

2024-25

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

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**Western Technical College**

Program  
Handbook



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## **Mission Statement:**

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Western's Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program promotes student success through excellence in learning and professional behaviors. The OTA Program prepares students as entry level practitioners through a competency-based education, collaborative efforts, and community partnerships.

## **Philosophy Statement:**

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The OTA Program abides by the philosophy of the occupational therapy profession. We believe that "All individuals have an innate need and right to engage in meaningful occupations throughout their lives. Participation in these occupations influences their development, health, and well-being across the lifespan" (AOTA, 2017). Engagement in occupation is complex and multidimensional. Various integrated factors contribute to the quality of participation in occupations including contexts, performance patterns, performance skills and client factors (AOTA, 2020). We believe occupational therapy practitioners' unique perspective and focus on occupations, allows them to maximize participation in occupation through "professional reasoning, analyzing occupations and activities and collaborating with clients" (AOTA, 2020).

Students in the OTA Program are regarded as occupational beings with a desired life situation to serve as an OTA. As such, they learn and grow through participation in meaningful occupations in the role of an OTA student. The program acknowledges that students bring unique life experiences to the program making learning unique to all students as they interpret and create new information from participation in the program. Therefore, the OTA Program is student centered and seeks to integrate and balance students' contexts, performance patterns, performance skills and personal factors to support student success. The OTA Program provides all learners opportunities for hands on learning and real-life application and allows them to reflect, plan, and redo to fully integrate knowledge.

### **References:**

American Occupational Therapy Association (2020). Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(suppl2), 7412410010.  
<http://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>  
American Occupational Therapy Association. (2017). Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71(Suppl.2), 7112410045.  
<http://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2017.71S06>

## **Program Outcomes:**

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The graduates of the OTA program at Western will be able to:

1. Practice within the distinct role and responsibility of the occupational therapy assistant.
2. Serve a diverse population in a variety of systems that are consistent with entry level practice.
3. Seek out learning opportunities to keep current with best practice.
4. Apply occupational therapy principles and intervention tools to achieve expected outcomes.
5. Demonstrate professional behaviors, ethical standards, values, and attitudes of the occupational therapy profession.
6. Advocate for the profession, services, and consumers.

## **Program Accreditation:**

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The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's Telephone number, c/o AOTA is (301) 652-2682 and its web address is [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org). Graduates of the OTA Program are awarded the Associate in Applied Science degree and are eligible to sit for the national certification exam for OTAs administered by NBCOT.





## The Key to Success

You will spend the better part of two years completing the core courses of the Occupational Therapist Assistant (OTA) program. True, the courses are rigorous, but the perception of *intensity* has to do with the amount of time you will spend with your instructors and fellow students and with studying the information. It will be important to collaborate with those around you as you work daily to learn and use the information in the program.

You may be familiar with a traditional educational format where you come to class to sit, develop blisters on your writing hand, and then regurgitate your wagonload of short-term memories on an exam. That will NOT work in the OTA program! You will still have to absorb a lot of information, but how you *use* the information is what will make you a successful OTA. You will be required to think, to assemble information from past units and courses and to create solutions to patient problems. That is how it is in the clinic. Every patient, every situation is different. You CANNOT memorize all the answers!

Another major difference in the program is that you will be educated in and held accountable for your professional behaviors. What are professional behaviors? They are the qualities – over and beyond the knowledge you gain and the skills you perform – which are essential for your success in the classroom and clinic. In broad terms, you are expected to demonstrate respect for others, communicate effectively, cooperate with classmates, and display the dependability expected of a professional. It's the “Golden Rule” applied to school. Treat your classmates, instructors, patients, and coworkers as you would like to be treated.

Behaviors displayed in the classroom are correlative to behaviors in the workplace. Picture the prospective employer inquiring about a recent graduate whose memorable behaviors were consistent tardiness, inability to work with others, and complaining at every opportunity. That is not someone an employer wants to hire or you want caring for your loved one in the hospital.

Those who make the most of the program learn early that the classroom instructors, clinical instructors, tutors, counselors, and other college staff are working extremely hard to provide you with an education that will allow you to realize your dreams. You, in turn, must do your part with the same dedication. You need to make the most of the assistance available from the program, from the college and from your classmates.



## So where in all this is the Key to Success?

First, acknowledge what it will take to become an Occupational Therapist Assistant. Second, understand that the program, just like the profession and your eventual patients, have high expectations for you. Third, recognize that the education you are about to undergo will most likely be different from anything you have experienced before.

- ✓ You will be held accountable for material from every class and expected to use this knowledge throughout the program to demonstrate your growth.
- ✓ You will problem solve and use critical thinking in practical situations; therefore, comprehension and the application of knowledge is emphasized instead of rote memorization.
- ✓ You are responsible for your behaviors, the cornerstones of professional attributes and indicators of your aptitude as a coworker and healthcare provider.
- ✓ You must be willing to trust, communicate, and become involved in your own improvements. Abundant assistance is available, but it must start with you.

You are entering a new situation with demands tailored to promote the best in you both professionally and personally. Make the most of it. You will find that becoming a cooperative learning partner with us is much more rewarding than simply showing up. Use the key. Open the gate to a great opportunity in education and a rewarding career.

**This program handbook contains all the key information, policies, and procedures necessary to complete the program successfully. Read it through completely and refer to it often!**

**\*\*Please note that many students who successfully complete the OTA Program and receive their degree wish to continue their education at some point in time.**

***Please keep the following records to ease the transition into the next phase of your education:***

1. Copy of summary transcript
2. Syllabus from each of your Western OTA courses

# Key Contacts and Resources

## Program Instructors

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All instructors have voicemail and email for convenient contact. You are encouraged to reach out to instructors with questions or concerns. Students are welcome to drop by the faculty offices at any time, but appointments are encouraged to ensure instructors are available. Instructors will post their class schedule outside their office door. If you must cancel a scheduled appointment, let the instructor know and make arrangements to reschedule the appointment.

Stephanie Andersen, OTR Program Chair/Instructor	HSC 4036	789-6132	Andersens@westernnc.edu
Lori Kramer, OTR AFWC/Instructor	HSC 4041	785-9883	kramerl@westernnc.edu
Kayla Minegar, COTA Adjunct Instructor	HSC 4088	785-9303	minegark@westernnc.edu
Alexis Swales, COTA Adjunct Instructor	HSC 4088	785-9303	swalesa@westernnc.edu

## Faculty Advisors

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Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. Your advisor is another key to your success. You will meet with your advisor at least once during a term. At these meetings you will be able to express needs, review professional growth, learn how the instructors have evaluated your progress, and in general discuss ways in which you can be successful. Your advisor can also point you in the right direction to access other services and resources at the college

## Program Administrative Assistant

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**Kat Anderson      HSC 4031      Phone: 785-9233**

Kat Anderson is the Program Assistant. You will want to know her number. If for some reason, you cannot reach an instructor, she can direct you to other persons who may be able to help you with your need or give you an idea of when the instructor may be available. She is also a contact for emergency needs. It is an expectation that you treat her politely and with respect with any need that you may have.

## College Advisor

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**Margaret Ho      HSC4088      Phone: 789-6159**

Margaret Ho is the College Advisor for the Occupational Therapy Assistant program. She will support you throughout your journey at Western and connect you with campus services and resources, troubleshoots academic barriers (i.e. Blackboard, tutoring, work/life/school balance) and help you complete the program as quickly as possible by providing support with class scheduling, program admission requirements, and transfer credit advisement.

## Emergency Contacts

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If someone needs to reach you in an emergency (for example, day care, parent, spouse, kids, etc.), make sure they have a copy of your schedule and some way to contact you. These two program assistants are one additional point of contact. They can access your schedule and try to get a message to you during the school day if needed.

- **785-9233** for Kat Anderson, Allied Health Program Assistant
- **785-9295** for Paula Berg, Health, and Public Safety Division Administrative Assistant

## Classmates

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Your classmates will be an important part of your success in the OTA program. We recommend that you share your contact information with them to the extent that you are comfortable doing so. This information can be used to arrange study groups, shared rides, etc. (Note: Misuse of this information must be immediately reported to program faculty and may result in formal sanctions per Western's Student Code of Conduct policy and procedure).

In addition, each student brings to the program a unique set of life experiences, academic backgrounds and learning styles. To make the most of your time together you are encouraged to respect the unique similarities and differences of your classmates and be open to learning from them.

## Peer Tutors

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Peer Tutor(s) may be available to assist you with learning and practicing patient care techniques. Peer tutors may be available within individual courses based on current students' needs. If you feel assistance would help you succeed and a tutor has not been identified, please contact the course instructor to request this service or to make other suitable arrangements.

## Fieldwork Educators

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Fieldwork Educators supervise OTA students who are completing the fieldwork portion of the program. Fieldwork Educators are volunteer occupational therapists (OTs) and OTAs with a minimum of 1 year of clinical experience. They volunteer their time and abilities because they believe in the importance of clinical education. An OTA student's clinical instruction may fall under the supervision of more than one Fieldwork Educator, depending on the site. The OTA student is responsible to clarify whom they are to report to and who is supervising them on a day-to-day or treatment-to-treatment basis.

For specific supervision guidelines, refer to the OTA Supervision Guidelines in the Fieldwork Manual. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will provide you with necessary Fieldwork Educators names and numbers prior to each clinical rotation.

