

2023-24

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 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. 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 fellow workers, 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 whining at every opportunity. That is not someone an employer wants to hire. That is not someone you want taking care of your loved one in the hospital. That is not even the person you want to stand in line with at the grocery store.

Those who make the most of the program learn early on 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 health care giver.
- ✓ 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 voice mail and email for convenient contact. Please talk with your instructors. While you are welcome to drop by the faculty offices at any time, you are encouraged to schedule appointments with your instructor. Each instructor posts a semester class schedule by his or her office door and each has “office hours” set aside for appointments. If you must cancel a scheduled appointment -- let the instructor know in advance and ask the instructor if you may meet at another time.

Stephanie Andersen, OTR Program Chair/Instructor	HSC 4036	789-6032	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 any way 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: 785-9223**

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 issue or she can 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 issue that you may have.

## College Advisor

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

The College Advisor supports students throughout their journey at Western and connects them with campus services and resources as needed, troubleshoots academic barriers (i.e.. Blackboard, tutoring, work/life/school balance) and helps a student complete their 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 instruments to your success in the OTA program. We recommend that you share contact information with your classmates. This information can be used to arrange study groups and shared rides.

## Peer Tutors

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Based on availability, Peer tutor(s) may be able to assist you with learning and practicing patient care techniques. Peer tutors are available within individual courses based on need. If you feel that scheduled assistance would help you succeed and a tutor has not been identified, please contact the course instructor to request this service.

## Fieldwork Educators

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Fieldwork Educators supervise OTA students who are completing clinical affiliations. Fieldwork Educators are volunteer occupational therapists (OTs) and OTAs with a minimum of 1 year of clinical experience. They give freely of their time and abilities because of their belief in their 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 student OTA (OTAS) 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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**Kris Follansbee      Email: [follansbeek@westerntc.edu](mailto:follansbeek@westerntc.edu)      Phone: 785-9875**

Carefully review the Technical Standards Criteria for the program and the syllabi for each course and consider the requirements expected of you in the classroom and labs. See the instructor for clarification if needed. If you find that you need support services or reasonable accommodations for a disability, the OTA Program asks that you maximize our ability to work together by taking the following steps *within the first week of class*: Accommodations can be requested through the Access Services website -- <https://www.westerntc.edu/access-services>

Disabilities need to be documented according to the documentation guidelines listed in the college's student handbook.

## Learning Commons

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Student Success Center, Room 201

Assistance is also available at Western's website or you can input this web address directly --

<https://www.westerntc.edu/learning-commons>

The Learning Commons offers help in the fundamental Math, Science, and English skills to support you in any class. It is also the place to hone your "student skills" as a reader, note taker, or test taker. In addition, there is an **online writing center** at Western – take advantage of online editing tips from the comfort of your computer! Learning Commons resources are available in your blackboard courses as well.

# 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 videotapes. Computer lab, internet access and private study rooms are also available. Library personnel are valuable in helping students take full advantage of the library facilities. Resource materials are also available in lab rooms in the HSC. When appropriate, instructors will have additional resources available in class or on Blackboard related to course topics.

## Computer Access

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There are 2 computer lab options available to OTA students including a computer lab located at the HSC and one on Western's main campus. Each computer lab allows the student access to word processing, PowerPoint presentation programs, and internet access. Students must comply with the specific lab policies related to computer use & printing. HSC lab has software needed for specific courses and these labs are intended ONLY for support of course requirements. Any inappropriate use of lab computers for personal use is strictly prohibited.

