 - 5	1 or more	

This Job Task Analysis (JTA) was co-designed and developed by AXIS Rehabilitation in partnership with the Department of Education. This collaboration ensures the JTA is evidence-based, practical and aligned with workplace and organisational requirements, supporting informed decision-making in workplace rehabilitation, employment and safe work practices.

The JTA is a tool to be used in workplace rehabilitation and does not capture every intricate duty or responsibility for each individual role within the department. Rather, it is intended to provide medical practitioners and providers with a clearer understanding of the role and its expectations in greater detail.