## Requests for Accommodation Related to a Disability

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Students with a disability(ies), pre-existing physical, mental, and/or emotional conditions, are encouraged to review the Technical Standards Criteria and course specific expectations (see individual syllabi) to understand requirements necessary to be successful in the program and/or individual courses. Instructors are available to provide additional information if needed. After reviewing, if you think you may qualify for an accommodation(s) based on disability and/or pre-existing condition, you must, per the Student Handbook (see the "Access Services" and "Counseling and Case Management" paragraphs

in the “Students Services and Activities” section of the handbook), formally request accommodation by meeting with Access Services(<https://www.westernnc.edu/access-services>). Access Services requires that all disabilities and subsequent accommodation(s) be documented according to the guidelines listed in the Student Handbook. In addition, it is recommended that meetings to request accommodation(s) be made a minimum of three weeks prior to the start of each term to ensure that approved accommodations can be applied at the beginning of the course.

It should also be noted that an approved accommodation(s) cannot fundamentally alter the requirements of a course. In instances where an approved accommodation is found to fundamentally alter course requirements, the student and faculty must work together with Access Services to determine whether an appropriate alternative can be found. If not, it is possible that course and/or program completion may be jeopardized.

## **Requests for Accommodation for Reasons Other Than Disability**

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All requests for accommodation other than those for a disability (e.g., religious beliefs, cultural requirements, illness, injury, etc.) must be presented to the Program Chair for consideration. The Program Chair is responsible for discussing the request with the Program Faculty, Associate Dean, and others as deemed appropriate (e.g., Division Dean, Access Services, Student Life, etc.) to determine if the request for accommodation is reasonable and does not fundamentally alter course and/or program requirements. Students will be informed in writing by the Program Chair regarding outcome of their request for accommodation.

## **Learning Commons**

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### **Student Success Center, Room 201**

The Learning Commons houses Math, Science, and Writing Centers with staff and peer tutors available to support your classes. Is a great place to study and Learning Commons staff and peer tutors can assist with specific assignments and provide recommendations for general study skills such as note taking, time management, organization, studying for written and practical exams and test taking anxiety.

Additional resources are available on line at: <https://www.westernnc.edu/learning-commons> including access to the online writing center: <https://www.westernnc.edu/writing-center>

# Program Specific Resources

## Occupational Therapy Resources/ Books/ Videos

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Occupational Therapy resources are found in the campus Library. The library collection includes a variety of relevant journals, books, and videos. Library personnel are available to help students take full advantage of the library facilities. Resource materials are also available in laboratory spaces in the Health Science Center (HSC). When appropriate, instructors will have additional resources available in class or on Blackboard related to course topics. Many of these resources are available online through the OTA LibGuide: <https://westerntc.libguides.com/OTAprgram/home>. Resources are reviewed and updated annually by program instructors.

## Computer Access

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Computers are available to OTA students in Room 2058 at the HSC and in the Learning Commons on Western's main campus. These computers can be used by students to access email, word processing and PowerPoint programs. Students must comply with all policies related to computer use and printing. The program's laboratory space in the HSC has computers with software needed to support specific courses, and the use of these computers is intended ONLY to support of course-specific requirements, activities, and assignments. Use of any Western computer for inappropriate and/or personal use is strictly prohibited.

## HSC Building Access

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Due to the rigors of the OTA program, students will study didactic and practical skills outside of the regularly scheduled course times. OTA students will have access to the HSC building in the evenings and on weekends, with access limited to OTA-specific laboratories. Students will be granted "swipe card" access after reading, discussing, and agreeing to all the HSC building policies. Any violation of HSC building policies will result in immediate loss of access to the building.

## OTA Program Textbooks

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Textbooks selected for each course have been evaluated and are considered current and relevant to the practice of occupational therapy. Before changing textbooks, instructors review new books and consider student feedback about books currently in use. Course textbooks assist students in learning course material and are valuable reference material during subsequent courses and all clinical rotations. Students need to demonstrate an ability to read critically and use textbooks to support and enhance classroom, lab, and clinical experience.

**All required course textbooks are available for purchase at the Westerns E-Campus-Online Bookstore** (<https://www.westerntc.edu/bookstore>)

## Advisory Committee

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The OTA program has an Advisory Committee comprised of program faculty, Western Leadership, and community practitioners. Practitioners involved in the committee are invested in our program as graduates, fieldwork partners and employers. The committee, which meets 2 times per year, provides advisement to the program on matters of curriculum development, policies, student success and occupational therapy practice resources. Students are appointed by faculty each year to serve as the student representatives to the committee.

# Additional College Resources

## College Wide Services

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Western is committed to serving students. There are several resources available on campus to assist current and future students. The following is a list of services that may be helpful to you as you work through the program. Information on these resources is also available in Blackboard.

- **“Paying for College”** – Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/paying-for-college> for help with financial aid, scholarships, military connected students, and tuition.
- **“Student Life”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/student-life> for information on athletics, government clubs and organizations, dining services, and the wellness center.
- **“Welcome Center”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/welcome-center> for help with career services, childcare, counseling, disability services, health and wellness and multicultural services.
- **“Western’s Library”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/western-library> to access resources available at the campus library.
- **“Western E-Campus-Online Bookstore”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/bookstore> to shop for new and used textbooks, Western apparel, school supplies and more. The campus shop is located on the first floor of the Kumm building.
- **“Student Housing”**-Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/Housing> to learn about Western’s residence hall.

## Student Employment Services:

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Western is committed to helping you find employment as a student and after graduation. Western students can access and research career opportunities through the Handshake online platform here: <https://www.westerntc.edu/handshake>. While most of these opportunities target graduates from Western, some of the job postings target students looking for on-call hours or summer employment. Check it out!

## Student Medical Care

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### Student Health Center

The Student Health Center located on the first floor of the Health Science Center, provides comprehensive primary care services for Western students enrolled in 6 or more credits with a valid student ID. Services include primary care, same day care, minor surgical procedures, gynecological services, immunizations, TB testing, reproductive services, basic lab services, allergy injections, HIV testing, counseling and physical therapy services. Cost of this service is provided by student activity fees except for a \$10 per visit co-pay. Students may be responsible for the cost of additional services such as, but not limited to ongoing therapy, medications, x-rays, and comprehensive tests. These services are billed directly to the students.

Appointments are required and can be made by calling (608)785-8558 or using the My Health Portal: [https://myhealth.uwlax.edu/login\\_dualauthentication.aspx](https://myhealth.uwlax.edu/login_dualauthentication.aspx)

More information is available online at: [www.uwlax.edu/StudentHealth](http://www.uwlax.edu/StudentHealth)

**Student Health Insurance:** Western Technical College DOES NOT carry or provide health insurance to cover students while attending classes at the College. This means that each student is responsible for his/her own coverage in case of an illness that might require medical attention. Students who are not covered under a parent's policy, an employer, or a personal policy are urged to arrange for insurance coverage. Students can obtain insurance through <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

**Student Accident Insurance:** Students taking degree and credit classes are automatically enrolled in the Wisconsin Technical Colleges Mandatory Accident Only Insurance Plan. This coverage is secondary to any other insurance coverage you may already have and is a reimbursement plan with no deductibles that can be used to cover out-of-pocket costs for medical expenses.

This Accident Only Insurance Plan covers students when an accident occurs while on campus, attending a practicum program, or attending a recognized student group activity approved by Western Technical College. Coverage is in place while on school premises when school is in session and during college-approved activities. Coverage is in place to and from a Western Technical College sponsored event within the state of Wisconsin, and up to 2 hours from the Wisconsin state border.

Students are responsible for processing their own claims.

#### **To Create an Account and Print an Insurance ID Card**

1. Go to <https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/> and select "Wisconsin Technical Colleges – Western Technical College" from the dropdown menu.
2. On the left-hand side of the page, you will find the link to Account Home
3. Scroll down to "Create Account" information. Your Student ID is the last 7 digits of your Student ID number, and your email address is your student email address.
4. Select "Authorize Account" located to the left of your screen under Account Information and enter your Student ID number along with your date of birth.
5. Once your account has been authorized, select "Account Home" and click on "Generate ID Card".

#### **To Access Student Accident Only Insurance Plan Information:**

1. Go to <https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/> and select "Wisconsin Technical Colleges – Western Technical College" from the dropdown menu.
2. On the left-hand side of the page you will have the following links to choose from:
  - a. My Benefits and Plan Information – includes a Schedule of Benefits and [FAQ](#)
  - b. Other insurance products
  - c. Discount and wellness
  - d. Claims company
  - e. Resources and links

Any questions regarding the Student Accident Insurance can be referred to the Student Life Office (Kumm Center, Room 100 or 608-785-9445).



# OTA Course Specific Information

## Program Structure

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The OTA Program is designed to be completed in five academic terms, culminating in an Associate of Applied Science Degree. The program prepares students as entry-level OTA practitioners and is aligned with Western Technical College's mission and vision, statewide curriculum program outcomes and ACOTE standards to provide students with the academic knowledge and challenges they need to be successful. The sequence and credits for each course are summarized in the Curriculum Outline ([Appendix B](#)) and course descriptions are on the OTA Program [webpage](#). The Program Progression and Graduation Policy outlines program, division and college wide progression and graduation requirements ([Appendix G](#)).