## Program 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 have access to the HSC building in the evenings and on weekends, with specific access to OTA labs. Students will be given "swipe card" access after reading, discussing, and agreeing to all the HSC building policies. Any violation of HSC building policies will result in 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, and 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 some possible 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 learn about the help and 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. From the main Western website, you can connect to job placement notifications such as **Tech Connect** and **Part-Time Job Board**. These sites offer you many opportunities to see what employment opportunities are available. While most of these are targeting the 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 in the Health Science Center, corner of Badger and 13th Streets, provides comprehensive primary care services for Western students with a valid student ID. Services include primary care for illness or injury, care for chronic health problems, minor surgical procedures, medical management of mental health concerns, obstetric (limited) exams and gynecological services, immunization and TB testing, physical exams, reproductive services, basic lab services, allergy injections, HIV testing and counseling, physical therapy services, consultation and referral. Cost of this service is provided by student activity money 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. Eligibility guidelines for Student Health Center Services

**Fall and Spring Term**

Enroll for six credits or more OR enroll for at least one credit and pay a \$100 fee

**Summer Term**

Enroll for six credits or more OR enroll for at least one credit and pay a \$50 fee; OR enroll for spring term and fall term, but not summer term and pay \$50 fee.

\*Appointments are recommended; please call (608)785-8558 or visit [www.uwlax.edu/StudentHealth](http://www.uwlax.edu/StudentHealth) for more information.

- **Student Health Insurance-** Western Technical College DOES NOT carry 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 coverage to be compliant with the Affordable Care Act. Comprehensive student health insurance, covering illness, is available at a group rate through a private firm. Premiums are paid by the student and forms can be picked up at the Student Development Office, Kumm Center, Room 100 or in the Welcome Center. Other coverage options are available at [www.healthcare.gov](http://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 External Standards from ACOTE. Course Competencies are identified that reflect these outcomes and standards, as well as a state-wide OTA curriculum, and approval of the program's Advisory Committee. These 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 course, provided to students as each course commences.

Formats for courses in our program include lecture, lab and seminar delivered in face to face, online and 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 grade is determined by a compilation of scores from assignments, written tests, practical testing, projects, and assessment of professional abilities. Grading throughout the OTA Program is done on a uniform scale. Percentages are not rounded up when grading. The grading scale is shown below.

A= 94-100%	A/B= 90-93%
B= 86-89%	B/C= 82-85%
C= 78-82%	D= 70-77%
F= < 70%	

## OTA Course Expectations

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The following guidelines are used in all OTA core courses.

### Grading

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

## Assignments

1. All assignments/projects are due at specified times. Assignments and due dates will be on individual syllabi and blackboard courses.
2. Instructors will notify students of how assignments are to be turned in on individual course syllabi
3. Students are responsible to make arrangements for turning in assignments and completing quizzes/exams/comps/practicals due on the day of an absence
4. All assignments must be completed (even if late). If all are not completed (and to a satisfactory level) students will fail that course
5. Assignments must be written on a college level for terminology, spelling, grammar, and overall appearance. Students who struggle with writing are encouraged to seek support from the writing center.
6. Multiple page assignments are to be stapled before handing in.
7. All assignments should look professional with no wrinkles, spills, large scratched out areas, doodling etc.
8. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to assign alternative learning activities if a significant classroom activity was missed.

## Technology

1. Blackboard is the platform utilized by Western as the online presence for course work and is utilized in all face to face and online courses. Students will be able to locate course documents, program information, updates and announcements in individual blackboard courses. 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.westerntc.edu/getready>
2. Students can contact PC Services with any blackboard related difficulties – [PCServices@westerntc.edu](mailto:PCServices@westerntc.edu) or (608) 789-6266
3. Student should notify their instructor as soon as possible if these difficulties will affect completion of course work

## Online Courses

4. Students enrolled in online courses are expected to be self-directed to be successful and optimize learning. Students should avoid procrastination and be mindful that online courses are designed to be as interactive as face-to-face courses.
5. It is the responsibility of the students to avoid late work by being aware of the **date and time assignments are due**. This information is available on the course syllabus and blackboard.

## Practical Exams

In addition to traditional written exams, students will demonstrate clinical skills through Practical Exams.