Each course in the OTA program is linked to specific Program Outcomes and ACOTE Standards. Course Competencies are identified that reflect these outcomes and standards and align with the state-wide OTA curriculum. They have been reviewed by the programs Advisory Committee to ensure the relevance and integrity of coursework to current practice demands. For each Course Competency, clear behavioral learning objectives are articulated. These will be in the syllabus and/or Course Outcome Summary for the respective courses and are provided to students prior to the start of each course.

Formats for courses in our program include lecture, lab and seminar and may be delivered in face to face, online or hybrid formats. The format of each course is designed to meet the needs of students based on the outcomes and content of that course. Course formats are evaluated and adjusted as needed based on allocated resources. Learning activities range from traditional lectures, assignments and reading to experiential activities that reflect skills needed in OT practice. These activities include peer and competency checks, projects, presentations, service learning, role-playing, and facilitating group activities.

## Uniform Grading Policy

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Your final course grades are determined by a compilation of scores from assignments, written quizzes/exams, practical exams, projects, and assessment of professional abilities/behaviors. Western's "Student Grading System" policy states that grading throughout the OTA Program will be done on a uniform scale (see below) specific for the Health and Public Safety programs and science-based prerequisites. **(Note: The HPS scale is different from the college wide grading scale due to accreditation and certification/board exam requirements. Please know a 78% is the minimum passing grade for all OTA Program courses).** Percentages are not rounded up when grading. The grading scale is shown below.

- A = 90-100 %
- B = 80 – 89 %
- C = 78 - 79 %
- D = 50 – 77%
- F = Below 50%

## OTA Course Expectations

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The following guidelines are used in all OTA core courses:

### Grading

1. HPS Grading Scale: Shown above.
2. Students must receive a final grade of C (78%) or better to continue in the program.

### Assignments

1. Assignments and projects are due at specified times. Due dates for all assignments and projects will be listed on individual course syllabi and within the course Blackboard page.
2. Instructors will notify students of how assignments are to be turned in on individual course syllabi.
3. Following an absence, students are responsible to make arrangements for turning in assignments and completing quizzes, exams, comps, and practicals that were due on the day of their absence.
4. All assignments must be completed (even if late) to pass program courses.
5. Assignments must be appropriately and professionally written (i.e., terminology, spelling, and grammar). Students who struggle with writing are encouraged to seek support from the Writing Center.
6. Assignments should have a professional appearance (i.e., formatting, citations, no wrinkles, spills, or large scratched out areas if handwritten).
7. The instructor may, at their discretion, assign an alternative learning activity(ies) in place of a missed classroom or laboratory activity.

### Technology

1. Blackboard is the online learning management platform utilized by Western for all courses. Students will be able to locate course documents, updates, and announcements in the Blackboard page for each course. Students are expected to understand Blackboard prior to the start of the OTA Program. Tutorials on Blackboard are available on the Western Website - <https://www.westernnc.edu/getready>
2. Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor will be used for online exams in individual program courses. Respondus Lockdown Browser can be downloaded here: <https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=629917475>
3. Students can contact PC Services with Blackboard, Respondus or general technology difficulties through email or phone at: [PCServices@westernnc.edu](mailto:PCServices@westernnc.edu) or (608) 789-6266
4. Students should notify their instructor as soon as possible if any technology difficulties will affect completion of course work

### Online Courses

1. Successful learning and completion of online courses is dependent on your ability to be self-directed and manage your time appropriately. Online courses are designed to be as interactive as face-to-face courses.
2. Students are responsible to avoid late work by being aware of the **date and time assignments are due**. This information is available on the course syllabus and in Blackboard.

## Practical Exams

In addition to traditional written exams, students will be required to demonstrate clinical skills through hands-on practical exams.

1. Practical exams are completed between the course instructor (who assesses performance), a peer who plays the role of the “patient”, and the student who plays the role of “practitioner”. Students will be assigned individual start times, no later than the evening before the practical exam. On the day of the exam, students are expected to arrive 15 minutes early and be prepared to start the practical exam at their scheduled time. Students who arrive late or are not prepared to start at their scheduled start time will not receive extra time to complete their practical exam. During the practical exam, students will be scored on the skills completed as the practitioner and in some cases (students will be informed a head of time) as the patient. Students will lose points for skills they do not perform correctly or are unable to complete.
2. Students who are more than 5 minutes late for their assigned start time for an unexcused reason will receive a 10% deduction on their exam score. Students who are absent from their exam time for an unexcused reason will receive a 15% deduction on their exam score. Additional episodes of tardiness or absence will be considered a breach of professional behaviors and handled using the “Procedure for Resolving Breaches of Professional Behavior” policy.
3. Students must ensure their attire is professional (e.g., proper footwear, clothing appropriate for skills being assessed, etc.). Instructors will notify students of appropriate attire prior to the practical exam date. **Note:** If you lack the appropriate attire, please notify the instructor BEFORE the practical and they will work to find acceptable alternatives for you.
4. For practicals where patient interventions are assessed, students will, in addition to demonstrating and having their skills as the “practitioner” assessed, be required to take on the role patient for one their peers. Exceptions to playing the role of the “patient” may be made, with prior approved accommodation from Access Services, for students with disability(ies), pre-existing, and/or emergent conditions as described in the “Pre-existing Conditions” section of the Program Handbook.
5. Students must adhere to [Western’s Honesty and Integrity Policy](#) throughout all steps of the practical exam process and while taking on the patient role.
6. Students are expected to use professional language and behavior throughout the practical exam.

## Skill Acquisition & Approval Ladder

To safely treat patients in the fieldwork and clinical environments, you must become proficient in performing **many** different hands-on skills (i.e., interventions). . The chart below illustrates the steps the program uses for teaching, learning, and demonstrating proficiency in these hands-on skills. You are expected to **participate in all steps** in order to give yourself plenty of opportunities to learn, make mistakes and correct your technique.

STEP	Description
<b>Pre-work</b>	Read assignments & review notes. Come into the lab prepared with a general understanding of what will be covered that day.
<b>Demonstration</b>	<b>In the laboratory setting</b> , the instructor will demonstrate (with permission) the skill using a student volunteer.
<b>Practice</b>	<b>In the laboratory setting</b> , each student will practice both performing and receiving the hands-on skill in lab with a partner. Because no two patients will respond alike, <b>you will switch partners frequently for a different experience.</b>
<b>Practice with Peers</b>	<b>Outside of the laboratory setting</b> , you will practice the same skill with peers. This is a good time to develop questions for clarification from the instructor and experience what it is like to do the skill on different patients.
<b>Peer Check</b>	Following practice, a peer will observe you completing the skill on a “patient” to ensure you are demonstrating the skill correctly. They will verify you did the skill correctly and provide feedback using a “Peer Check” form provided by your instructor. <b>Message to the Peer Checker:</b> Please be honest in your assessment. Offer constructive (vs. critical) feedback so that your classmate clearly discerns that they performed the skill correctly, and if not, can learn from your feedback what mistakes they may have made and how they can improve moving forward.
<b>Competency Check</b>	You will complete a “Competency Check” on selected skills with the course instructor. The instructor will clearly mark “Pass” or “Fail” on the “Competency Check” form. If you do not pass, the instructor will indicate what you missed and clarify what you need to correct moving forward. You will need to schedule an appointment to repeat the “Competency Check” on another day prior to taking the practical exam. <b>Come prepared</b> to make the most out of this learning opportunity!
<b>Practical Exam</b>	After successfully completing the “Competency Check”, each student will demonstrate skills in the practical (i.e., hands-on) exam using an assigned clinical scenario. <b>Note: Practical Exams may incorporate several skills into a single session of testing and you will not be allowed to take the practical exam until all related “Competency Checks” are successfully completed.</b> Practical Exams will be completed with an instructor (who assesses your performance as “practitioner”) and a peer playing the role of the “patient” when appropriate. Expectations for individual practical exams will be outlined ahead of time in a grading rubric.

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## Student Records

Graded assignments and copies of Professional Behavior Assessments and Student Success Plans are returned to students for their reference. Sample written assignments, written exams, practicals exam rubrics, and other student-related documents are securely maintained in an active student file in the program director's office while the student is enrolled in the program. Electronically submitted assignments/exams are stored in Blackboard for the students and instructor to view. Upon graduation, the student records are moved to a permanent, locked file room on the HSC premises. These records are kept for a period of 5 years, whereupon, the final Level II Fieldwork Performance Evaluations are retained, and the rest is shredded.

## Professional Behaviors in the OTA Program

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Appropriate professional behaviors are expected of all members of the learning community. Respect, demonstrated by how one interacts with others, is hard won but easily lost. Experience shows that behaviors demonstrated in the classroom do carry over into clinical practice.

**Consider the prospective employer** who seeks our assessment of your work ethic. Saying, "This individual was always late for class" will speak volumes; adding, "But we **hope** that wouldn't be the case in the clinic" will not help.

Students in the OTA program are held accountable to professional standards as they relate to the mission and values of Western Technical College and the AOTA Code of Ethics. Using the Professional Behavior Assessment, students will have opportunities throughout the program to assess and develop the following professional skills

- Dependability
- Active Learning
- Preparation
- Respect in Interpersonal Relations
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Health and Wellness
- Safety
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Flexibility
- Self-direction
- Leadership

## Professional Communication Expectations

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The following guidelines are to be used with phone and E-mail communication with your course and clinical instructors. Violation of these guidelines is a breach of appropriate professional behaviors.

## Phone etiquette

- ✖ State who you are (If calling someone new, state you are an OTA student).
- ✖ State reason for the call.
- ✖ Refer to course syllabus regarding best contact hours for individual instructors
- ✖ State times that you are available for a call back.
- ✖ Do not call very early or very late.
- ✖ Speak clearly.
- ✖ Do not use slang.

## Netiquette

- ✖ Check email **daily and respond within 24 hours** for requests for information from instructors. Email will be our primary means of offsite communication with you.
- ✖ Notify all instructors if you have a change in email address.
- ✖ Address emails respectfully
- ✖ Use complete sentences.
- ✖ Do not use “slang” abbreviations (i.e., LOL)
- ✖ Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Consider typing out your email in Word to use spell and grammar check if you struggle with this.
- ✖ If a person is cc'd hit “reply to all” if the information you are sending is pertinent to that person as well as the sender.
- ✖ If a large group has received an E-mail and you are sending information that is only pertinent to you and the sender hit “reply”.
- ✖ Follow good internet security measures and keep content school related.
- ✖ Maintain confidentiality of patients, students, and faculty.
- ✖ Do not share another person's email address unless you have their permission.
- ✖ Use a title in the subject line.
- ✖ Please use email for necessary questions. Problem solve first, rely on others, then request information from instructors. This prevents too many email messages and slows down the ability to reply in an efficient manner.
- ✖ Use please, thank you, your welcome, etc.

## Cell phone Etiquette

- ✖ **All cell phones must be turned to “silent” and stored during class, laboratory and clinical hours.** You may check your phone during breaks only.
- ✖ If there is an emergency that requires you to have your phone on, please speak to the instructor before class starts.

## Professional Involvement

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Students in the OTA Program will be educated on the role and benefits of national and state associations that promote and advocate for occupational therapy including the Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association (WOTA) and American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). Student membership is strongly encouraged for students to become more involved in understanding and advocating for occupational therapy. It is important for students to also understand the regulatory organizations that affect the occupational therapy field. See [Appendix D](#) for organization contact information.

## Student Occupational Therapy Association

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The OTA program endorses the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). The association is sanctioned by the Western Student Government and meets twice monthly to plan events and fund-raising activities. The mission of SOTA is “*To support the professional growth of the students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program and to promote OT on the Western campus in the community.*”

## Appropriate Attire

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Lab courses are active and hands-on. To work comfortably and get the most out of lab time, students are expected to wear clothing that allows them to move easily and will not interfere with skills practice. Instructors will provide information on specific clothing recommendations based on individual course content and activities. If you lack appropriate laboratory attire, or choose not to wear it for religious, cultural, or other personal reasons, please inform your instructor who will work with you to find appropriate alternatives.

When participating in all community and fieldwork activities and in keeping with the professional behavior expectations, students will observe a business casual dress code, unless directed otherwise. Complete dress code expectations are available in [Appendix C](#)

## Possible Risks & Discomforts

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Safety in the application of interventions will be a primary emphasis in the OTA program and fieldwork environment. When in doubt, a conservative treatment approach should be utilized. Remember this maxim:

*Apply the least amount of force or intensity  
to achieve the occupational therapy treatment goals.*

As with any intervention practiced in the laboratory setting or clinical environment, you should understand that there exists the possibility of momentary discomfort, pain, muscle soreness, freezing or burning of tissue, and/or unexpected electrical phenomenon. It is your responsibility as a student to adhere to safe practice guidelines. Additionally, you should immediately report any problems or feelings of discomfort to your peer/partner, your instructor, and your Fieldwork Educator.

## Pre-existing Conditions

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The purpose of the laboratory portion of the OTA program is to learn about and practice an array of interventions that you will be expected to administer as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. In addition to proficiently delivering an intervention, part of the learning process also includes experiencing these interventions for yourself so that you understand them from the patient perspective (i.e., you know what sensations, emotions, etc. that the patient might be experiencing). As stated above, there may be momentary discomfort experienced when receiving some interventions. **If you have a pre-existing condition (medical, mental health, trauma, religious, customary, etc.) that would prohibit you from safely or comfortably delivering or receiving an intervention, please discreetly bring it to the attention of your instructor. You must not feel compelled to receive any intervention.** If possible, the instructor will find a suitable and safe/comfortable alternative so that you may still have the intended experience. **Note:** If it is determined through the course of discussion with your instructor that ongoing accommodation(s) from receiving interventions while playing the role of “patient” may be necessary, the request must follow the process described above

in the “Requests for Accommodation Related to a Disability” section of the Program Handbook.

## Infection Control

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While in the OTA program, you will become acquainted with standard precautions that are employed to protect both you and your patients/clients from infection. These precautions will be utilized in both the laboratory and clinic/fieldwork settings. You will also be taught how to properly sanitize laboratory and equipment surfaces and will be responsible for doing so after using spaces/equipment in class or on your own. You will also be shown the location of first aid kits and taught how to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens. **Your practice of standard precautions and good sanitary procedures is the first line of defense in preventing infection!**

## On Campus Injury or Illness

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If an injury occurs while on campus, in the laboratory, or in the classroom, there are nearby areas equipped with first aid kits and appropriate response equipment (e.g., eye wash station, sharps containers, etc.) for immediate care of minor injuries. The HSC also has an AED unit on the 1st floor near the Badger Street entrance.

All classroom accidents or injuries must be reported to the instructor or Program Assistant so an incident report can be completed. Students may also be referred the [Student Health Center](#) for further care, if necessary. . In the event of an emergency, 911 will be contacted and student(s) will be taken to the nearest emergency room. Any necessary treatment administered at the hospital will be with the consent of the student or parent/guardian. Students are responsible for their own medical bills.

## Student Illness

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Students are advised to use sound judgment when making the decision to attend class when ill or under medical care. If you elect to remain at home due to illness, you must contact **all instructors** prior to the start of class. Instructors will identify their preferred contact method on course syllabi. For a prolonged illness or injury resulting in limitations, students are expected to meet with instructors and/or Access Services, if necessary, to discuss how to best complete necessary learning activities and practical exams.

## Unsupervised Laboratory Setting

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There will be many opportunities for OTA students to practice program skills to develop proficiency prior to competency checks and practical exams. Many of these opportunities will occur in an unsupervised laboratory setting as outlined in the Skill Acquisition and Approval Ladder. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the student to use the equipment and resources safely and to report any misuse or problems to program faculty, who will investigate the reported damage and/or misuse by students. In extreme cases, dismissal from the OTA program may occur in keeping with the Student Code of Conduct. Misuse of unsupervised laboratory time (e.g., rough housing, napping, etc.), equipment, and/or resources will result in the loss of access to the unsupervised laboratory setting.



## Photo and Video Use

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During classroom and laboratory activities, photographs and video clips may be taken to facilitate learning. Photos and video clips taken during a semester may continue to be used by the instructor for educational purposes. At times, students will be asked to volunteer for photos or videotaping that is specifically intended to market the program. Students can opt out of photo and video use at the beginning of the program in writing.

## Laboratory Equipment Safety and Inspection

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All electrical equipment owned and used by the OTA program will be annually inspected by a qualified biomedical engineer. Annual inspection includes visual inspection, safety testing, calibration (when necessary), labelling, and documentation of results. Wheelchairs and treatment mats are inspected at a minimum annually (in May) by faculty. Faculty will arrange for repairs as needed.

Any real or potential safety concerns discovered by the biomedical engineer, faculty, or student should be immediately reported to an OTA faculty member and the equipment will be labelled for repair and taken out of use until repaired and deemed safe for continued use.

## Storage, Use or Spill of Hazardous Materials

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The OTA program will follow both the [Health Science Center's](#) and [Western Technical College's](#) emergency procedures for spills. A copy of these procedures is posted in each lab and available online. MSDS sheets are available in labs for any hazardous materials used. Storage and use will follow the recommendations on the MSDS sheet(s). Eye wash stations are located in rooms 4002 and 4014.

## Evacuation Procedures

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In the case of an emergency, contact UW-L campus police at 608-789-9999 only if it is safe to do so. They will take information and contact 911 if needed. If you are in imminent danger, leave the building immediately and get 50 yards away prior to contacting campus police or 911.

## Tuition and Fees

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The OTA program follows the Wisconsin statewide curriculum, which consists of 4 trimesters of didactic instruction and concludes with 16 weeks of fieldwork experience. The program cost includes tuition and textbook fees. Tuition and fees are subjects to change based on current college tuition. For the most up to date tuition rate, see the Western website - <https://www.westernnc.edu/tuition>

## Program Completion

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Students must complete all Level II fieldwork within 16 months following completion of the didactic portion of the program. Graduates of the program are eligible to sit for the NBCOT certification examination and must pass this exam prior to applying for a license to practice. State licensing requirements vary, and students are encouraged to investigate licensing requirements as they near program completion. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's exam and licensing eligibility.

## Please don't let it happen!

Students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program must have demonstrated a thorough understanding of competence in the many skills used to treat patients safely and effectively. Your grades reflect your mastery of the material. Students who have any difficulty with examinations or assignments are encouraged to seek academic support from the instructor, tutor, peers, or Learning Commons personnel. The faculty cannot emphasize this point enough:

*If a person fails a challenge and takes no steps to improve,  
then it is just as likely that the person will fail the challenge again.*

Numerous opportunities are presented for improvement. Students are urged to make the personal commitment to become active learners and participants in **their** education.