1. Practical exams are completed individually between the course instructor and the student. Prior to the day of the exam, students will be assigned individual start times. On the day of the exam, students are expected to arrive early and be prepared to start the 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 exam. Students will be scored on the skills completed during their exam time and may lose points for skills they 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 will ensure footwear and clothing is appropriate for skills being assessed in individual exams. Instructors will notify students of appropriate attire prior to the practical exam date.
4. For some practical exams, students will be required to take on the role of patient for their peers.
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

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You must become proficient in the performance of **many** skills. The chart below illustrates the steps the program uses for accomplishing this. You are expected to participate in all the steps in order to give yourself plenty of opportunities to learn, make mistakes and correct them.

STEP	Description
<b>Read</b>	Read assignments & review notes. Attempt to come into the lab prepared with a general understanding of what will be covered that day.
<b>Demonstration</b>	The instructor will demonstrate the skill in the lab.
<b>Lab Practice</b>	You will practice the skill in lab with a partner. Because no two people (clients) will respond alike, <b>it is highly recommended that you switch partners frequently for a different experience.</b>
<b>Practice with Partner</b>	During available times, practice the same skill with a partner. This is a good time to develop questions for clarification with the instructor.
<b>Peer Check</b>	Have a partner Peer Check you as you perform the skill. <b>Message to the Peer: Be meticulous in your assessment!</b> Offer constructive criticism so that the student learns the correct method.
<b>Competency Check</b>	You will complete a Competency Check on selected skills with the course instructor. <b>Please be fully prepared!</b> If you do not pass, the instructor will indicate what you missed & clarify information. You will need to schedule an appointment for an additional Competency Check on another day.

<b><i>Practical Exam</i></b>	Practical Exams may incorporate several skills into a single session of testing. <b>You will not be permitted to take the Practical Exam until all related Competency Checks are successfully completed.</b> The instructor will provide deadlines and consequences for failing to meet the deadlines.
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## Student Records

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Graded assignments and copies of Professional Behavior Assessments and Student Success Plans are returned to students for their reference. Sample written assignments, written exams, written practicals 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 a student OTA).
- ✗ 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 E-mail **daily and respond withing 24 hours** for requests for information from instructors. E-mail will be our primary means of offsite communication with you.
- ✗ Notify all instructors if you have a change in E-mail address.
- ✗ Address emails respectfully
- ✗ Use complete sentences.
- ✗ Do not use “slang” abbreviations i.e., LOL, etc.
- ✗ Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If you need to, type out your email in Word to use spell and grammar check prior to copying your message into E-mail.
- ✗ Send attachments in Word only unless told to use a different program.
- ✗ 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, fellow students and faculty.
- ✗ Do not share another person’s E-mail address unless you have their permission.
- ✗ Use a title in the subject line.
- ✗ Please use E-mail for necessary questions. Problem solve first, rely on others, then request information from instructors. This prevents too many E-mails and slows down the ability to reply in an efficient manner.
- ✗ Use please, thank you, your welcome, etc.

## Cell phone Etiquette

- ✗ **All phones will be turned off 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.
- ✗ Notify all instructor if you

## 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 in on. To 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.

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

## Possible Risks & Discomforts

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Safety in application of interventions will be a primary emphasis in the OTA program as it should be in your future practice. If doubt exists, a conservative treatment approach will be utilized. Remember this maxim:

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

As with any intervention, you should understand that there exists the possibility of discomfort, pain, muscle soreness, freezing or burning of tissue, and/or unexpected electrical phenomenon. It is your responsibility as a student to adhere to safety guidelines. Additionally, you should immediately report any problems or feelings of discomfort to your instructor.

## Pre-existing Conditions

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The purpose of lab is to learn about and practice an array of interventions that you might expect to administer in occupational therapy. It is best to experience each intervention yourself so that you know what sensations the patient might be feeling. **If you have a pre-existing condition (orthopedic or otherwise), please discreetly bring it to the attention of your instructor!** You must not feel compelled to receive any intervention. It is very possible that the instructor will find a suitable and safe alternative so that you may still have the intended experience.