# Key Program Policies and Procedures

## Admission Procedure-General

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In accordance with the Admission Policy for Western (E0200), admission to the OTA program is as follows:

- 1) Apply to and be accepted to the college. Application details and requirements are outlined at <https://www.westerntc.edu/apply>
- 2) Apply to the OTA program (<https://www.westerntc.edu/occupational-therapy-assistant>) and meet the following requirements:
  - a) Read the Programs' Technical Standards [Occupational Therapy Assistant Technical Standards](#)
  - b) Complete a Background Check: [Occupational Therapy Assistant Background Check Form](#)
- 3) Make an appointment with your Admissions Coach or College Advisor to complete the [Intent to Enroll](#) form.
- 4) Following completion of the Intent to Enroll form, Students will be placed on the waiting list. Students are encouraged to begin work on their general education courses prior to the start of the program.
- 5) All students are required to attend mandatory college and program orientations in the spring prior to their designated fall start date. Students will receive information about program expectations and rigor, class schedule and building information. Students cannot register for classes until they complete program orientation. .

## Admission Procedure-from another OT/OTA program

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Students wishing to transfer to Western from another OT/OTA program must:

- Complete an application for admission to Western with all related fees and requirements - <https://www.westerntc.edu/apply>
- Request an official transcript be sent to the Admissions Office at Western for completion of a Transfer Credit Evaluation. Sometimes syllabi are required to make the determination, and all decisions are made by the Registrar at Western.
- Submit a letter of intent for transfer to the OTA Program Chair **at least 60 days in** advance (more if possible) of the term in which the student is seeking admission.
- Provide a Transfer Recommendation Form to the Chair of the outgoing program ([Appendix E](#)). This is completed and sent confidentially to the OTA Program Chair at Western for consideration.
- If admission requirements are met and space is available, the OTA Program Chair will request an interview to discuss program transition and reasons for transfer. If concerns about academic standing or professional behaviors are communicated, a Student Success Plan will be developed for remediation and clarification of expectations. Enrollment in OTA courses is based on the established sequence and pre-/co-requisites to ensure integrity of the curriculum design and program outcomes.
- If there has been an interruption in program enrollment greater than one term, students must pass competency exams at a C (78%) or better for all prior OTA courses to ensure competency is consistent with the OTA Re-entry policy

## Minimum Grade Policy on Written Examinations:

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To practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant, students must pass the National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) exam following completion of the program. To prepare students to pass the NBCOT exam, all exams (defined as a written assessments worth 30 points or more) in OTA program courses are written to mirror the format and content of the NBCOT exam. In addition, to ensure students are prepared to pass the NBCOT exam on their first attempt and the program meets or exceeds its accreditation requirements, the program requires students to achieve a **C (78%) or better** to pass all written examinations.

Students who score below 78% on a written exam must complete a “Post Test Self-Reflection” to identify areas of concern and develop strategies to improve their performance on future exams. A Student Success Plan may also be developed, and faculty may require students to seek support from Access Services, Learner Support & Transition, embedded support faculty, and/or peer tutors.

Students will be allowed a total of **five (5) written examination failures (score less than 78%) for the entire program**. Upon the 6<sup>th</sup> written exam failure, the student will **receive an F grade in the class the failure occurred in**. They may continue in program courses that semester. However, at the end of term, they will be dismissed from the program. Students who wish to re-enter the program following dismissal must follow the Health and Public Safety division re-entry procedure found in the Student Handbook.

## Minimum Grade Policy on Practical Examinations

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Students are required to achieve a **minimum of 78% (C) with no critical safety errors** on all practical examinations to pass. One (1) practical exam failure (i.e., a score less than 78%) will be allowed in each course. Students must retake and pass (with no critical safety errors) the practical to continue in that course. If a student **fails a practical retake or a second practical exam in the same courses, they will receive an F grade in the course. Failure of five (5) practical exams in the program will result in program dismissal at the end of that term**. The student will receive an F in the course the 5<sup>th</sup> failure occurred in.

## Retaking a Practical Examination

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Students who do not achieve a minimum passing grade of a 78% (C) with no critical safety errors on a practical examination or score >78% (C) but miss a critical safety component(s) will have the opportunity to retake the practical using a similar format and scenario. During the time between the initial examination and the retake, students are encouraged to work with their instructor and/or peers to prepare for retaking the practical examination. **Students are responsible for providing a peer to act as their patient during the retake exam.**

### Parameters for retaking practical examinations

1. Students will be allowed to retake **one (1)** practical exam per course and **four (4)** across the entire program.
2. **All retakes must be completed within one (1) week** of the date that the initial examination results are returned to the student. In cases where a student fails the last practical examination in a term and the one- week timeframe extends beyond the date when final grades are due, the student may be given a grade of “Incomplete” for the course. The “Incomplete” grade will be

changed to the earned letter grade upon completion of the practical examination. **Unless pre-approved by the instructor, students who fail to retake a practical exam within the one-week timeframe will receive a failing (F) grade.**

3. Students must achieve a 78% (C) or better and meet all critical safety criteria on the practical re-take. Upon successful completion of the practical retake, the student will receive a 78% passing score which indicates competency in the skill. The point value equivalent to 78% will be recorded regardless of points earned in the original or retake attempt.

4. Students who fail ( $\leq 78\%$ ) a retake or a second practical examination in an individual course **will receive a failing (F) grade for the course.** Students can remain in their other OTA program courses until the end of the term but will not be able to progress in the program in accordance with the Health and Public Safety (HPS) Division's General Policy which states, "*All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.*" Students who desire to continue in the program will need to follow the HPS program re-entry procedure.

5. Students who fail a fifth practical examination in the program **will receive a failing (F) grade for the course and be dismissed from the program at the end of the term.**

## **Procedure for Dismissal from the OTA Program**

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**Dismissal from the OTA Program may occur for several reasons including:**

1. A total of three failing grades in prerequisite science or core program courses (failing scores include "D" "F" or  $\geq 2$  "W" in the same course)
2. Failing same course twice (failing scores include "D" or "F")
3. Exceeding the maximum allowed failures on written or practical exams as outlined in "Minimum Grade Requirements for Written Exam Policy" and "Minimum Grade Requirements for Practical Exams Policy." Refer to policy for details.
4. Lapse in student health record requirements (i.e., TB testing, immunizations, CPR training) that preclude student from attending Fieldwork and cannot be reasonably fulfilled within the assigned timeframe.
5. Actions that significantly endanger patient and/or student safety in the classroom, laboratory, or fieldwork setting. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol/drug use, sexual misconduct, abuse, etc. In these instances, students will be immediately dismissed from the course, program, and/or clinical/fieldwork site.
6. Failure to comply with expectations set forth in a Student Success Plan or other contract developed between the student and faculty.
7. Any action that falls under the Health and Public Safety Division Policy on Program Dismissal (see copy of policy under Division Policies in this handbook).
8. Any actions or behaviors at Level I or Level II Fieldwork sites that violate expectations and/or policies stated in the Fieldwork Manual (see Manual for details) or established by the site.

Note: Depending on the reason for dismissal, program re-entry is not guaranteed. Re-entry will be handled in accordance with the "HPS Re-entry" and "Student Code of Conduct" policies/procedures.

## **Procedure for Withdrawal from the OTA Program:**

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After careful consideration, if a student chooses to withdraw from the OTA program for non-academic reasons (e.g., unforeseen life circumstances, financial difficulties, or the recognition they are not interested in becoming an Occupational Therapy Assistant) the student must notify the Program Chair of their intent to withdraw. The Program Chair will refer the student to their College Advisor to complete the withdrawal process.

When withdrawing from a course or program, students should consider the period for reimbursement of fees from the College. Tuition refunds will be provided to students who withdraw based on college policy and the percentage of tuition returned varies based on the time of withdrawal. For the most updated information, check out the colleges policy and procedures page - <https://www.westernnc.edu/withdrawal-policy>

## **Procedure for Re-entry into the OTA Program**

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A student who leaves the OTA program for personal or academic reasons can re-enter the program in the future. Re-entry is contingent upon available program seats and clinical space.

### **Students Who Withdrew Prior to Completing Any Program Courses**

Students who withdrew from the OTA program before completing any core program courses must contact their college advisor or admissions coach to complete the intent to enroll form. The student will be placed on the waiting list based on their **new intent to enroll date**.

### **Students Who Withdrew After Completing Some Program Courses**

Students who have completed any core OTA courses and desire to re-enter the OTA program must follow the Health and Public Safety Division's Program Re-Entry Appeal Process.

## **Procedure for Conflict Resolution**

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Students who enter the OTA program are held accountable to the policies set forth by the college, the program, and the instructors. Every attempt is made to make these policies as clear as possible and it is the student's responsibility to ask questions if clarification is necessary.

If the student is either unable or unwilling to comply with these policies, a meeting will be held to discuss and attempt to resolve the issue(s). Following the meeting, faculty will create a written Student Success Plan (SSP) that outlines the following: -

- The behavior(s) and/or issue(s) which conflict with the policies of the program and the professional expectations linked to the behavior.
- A concrete and realistic plan which guides and holds the student accountable to making the desired change(s) that uphold the expectations of program students.
- A timeline for change and specific consequences for unchanged behavior.
- Acknowledgment that failing to abide by the terms of the plan will result in consequences up to and including dismissal from the OTA program.