## Infection Control

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In this program, you will become acquainted with standard precaution procedures to be always utilized in the lab and clinic. You will also be assigned duties for sanitizing the lab after using it in class or on your own. You will be shown the location of first aid kits and told how to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens. Your practice of sanitary procedures is the first line of defense in preventing infection!



## **On Campus Injury or Illness**

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Should an injury occur on campus, labs or nearby areas are equipped with first aid kits and appropriate response equipment (e.g., eye wash station, sharps containers, etc.) for immediate care and minor injuries. The HSC has an AED unit on the 1st floor near the Badger Street entrance. Report any classroom accidents or injuries to the instructor or Program Assistant. Students may be referred to the [Student Health Center](#) and an incident report will be completed. In the event of an emergency, 911 will be contacted and the students will be taken to the nearest emergency room. Any necessary treatment will be administered at the hospital 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 if ill or under medical care. For prolonged illness or injury resulting in limitations, an instructor may request a physician's release for returning to class and/or ask to meet to discuss any abilities affected. If you have been exposed to or are experiencing COVID symptoms, contact the COVID team prior to reporting to campus. Notify your instructors so remote learning can be arranged. For the most up to date information on COVID policies and to report COVID exposure and symptoms, see the Western COVID Page - <https://www.westerntc.edu/coronavirus>

## **Unsupervised Laboratory Setting**

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There will be many opportunities for OTA students to practice in an unsupervised laboratory setting to develop proficiency in program skills as outlined in the Skill Acquisition and Approval Ladder. It is the responsibility of the student to use the equipment and resources safely and to report any misuse or problems with any of the equipment or resources. Program faculty will investigate any reported damage to equipment, resources or reported misuse of electrical equipment by students with possible dismissal from the OTA program. Misuse of unsupervised laboratory time (rough housing, napping, etc.) will result in the loss of access to the unsupervised laboratory setting.

## **Photo and Video Use**

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During classroom and lab activities in the OTA program, 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 and labeled by the Biomedical Engineer students under the supervision of a qualified biomedical engineer. Annual testing and calibration, labelling that verifies calibration, documentation of testing results and repair will be completed. An outside vendor may be utilized if the Biomedical Engineering program is unable to provide the service for specific equipment inspection or repairs.

Wheelchairs and treatment mats are inspected at a minimum annually (in May) by faculty. Repairs are made or arranged for as needed.

Any real or potential safety concerns discovered by a student should be immediately reported to an OTA faculty member and the equipment should be labelled and taken out of use until deemed safe.

## **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 Colleges](#) emergency procedures for spills. A copy of these procedures is posted in each lab and available online. MSDS sheets are available in the lab 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 UWL Campus police at 608-789-9999 if it is safe to 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. For full emergency procedures, review the HSC policies and procedures online or in the handbook.

<https://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/content/health-science-center/building-policies>

## **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.westerntc.edu/tuition>

## **Program Completion**

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Students must complete all Level II fieldwork within 16 months following completion of the didactical 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.

### **Please don't let it happen!**

The Occupational Therapy Assistant must have a thorough understanding and high degree of knowledge and 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 remedial help 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 self-improvement. Students are urged to make the personal commitment to become better learners and more active 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.westernc.edu/apply>
- 2) Apply to the OTA program (<https://www.westernc.edu/occupational-therapy-assistant>) and meet the following requirements:
  - a) Read the Programs' Essential Functions: [Occupational Therapy Assistant Essential Functions](#)
  - 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 of their designated fall start date. Students will receive information about the program expectations, program rigors, class schedule and building information. Students cannot register for classes until the program orientation is complete.

## Admission Procedure- from another OT/OTA program

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Students wishing to transfer from another program must:

- Complete an application for admission to Western with all related fees and requirements - <https://www.westernc.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 with **at least 60 days** advance notice to the term to which the student is seeking admission, however, **earlier is recommended.**
- 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 may also be developed for remediation and clarity 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 of one or more terms in academics, the students will need to pass competency exams at 78% or better for OTA courses already passed. This is to ensure competency level and 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 pass the NBCOT exam on their first attempt and the program meets or exceeds its accreditation requirements the program requires students to achieve a **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, embedded support faculty, and/or peer tutors.

Students will be allowed a total of **four (4) written examination failures (score less than 78%) for the entire program**. Upon the fifth failure, the student **will be immediately dismissed from all program courses and activities (i.e., program dismissal)**.

## **Minimum Grade Policy on Practical Examinations**

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Students are required to achieve a minimum of 78% (C) on all practical examinations. **One (1) practical exam failure (less than 78%) will be allowed in each course**. If a student fails a second practical exam in a course, they will receive an “F” for that course. **Failure of five (5) practical exams in the program will result in program dismissal**.

## **Retaking a Practical Examination**

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Students who do not achieve a minimum passing grade of a 78% (C) on a practical examination or miss a critical safety component(s) will have the opportunity to retake the practical in a similar style and content. 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 return of the initial examination. 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 successful 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. Grading policy for practical exam retakes

- a. If a student earned a passing grade ( $\geq 78\%$ ) but failed due to a safety issue the student will keep the original earned grade upon successful completion of the retake.
- b. If a student failed with an earned grade of less than 78%, the student will receive a minimum passing grade of 78% (C) as their final grade upon successful completion of the retake.

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 immediately dismissed from all program courses and activities (i.e., “program dismissal”).**

## Procedure for Dismissal from the OTA Program

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### Dismissal from the OTA Program may result from several causes including:

1. Failing a prerequisite or program course (failing scores include “D” “F” or “W”)
2. Exceeding the maximum allowed written or practical exam failures as outlined in “Minimum Grade Requirements for Written Exam Policy” and “Minimum Grade Requirements for Practical Exams Policy.” Refer to policy for details.
3. 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.
4. Actions that significantly endanger patient safety within classroom, laboratory or fieldwork setting. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol/drug usage or sexual misconduct. Student will be dismissed from the course, program, and/or clinical/ fieldwork site immediately.
5. Failure to comply with expectations set in Student Success Plan or other contract developed between the student and faculty
6. Academic suspension per Western policy
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 action on level I or Level II Fieldwork that violates expectations set by Fieldwork Manual (see Manual for details).

### Dismissal from the OTA program for the following causes, results in student being unable to apply for re-entry:

1. Failing 3 or more prerequisite or program courses (failing scores include “D” “F” or “W”)

2. Failing same course twice (failing scores include “D” “F” or “W”)

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

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**Withdrawal from the OTA Program may result from several causes including:**

1. Desire by the student to drop from the program. This may be due to unforeseen life circumstances, financial difficulties, or the recognition by the student that s/he is not interested in becoming an Occupational Therapy Assistant.
2. Excessive absences from scheduled activities (lecture, lab, required meetings).
3. Failure to receive a grade of C or better in any OTA program course (Core classes, Occupational support classes, and General Education coursework)

## **Withdrawal Procedure:**

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If withdrawal from the OTA program becomes necessary, the student is advised to consider the circumstances carefully. The student is required to notify instructors of intent to withdraw and will then be referred to College Advisor to complete the withdraw process.

When withdrawing from a course or program, thought should be given to 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 later. Re-entry is always contingent upon available classroom and clinical space in the program.

### **Re-entry: Before Completion of First Program Semester Courses**

Students who withdraw from the program before completing any of the core OTA 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**.