The SSP must be presented and discussed with the student in-person. Following presentation and discussion, the student will be given the opportunity to add their thoughts to the plan. The completed SSP must be signed by both the faculty and the student.

## **Right to Appeal**

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Students in the OTA program have the right to appeal any decision made by faculty using the procedure described below:

1. The student must first discuss their concern(s) directly with the with the faculty member involved. (Note: If the Program Chair is the faculty member most directly involved the student may proceed directly to step 3 in this process if a resolution cannot be reached).
2. If a resolution was not reached after discussion with the faculty member directly involved, the student may bring their concern(s) to the OTA Program Chair to review and attempt to mediate a resolution.
3. If a resolution cannot be obtained after discussion with the Program Chair, the student can elevate the concern to the Associate Dean of Allied Health or, in their absence, the Dean of the Health and Public Safety division, by contacting the Administrative Program Assistant to schedule a meeting.

## **External Complaints**

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Western is committed to incorporating feedback from students, employees, community partners, and the public into college and program operations. Individuals have the right to file informal concerns or formal grievances regarding Western's personnel, services, processes, facilities, academic issues, or any allegation of discrimination. Western uses feedback to make improvements to services or in teaching and learning. Complaints can be submitted in writing on Westerns website - <https://www.westerntc.edu/feedback>

## **Procedure for Breaches of Honesty and Integrity**

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Students in the OTA program are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity in all academic and clinical settings. The OTA program at Western follows the policies and procedures outlined in Western's Academic Integrity Policy. Students are expected to review and understand this policy. Any breaches in academic integrity will be handled as outlined in the policy.

## **Procedure for Resolving Attendance Concerns**

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Attendance and participation in class (lecture and laboratory) is crucial to the successful completion of the program since information in all OTA program courses is presented sequentially and is typically not repeated. Therefore, students are expected to attend all OTA Program courses as scheduled to maximize their learning. Furthermore, it is important for students to attend all classes **in their entirety**. Tardiness, defined as “arrival **any time after the start** of class,” and early departures are discouraged unless necessary and prior approval has been granted.

Faculty recognize that occasional tardiness, early departures, and absences may occur for expected or unexpected reasons. In such instances, it is the **responsibility of the student** to notify the instructor as soon as possible and obtain and complete all missed work. For an **unexpected** absence/tardiness to be excused, students must **contact the instructor directly prior to class**. In the event of an **expected** absence/tardiness, students should contact the course instructor as soon as they become aware. Examples of excused tardiness/absences include:

- Personal/family illness, injury, emergency, medical appointment, and/or other obligation
- Approved professional activities
- Scheduled civic or military responsibilities
- Mandatory religious observations
- College-sponsored events

The procedure for handling unexcused tardiness and absence is directly linked to the development of professional behaviors and is described below:

**First unexcused tardy/absence:** a verbal warning will be given, documented, and filed in the student record.

**Subsequent unexcused tardies:** a 10-point deduction from the course grade will occur for **each subsequent occurrence**.

**Subsequent unexcused absences:** a 15-point deduction from the course grade will occur for **each subsequent occurrence**.

Habitual unexcused tardiness (3 or more) or absences (2 or more) will be considered a breach of professional behavior and will be managed using the “Procedure for Resolving Breaches of Professional Behavior” and may also require a “Student Success Plan”. Unexcused tardiness and absence are cumulative across all courses each term.

## **Procedure for Resolving Breaches of Professional Behaviors**

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A key to student success in the OTA program is the ability to demonstrate professional behaviors. Consistent and effective display of these behaviors is expected in the classroom, labs, and clinical setting. Behaviors that do not conform to these expectations will be considered a breach of professional behaviors. When a breach of professional behavior occurs, it will be brought to the student's attention and



addressed appropriately (see below). In addition, behaviors that violate the Health and Public Safety Division's Program Dismissal policy, (e.g., violation of the Student Code of Conduct, endangering patient safety, breaching patient confidentiality, jeopardizing relationships with clinical partners, or violating specific program policies) may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

The procedure for handling breaches of program policy and/or professional behavior is described below:

**First offense:** The first breach of a program policy or professional behavior will be verbally discussed with the student and documented in writing. A copy of the documentation will be shared with the student and filed in the student record. The discussion will include identifying the problem behavior, the alternative expected professional behavior, and consequences of continued non-professional behavior.

- Other program faculty may be consulted, as necessary, to determine if the problem requires monitoring across the program or can be identified as an isolated circumstance.

**Second offense:** Repeated or additional breaches in program policy or professional behavior requires development of a formal Student Success/Intervention Plan to help the student take the necessary steps to demonstrate change. In addition, the second offense will directly impact the student's grade.

- The student will receive a 25-point deduction in the course in which the behavior occurred.
- The student and course instructor will develop a Student Success Plan outlining the plan of action that must be taken to resolve the concern.
- The student may be required to meet periodically with the course instructor, program director, Associate Dean, and/or college advisor to address and document progress related to professional behaviors.
- Failure to remedy the actions as detailed in the Students Success/Intervention plan or further breaches in program policies or professional behaviors will result in a recommendation for a change in program status (i.e., dismissal).

A method of tracking concerns across all program settings (class/lab/clinical) will be initiated to ensure that the problem is addressed and corrected by the student in all program settings.

### **Third offense: Recommendation of a change in program status**

Students with ongoing behavioral issues that have not been resolved or significantly improved after the first and second attempts will be recommended for a change in program status.

- Faculty will recommend the student be dismissed from the program and establish a plan guiding this change. Participants in this step may include the student, program director, college advisor, Associate Dean, and/or Dean.
- Following dismissal from the program, a student is free to request re-entry to the OTA program. This petition must follow the Health and Public Safety Division's Program Re-Entry Process.

## Policy for Makeup Days

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If classes are canceled due to inclement weather, instructor illness etc., all course material will **be delivered in an alternative format** to ensure students receive all course content. The format and time of instruction will vary based on course content and will be communicated to students as soon as possible through email and Blackboard. Western has designated 1 weekend per month for makeup days and classes may be rescheduled on these days. Students will be provided makeup dates in advance and should keep these dates in mind when scheduling work and other activities. These dates will become mandatory should make up days become necessary.

## Clinical Policies and Procedures

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Clinical education (i.e., Fieldwork) is an integral part of the OTA program's curriculum. During the fieldwork experience, the student is given the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom/laboratory settings to actual patients. This is done under the supervision of a fieldwork educator who is an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant employed by the clinical site. Throughout the fieldwork rotation, students will work with a variety of patient types. The fieldwork portion of the curriculum starts in the fourth semester of the program. All policies and procedures related to the fieldwork experience are outlined in the OTA Fieldwork Manual, which students will receive in the Fieldwork Seminar course.

## Additional Policies

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Students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are required to follow all OTA Program, Health and Public Safety Division, and Western policies and procedures. For your convenience, key policies are provided in [Appendix A](#). For the most up to date information on policies, visit the [Western Student Handbook](#)

In addition, all students are expected to follow the rules and guidelines outlined in the [HSC Student Information/Policies Guide](#) while using the Health Science Center.

# Thriving...Not Just Surviving

Making the decision to enter the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program took much thought and consideration. Many of you waited years for your opportunity to enter the program. The next two years will be filled with challenges, laughter, tears, new friends, stress, and feelings of accomplishment.

Our hope is that years from now you will look back on your experience at Western and realize that these were some of the best years of your life. Our experience has shown that you are more likely to succeed if you:

- ◆ ***Remain open to new experiences.*** College courses, if done right, will challenge you to expand your horizons.
- ◆ ***Have a positive attitude.*** It's been proven that the ability to learn is improved with a positive attitude. Having a positive attitude will make it easier for you to learn new skills and work efficiently with peers and instructors.
- ◆ ***Develop Good Time Management.*** Get in the habit now of using your time wisely and efficiently! Waiting until the night before the test to study is a not a good way to prepare for an exam. You will be asked to complete many assignments and projects during your two years. Take time to break these into small pieces and complete them over time instead of at the last minute. The clinical skills that you learn will require lots of practice to gain a level of proficiency sufficient to treat patients. Build time into your schedule to practice these skills to be successful on competency and practical exams.
- ◆ ***As best you can, keep stress to a minimum.*** Good nutrition, getting adequate sleep, taking time to relax, and practicing good time management will all help keep stress to a minimum. Having a support system in place and taking time to exercise (even a walk around the block is helpful) are also important. The Wellness Center is available for student use and may be a helpful resource.
- ◆ ***Study Wisely.*** Use good time management. Identify your learning style (something we'll do in class) and choose your study partners carefully (just because you really like your classmates doesn't mean you are compatible study partners). If your approach to studying isn't working, be willing to seek assistance and new ideas from others and adjust.
- ◆ ***Take ownership of your behavior and performance.*** It is our job as faculty to provide information and guide you in the application of the new information. It is your responsibility to receive, study and practice with the information given to you. As faculty, we won't take responsibility for the grade you get, but will take responsibility for assisting you in any way we can provided you are open and responsive to our assistance.
- ◆ ***Communicate.*** Clear and frequent communication is key to success in this program. As instructors, we'll strive to let you know what is expected in the course. You should at all times know where you stand as far as how you are doing in the course. If you aren't sure, ask! Share with instructors' information that you think is relevant to your success in the program.
- ◆ ***Seek help before it is too late!*** Seek help before you reach crisis mode. Many people on campus are committed to helping you successfully complete the program. Use peers, faculty, advisors, learning commons staff, counselors, and any other resources you need for success. Don't be afraid to seek help!

# Appendix A

## Key Health and Public Safety Division Policies and Procedures

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### General Policy

- Students whose actions significantly endanger patient safety (which includes but is not limited to, alcohol/drug usage or sexual misconduct) will be dismissed from the course, program, and/or clinical/internship site immediately.
- All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.
- Students who receive a total of three (3) or more failing grades (“D” or “F”) in program core and/or science courses will be dismissed from the program.
- Students who receive a total of two (2) or more withdrawals from the same program core and/or science course will be considered as earning the equivalent of a failing grade leading towards dismissal from the program.
- Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course and/or program re-entry.
- All re-entry is based on program and/or class capacity.

### HPS Program Dismissal Policy and Process

#### **Procedure for Program Course Repeat:**

The Health and Public Safety Division staff supports cooperation between faculty, counselors, and students to promote an environment in which students can succeed. In keeping with this philosophy, the Division staff utilizes student success plans as an integral part of supporting the learning needs of students.

- Students wishing to enroll in a course for a second time must work with the faculty to create a student success plan.

The re-entry success plan will address the factors contributing to the lack of success and the action plan for the student, which may include the behavior the student is expected to demonstrate and the time frame for the student to progress.

#### **Health and Public Safety Division/Program Re-entry Policy and Process:**

Students failing a Health and Public Safety Division program may appeal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety. Students will follow the re-entry process and recognize that the Dean reserves the right to deny the student program re-entry. Students requesting program re-entry are required to follow the following process:

1. Write a letter of intent requesting re-entry into the program that includes:
  - a. Contact information: Name, program, student ID number, address, phone, and email;
  - b. an examination of the student’s choices and behaviors that prevented successful completion of courses/program;

- c. the student's plan for change and improvement for program success; and
- d. the student's professional goals.

2. Send the letter of intent by USPS mail or email to:

Dean of Health and Public Safety, Western Technical College, 400 Seventh Street North, PO Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI 54601-0908.

Send email to: [bergp@westerntc.edu](mailto:bergp@westerntc.edu)

3. The Division will contact the student to schedule an appeal meeting with the Dean of Health and Public Safety or designee.

4. The student will be notified of the Dean's decision by letter (USPS mail or email). Program reentry is always dependent on space availability. In situations where re-entry is granted, the Dean will often refer the student to meet with program faculty to develop a program success plan. The success plan may include (but is not limited to the following):

- 1. Additional courses for remediation
- 2. Competency demonstration
- 3. 3. Required meetings with Western faculty and staff

# Appendix B

## Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum

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Term 1	Session 1	Session 2
Summer 1	College Success Course (1 credit)	Introduction to Psychology (3 credits)
	English Composition 1 (3 credits)	Speech (Oral Interpersonal Comm) (3 credits)
	Gen Anatomy & Physiology (4 credits)	

14 credits

Term 2	Session 1	Session 2
Fall 1	Introduction to Diversity (3 credits)	Developmental Psychology (3 credits)
	Activity Analysis and Applications (2 credits)	
	Intro to Occ. Therapy (3 credits)	Med & Psychosocial Conditions (3 credits)

14 credits

Term 3	Session 1	Session 2
Spring 1	Community Practice (2 credits)	
	OT Performance Skills (4 credits)	
	OT Theory and Practice (3 credits)	Psychosocial Practice (3 credits)

12 Credits

Term 4	Session 1	Session 2
Fall 2	Geriatric Practice (3 credits)	
	OT Phys Rehab Practice (4 credits)	
	OT Pediatric Practice (4 credits)	
	OTA Fieldwork I (2 credits)	

13 credits

Term 4	Session 1	Session 2
Spring 2	OT Practice and Management (2 credits)	
	8 weeks: Fieldwork II A (5 credits) and 8 weeks: Fieldwork II B (5 credits)	

12 credits

# Appendix C

## OTA Program Dress Code

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Students in the OTA Program are expected to maintain a business casual dress code for all community events **unless provided with different instructions from an instructor or fieldwork educator.** This dress code is in effect for **community events, guest speakers and fieldwork sites.** These are based on standards of most of most community partners.

Attire	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Footwear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat or low heel casual-dress shoes with non-skid bottoms</li> <li>Socks or stockings <b>must be worn</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandals or flip flops</li> <li>High heels</li> <li>Open-toed shoes</li> <li>Worn or soiled shoes</li> </ul>
Pants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casual-dress pants <b>clean and pressed</b></li> <li>Skirts or dresses if modest length and <b>allow for safety and ease of movement</b></li> <li>Conservative fit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cargo or “pocket pants”</li> <li>Capri pants or shorts</li> <li>Low-rise pants</li> <li>Jeans</li> <li>Ripped or shredded hems</li> <li>Athletic wear</li> <li>Leggings</li> </ul>
Shirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dress shirt, polo shirt or blouse - <b>modest necklines and length, clean and pressed</b></li> <li>Program polo shirt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shirts with offensive language or pictures</li> <li>Sleeveless tops or tank tops</li> <li>Low cut or midriff tops – <b>be aware of positioning with movement</b></li> </ul>
Jewelry/Body Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nametag <b>must be worn</b></li> <li>Stud or small loop earrings</li> <li>1 ring per hand</li> <li>Wristwatch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body piercings that <b>interfere with lab or clinical activities</b></li> <li>Offensive Tattoos - <b>Specific sites</b> may require coverage</li> <li>Dangling/large jewelry</li> </ul>
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hair clean and combed</li> <li>Facial hair neat and trimmed</li> <li>Nails clean and trimmed</li> <li>Conservative makeup and hair color</li> <li>Proper personal hygiene</li> <li>Discreetly covered underclothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Artificial nails or nail polish</b></li> <li>Use of perfume or cologne</li> <li>Chewing gum or tobacco</li> <li>Exposed straps, camisoles, or other portions of undergarments</li> <li>Smelling of smoke or body odor</li> </ul>

# Appendix D

## Professional Organizations and Regulatory Agencies

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### **American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)**

7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E

Bethesda, MD 20814

(301) 652-6611

[www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)

### **Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association (WOTA)**

16 N. Carroll St., Unit 600

Madison, WI 53703

[www.wota.net](http://www.wota.net)

### **Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)**

7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E

Bethesda, MD 20814

(301) 652-6611

[www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org)

### **National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)**

1 Bank St. Suite 300

Gaithersburg, MD 20878

(301) 990-7979

[www.nbcot.org](http://www.nbcot.org)

### **State of Wisconsin - Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS licensing)**

4822 Madison Yards Way

Madison, WI 53705

(608) 266-2112

(877) 617-1565

[www.dsps.wi.gov](http://www.dsps.wi.gov)



# Appendix E

## OTA Student Transfer Recommendation Form

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The below student has requested to be accepted into the OTA Program at Western with the transfer credits from your OTA program. The form is to be filled out by the OTA Program Chair.

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

College (Transferring from) \_\_\_\_\_

Reason For Transfer \_\_\_\_\_

Total semesters student has been enrolled in your classes (include present semester, if applicable). \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT CHAIR / INSTRUCTOR:** If you are unable to complete this form, please have another program instructor fill it out.

**Department Chair / Instructor's evaluation of student:** Please rate this student's current performance in your OTA program by circling the appropriate number.

4 = Outstanding, 3 = Above Average, 2 = Average, 1 = Below Average/Unacceptable

<b>Work Habits, Safety</b>	4	3	2	1	<b>Motivation</b>	4	3	2	1
<b>Academic Performance</b>	4	3	2	1	<b>Initiative</b>	4	3	2	1
<b>Professional Presentation</b>	4	3	2	1	<b>Attendance</b>	4	3	2	1
<b>Cooperation</b>	4	3	2	1	<b>Integrity</b>	4	3	2	1

**Please add additional comments:** The OTA Program at Western is seeking your input regarding this student being considered for admission into the OTA program at Western. Please list this student's strengths along with any concerns you might have regarding academic performance and professional behaviors while in your program.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chair/Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Department Chair

Please return directly to the OTA Program Chair: Western Technical College, Attn: Stephanie Andersen; 400 Seventh Street N., P.O Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI 54602-0908 to [andersens@westerntc.edu](mailto:andersens@westerntc.edu)

# Appendix F

## Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) Bylaws

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### ARTICLE I

#### NAME

The name of the organization shall be Student Occupational Therapy Association, and it shall be referred to as the club or SOTA throughout these by-laws.

### ARTICLE II

#### PURPOSE

The mission of SOTA is to support the professional growth of the students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program and to promote OT on campus and in the community.

#### GOALS:

To achieve our mission statement SOTA will...

- advocate program improvement.
- promote professional participation in organizations (AOTA, WOTA).
- promote recognition of Occupational Therapy at Western and in the community.
- provide representative to WISCOUNCIL and state/national conferences, and Western Student Government.
- provide a means of peer support, networking, and mentoring.
- balance student demands and stress through “fun” social events.

### ARTICLE III

#### MEMBERSHIP

##### SECTION 1: Eligibility

Membership of SOTA will include all students interested or enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Western Technical College.