### **Re-entry: After Successful Completion of the First Program Semester Courses**

Students who have completed any of the core OTA courses who desire to re-enter the program, must follow the Health and Public Safety Division /Program Re-Entry Appeal Process which reads:

Students failing or dismissed from a Health and Public Safety Division program – [Health and Public Safety Division Policies](#)

## 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. It is the student's responsibility to ask questions if clarification is necessary.

If the student is either unable or unwilling to comply with the policies, a meeting will be held to discuss the issues. **It is the student's responsibility to work with faculty to create a written student success plan** that would address the following:

- Identification of the behavior(s) or issue(s) which conflicts with the policies of the program and/or the professional expectations of program students
- A concrete and realistic plan which the student will put into action to change the unfavorable behavior(s) and bring them in line with the expectations of the program
- A timeline for change
- Acknowledgment that failing to successfully make the desirable change(s) will result in consequences that may include dismissal from the OTA program. (These consequences will be clarified at the meeting.)

Using input from both student and instructor (or program chair), a contract for change will be developed and signed by all involved with the discussion.

## Right to Appeal

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The student has a right to appeal any decision made by faculty.

1. As in the "professional world", the student is asked to first discuss their concerns with the with the faculty person most directly involved.
2. The student may then bring their concerns to the OTA Program Chair for further review.
3. In the event that the student wishes to discuss the issue further, he/she can contact the Associate Dean or Dean of the Health and Public Safety division.

Students are advised to consult the Western student handbook for further information on the appeal process.

## External Complaints

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Western is committed to incorporating feedback from students, employees, partners, and the public into College 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 Western's website - <https://www.westernc.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 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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All students are expected to attend OTA Program courses as scheduled to maximize learning as course work is not repeated, and information is presented sequentially. Therefore, it is important for students to attend all classes **in their entirety**. Tardiness is defined as arrival **any time after the start** of class.

We recognize that occasional absences are unavoidable. It is the **responsibility of the student** to obtain work missed to absence or tardiness (excused or unexcused). In the event of an unexpected absence/tardiness, students must **contact the instructor directly at least 15 minutes prior to class** for it to be excused. In the event of an expected absence/tardiness, students should contact the course instructor as soon as they become aware of the potential absence/tardiness. Examples of absences are as follows, but are not limited to:

<u>Excused</u>	<u>Unexcused</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Valid personal/family illness, injury, emergency, or obligation</li><li>• Cancellation by instructor</li><li>• Approved professional activities</li><li>• Scheduled civic or military responsibilities</li><li>• Mandatory religious observations</li><li>• College-sponsored events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to contact the instructor as described</li><li>• Scheduling of personal appointments</li><li>• Vacations or personal days</li><li>• Not prepared for classes</li><li>• Mismanagement of time</li><li>• Work scheduled in lieu of class</li></ul>

The procedure for handling tardiness and absences is described below:

**First offense of unexcused tardiness:** a warning will be given, documented, and filed in the student record

**Subsequent unexcused tardiness:** - 10-point deduction from related course grade for **each occurrence**

**Unexcused Absence:** 25-point deduction from related course grade for **each occurrence**

Tardiness and absences are cumulative across all courses. A combination of 3 unexcused tardiness/unexcused absences **OR** 2 unexcused absences. will be considered a breach of professional behavior and will be handled using the Procedure for Resolving Breaches of Professional Behavior listed below.



Due to the hands-on nature of the program, participation in class is crucial to the successful completion of the program. Multiple excused tardiness/absences may require a student success plan to ensure student success in the program.

## **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). A display of any unprofessional behavior outlined in this handbook that compromises the educational or clinical experience of the student and/or their peers will be handled as described 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 or faculty policies) may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

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

**First offense:** The first breach of a program policy or professional behavior will be documented using any written or verbal form (e-mail, grade book, handout, verbal discussion). A copy of the documentation will be shared with the student and the student will be encouraged to discuss the consequences of the current behavior, consequences of future behaviors, and attempt to remediate the issue with the course instructor.

- Other program faculty may be consulted 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 plan of action that must be taken to resolve the concern. There is an expectation that there will not be further occurrences. The plan will be identified in a Student Success/Intervention Plan which is entered into the student record.
- The student may be required to meet periodically with the course instructor, program director, 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.

A method of tracking concerns across all program settings (class/lab/clinical) is 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 addressed in an alternative format** to ensure students receive all course content needed to be successful in each course. 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. In the event a lab activity or comp/practical exam needs to be made up, Western has designated 1 weekend per month to be used for makeup days and classes will be rescheduled to 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 is an integral part of the curriculum of the OTA program at Western Technical College. It is during the clinical education component of the program that 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. Through clinical and internship rotations, students will be given an opportunity to work with a variety of patient types. The clinical education portion of the curriculum starts in the fourth semester of the program and warrants its own handbook titled The OTA Fieldwork Manual. Additional policies and procedures related to fieldwork are found in this manual. Students will receive a copy in Fieldwork Seminar.

## **Additional Policies**

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Students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are required to follow all OTA Program specific policies and procedures along with all Health and Public Safety 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](#)

*All students are expected to follow the rules/guidelines for use of the Health Science Center as outlined in the HSC Student Guide as well.*

# 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 at 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 and your peers/instructors to work together.
- ◆ ***Practice 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 good way to fail an exam. You will be asked to do many papers and projects during your two-years...take that project and break it down into small chunks and work on it slowly but surely. The PT skills that you learn will require practice on your part so that you can gain a level of proficiency sufficient to treat patients. Work to balance your time, many of you are juggling not only school but work and family as well. Make time to play, you are more likely to retain the information that you are studying if your stress level is lower. Never underestimate the power of a good laugh.
- ◆ ***As best you can, keep stress to a minimum.*** Eat...get adequate sleep...take time to play...practice relaxation skills... practice good time management. Have a support system in place and don't forget about exercising. The Wellness Center is available for student use...or even a walk around the block is helpful. Take time to smell the roses.
- ◆ ***Study Wisely.*** Use good time management. Identify your learning style (something we'll do in class). Choose your study partners carefully (just because you really like your classmates doesn't mean you are compatible study partners). If your studying doesn't seem to be paying off...be willing to seek assistance of others (faculty/academic success center) for ideas of changes to make.
- ◆ ***Take ownership for your behavior and performance.*** It is our job as faculty to provide information to you and guide you in the application of the new information. How you choose to receive, study, and practice with the information will be totally up 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.
- ◆ ***Communicate.*** The more the better. 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.
- ◆ ***Seek help before it is too late!*** The time to seek help is before you reach the crisis mode. Many people on campus are committed to assisting you in successfully completing the program. Use the Learning Commons and remember that counselors are available free of charge for assistance with personal issues. 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 or more non-passing grades (“D”, “F”, or “W”) in program core and/or science courses will be dismissed from the program.
- Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course re-entry and/or program re-entry.
- No student will be allowed to enroll in a core program course more than twice. Each course drop, withdrawal, or failure will count as a course enrollment.

### Course Repeat Policy

Each course drop, withdrawal or failure will count as a course enrollment. A student seeking to enroll in a program course for a second time must initiate a student success plan with program faculty prior to enrollment. Enrollment in a course for a second time is on a space-available basis. Students will not be allowed to enroll in a course more than twice without appealing to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course re-entry (See Program Re-entry Appeal Process).

General Procedure:

1. The student is required to complete a student re-entry success plan with the course instructor and/or program chair.
2. The faculty member provides the associate dean a copy of the student success plan.
3. If the student is enrolled in a program course for the second time, but has not developed a success plan, the associate dean will direct admissions to drop student from the course.
4. A program may require a student to demonstrate competency skills with a passing grade of a “C” or better prior to re-enrollment in a course.