##### SECTION 2: Maintaining Membership

To be recognized as an active SOTA member, the student must:

- a) Attend a minimum of 50% of the scheduled meetings (except those on level II fieldwork).
  - b) Participate in a minimum of one fundraising event per year.
- Students failing to meet these criteria will receive probationary notice by the officers, and if not corrected, may not use the title of “SOTA member” or receive benefits of the same.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES**

#### **SECTION 1: President**

The president's responsibilities shall be:

- a) Set the agenda for and call all club meetings.
- b) Assure that information on committee activities is relayed to members and club functions are coordinated.
- c) Act as a liaison between the club, advising faculty, and UW-L SOTA president and other partner organizations.

#### **SECTION 2: Vice-president**

The duties of the vice-president shall be as follows:

- a) Assume the duties of the president in case of absence.
- b) Assume any duties delegated by the president.
- c) Solicit membership for all committees.

#### **SECTION 3: Secretary**

The duties of the secretary shall be as follows:

- a) Record and post minutes of all meetings.
- b) Act as SOTA liaison to school publications.
- c) Assure that meetings and announcements are posted.
- d) Maintain correspondence regarding club activities.

#### **SECTION 4: Treasurer**

The duties of the treasurer shall be as follows:

- a) Keep records of club fundraising activities.
- b) Deposit all funds in the Western business office immediately upon receipt.
- c) Collect and maintain a ledger of contribution and expenses to club funds.
- d) Report status of club treasury to club advisors and members.
- e) At the end of the treasurer's out-going term, in-coming treasurer and faculty advisor will meet to audit the records.

#### **SECTION 5: Student Government Representatives (2 minimum).**

The duties are as follows:

- a) To attend bi-monthly student government meetings/open forums and vote as representatives of SOTA.
- b) To obtain pertinent information and act as liaison to Student Life Office.
- c) To ensure that student government activities are reported to club members.

## SECTION 6: Faculty Advisor(s)

Faculty advisor(s) shall be a faculty member at Western. The role of the advisor(s) shall be as follows:

- a) Advise class and officers on all matters.
- b) Attend all officers' meetings.
- c) Assist treasurer with record keeping and audit.
- d) Represent Western's interests in all club activities.
- e) Cast deciding vote in case of a tie.

## SECTION 7: Historian (optional)

The duties of the historian are as follows:

- a) Arrange or appoint means to record all club events.
- b) Maintain a physical or virtual library of articles, letters, pictures, etc. of all club events.

## SECTION 8: Club Representatives (optional)

Three positions are open for the opportunity to represent SOTA with other professional organizations. These include ASD rep. and WOTA student rep. The common roles and requirements of each are as follows:

- a) Serve as a liaison between SOTA and designated organizations. This includes correspondence, soliciting votes and opinions, and maintain manuals.
- b) Attending all required meetings/conferences or making other arrangements for representation.

### SECTION 8.1: Association of Student Delegates (ASD) representative

The duties are as follows:

- a) Must be an AOTA member.
- b) Meeting requirements may include one annual national conference.

### SECTION 8.2: Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association (WOTA) student representative

The duties are as follows:

- a) Must be a member of WOTA.
- b) Meeting includes one state conference with attendance to the scheduled Student Forum.

## ARTICLE V

### MEETINGS

Meetings shall be held regularly (preferably 1-2 times a month) at a time not to conflict with class schedules, which may occasionally include evenings. Club officers may call additional meetings as needed for effective planning and communication. Officers, committee members, and advisor(s) should meet/communicate the week preceding scheduled club meeting to set the agenda.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND VACANCIES**

#### **SECTION 1: Elections**

The elections will be held annually at the end of the fall semester. A simple majority is required for each office. The election can be held by voice vote or ballot, per group consensus. At the end of each term, incoming and outgoing officers will meet a smooth transition for the new term. Student government representative(s) must be voted upon at the beginning of the fall semester. There will be a three-month cross over for this position.

#### **SECTION 2: Resignations**

Any class officer may resign after consultation with club advisor(s).

#### **SECTION 3: Removal from office**

Any officer shall be removed from office for the following reasons:

- a) Violation of the club by-laws.
- b) Violation of college policies outlined in the Western Student Handbook.
- c) Withdrawal from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.

# Appendix G

## Program Progression and Graduation Policy

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### I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline OTA program policies regarding progression and graduation. **This Policy supports 2018 ACOTE Standards (A.3.2, A.3.3, A. 3.4, A.3.7, A.4.4, A.4.6 and A.4.7)**

### II. Background

The OTA Program strives to support students and promote successful progression through the program curriculum, as evidenced by retaining and graduating students with an Associate of Applied Science degree. All didactic and fieldwork education are driven by the program's mission, curriculum design, and program outcomes to ensure that the students leave as competent entry-level OTAs. Requirements regarding progression and graduation are implemented across the curriculum to ensure consistency and clear communication/understanding of expectations for all students.

In addition, the OTA Program supports and upholds all policies of Western Technical College and the Health and Public Safety Division. Current information regarding academic standing, grading system, appealing grades, and graduation requirements can be found in the Western Student Handbook. Additionally, each student receives a copy of the OTA Program Handbook (which is also available online) that contains all program specific policies. Competencies and course specific expectations are clearly stated in each course syllabus, which are made available to students by posting on Blackboard at the beginning each term prior to the start of the course. In addition, instructors may further specify criteria for success within assignment descriptions, unit outlines, or assignment lists.

To progress in the OTA Program, a students must adhere to all program, division, and college polices and:

- Complete all assigned coursework and examinations.
- Receive a final grade of C (78%) or better for all courses.
- Pass all Practical Exams at a C (78%) or better (refer Minimum Grade Policy on Practical Examinations).
- Attend and pass all Fieldwork Education rotations (refer to OTA Program Fieldwork policies).
- Follow all safety and ethics practices as outlined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Western's Student Code of Conduct, OTA Professional Behavior Assessment, American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Code of Ethics, and course content.
- Maintain current immunizations, CPR certification, annual TB testing, health and safety training required for Level I and II Fieldwork, and eligibility to participate in Service-Learning assignments. Fieldwork placement is not guaranteed if there are changes on the background check or a lapse in health and/or safety requirements.

Students must take courses in the sequence described in the curriculum outline. Deviations from the curricular path may only occur with prior approval from the Program Chair.

#### **IV. Academic Concerns**

The “Academic Information” section of the Student Handbook outlines the grades appeal procedure and parameters for Incomplete courses.

Students in the OTA program will have immediate and ongoing access to current grades for each course in which they are currently enrolled through Blackboard. Faculty will regularly review student performance and provide feedback on grades via the gradebook. Students are responsible to track their own grade progress and communicate with the instructor if discrepancies or questions arise. Faculty advisors will review each student’s progress and transcripts at least once per term and discuss the findings during the Professional Behavior Assessment session. If a student is at risk (C grade or lower) prior to midterm, the faculty will notify the student in writing and offer an advising appointment and/or Student Success Plan to provide the student with additional academic support.

#### **V. Academic Consequences**

Failure to complete all coursework by the end of the term will result in a final grade of F (Fail). Incomplete grades are reserved for extenuating circumstances. Withdrawal or a grade below a C in an OTA course precludes a student from enrolling in subsequent courses for which it is a pre/co-requisite. Students may appeal grades or dismissal from the program (refer to Health and Public Safety Division academic policy in the Western Student Handbook).

According to the Health and Public Safety Division’s General Policy, no student may enroll in a course more than twice. Each course drop, withdrawal, or failure counts as a course enrollment. Additionally, students who receive a total of three (3) failing grades (“D” or, “F”; Note: Two withdrawals from the same course counts as one failure) in program courses will be dismissed from the program. In addition, students whose actions compromise patient confidentiality or significantly endanger patient safety will be dismissed from the course, program and/or fieldwork site immediately.

Students who wish to repeat a course will be required to complete a Student Success Plan with the course instructor or Program Chair and pass competency exams for previously completed program courses (refer to OTA Program Re-entry Procedure). In cases where a student has an adjusted curriculum path (e.g., three-year plan), necessary variances and ramifications will be specified in a Student Success Plan. Any adjustments require recommendation and prior approval of the OTA Program Chair.

#### **VI. Transfer of Credits**

Students may be eligible to transfer in credits from other accredited educational institutions to complete the requirements of the OTA Program. To receive credit, the coursework must have been completed at a C or higher-grade and students must also demonstrate proficiency in all course

competencies. Audit or Credit for Prior Learning may be requested by the student by contacting Student Services and the Program Chair.

## **VII. Graduation**

To graduate from the OTA Program, a student must:

- Complete all 65 credits as outlined in the OTA Program curriculum outline. A minimum of 25% of credits must have been taken at Western.
- Complete all Level II Fieldwork rotations within 16 months of completing the didactic portion of the program.
- Complete all general studies and program courses with a C or better (or a “Pass” grade on a pass/fail grading scale or “Credit” grade on a credit/non-credit grading scale)
- Have a minimum of a 2.0 GPA in the specific area of study
- Apply for graduation and be approved by the Registrar.
- Pay the \$35 graduation fee.

## **VIII. Certification Exam**

All graduates of the OTA Program are eligible to sit for the NBCOT certification exam for the Occupational Therapy Assistant. After successful completion of the exam, the graduate will become a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) and can apply for licensure to practice in the state in which their employer resides. It is important to note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate’s ability to sit for the NBCOT certification exam and/or to attain state licensure.