### HPS Program Dismissal Policy

Students may be dismissed from a program for:

- Violation of the Western Student Code of Conduct.
- Actions that significantly endanger patient safety (including, but not limited to, alcohol/drug use or sexual misconduct) will result in immediate dismissal from the course, clinical/internship site and/or program.
- Breaching patient confidentiality.
- Jeopardizing clinical/fieldwork or internship relationships

- Violation of program or facility-specific policies.
- Receiving a total of three or more non-passing grades (“D”, “F”, or “W”) in program core and/or science courses.

Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for program re-entry. Please refer to the Program Re-Entry Appeal Process listed in the Western Student Planner and Handbook. The planner can be purchased at Western’s Campus Shop or found on Western’s website at <https://www.westerntc.edu/>

## **Program Re-entry Appeal Process**

Students failing or dismissed from a Health and Public Safety Division program may appeal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for re-entry. Students will follow the re-entry process and recognize that the Dean reserves the right to deny the student program re-entry.

Process:

Students requesting program re-entry are required to initiate the following process:

1. Write a letter of intent requesting re-entry into the program that includes:
  - The student’s professional goals.
  - An examination of the student’s choices and behaviors that prevented successful completion of courses/program.
  - The student’s plan for change and improvement for program success.
  - Contact information, including name, program, student ID number, address, phone and email.
2. Mail letter of intent to: Dean of Health and Public Safety, Room K211, Western Technical College, 400 North Seventh Street, PO Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI, 54602-0908.
3. The Division will contact student to schedule an appeal meeting with the Dean of Health and Public Safety.
4. The student will be notified of the Dean’s decision by letter (email or USPS).

Program re-entry is always on a space-available basis. 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. Required meetings with Western faculty or staff

# Appendix B

## Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum

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Term 1	Course #	Title	Credits	Date Completed	Grade
Summer 1	10801136	English Composition 1	3		
	10806177	Gen Anatomy & Physiology	4		
	10809172	Introduction to Diversity	3		
	10809198	Introduction to Psychology	3		

13 credits

Term 2	Course #	Title	Credits	Date Completed	Grade
Fall 1	10514171	Introduction to Occupational Therapy	3		
	10514172	Medical and Psychosocial Conditions	3		
	10514173	Activity Analysis and Applications	2		
	10801198	Speech	3		
	10809188	Developmental Psychology	3		

14 credits

Term 3	Course #	Title	Credits	Date Completed	Grade
Spring 1	10514174	OT Performance Skills	4		
	10514175	Psychosocial Practice	3		
	10514176	OT Theory and Practice	3		
	10514179	Community Practice	2		

12 credits

Term 4	Course #	Title	Credits	Date Completed	Grade
Fall 2	10514178	Geriatric Practice	3		
	10514189	OT Phys Rehab Practice	4		
	10514190	OT Pediatric Practice	4		
	10514184	OTA Fieldwork I	2		

13 credits

Term 5	Course #	Title	Credits	Date Completed	Grade
Spring 2	10514185	OTA Practice and Management	2		
	10514186	Fieldwork II A	5		
	10514187	Fieldwork II B	5		

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 instruction 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>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 of all tattoos</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 use of personal hygiene</li> <li>Discreet 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>Straps, camisoles, or other portions of undergarments showing</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)**

4720 Montgomery Lane  
PO Box 31220  
Bethesda, MD 20852-4929  
(301) 652-6611  
[www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)

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

16 N. Carroll St., Unit 600  
Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 819-2327  
[www.wota.net](http://www.wota.net)

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

6116 Executive Boulevard  
Suite 200  
Bethesda, MD 20852-4929  
(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**

Definitions of good academic standing and the conditions for academic probation and suspension can be found in Western's Student Handbook under the "Academic Information" section. Students will be notified in writing by the college when placed on academic suspension. The "Academic Information" section of the Student Handbook also 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 or more non-passing grades (D, F or W) 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 64 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 following completion of 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.