



# **PROGRAM** HANDBOOK

## **Occupational Therapy Assistant Program**

**Student Handbook**

**2024-2025**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
WELCOME .....	1
OTA TECHNICAL STANDARDS .....	2-5
COLLEGE MISSION, VISION & VALUES STATEMENTS .....	6
DIVISION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS & HUMAN SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT .....	7
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT (OTA) PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT .....	7
OTA PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY .....	7-11
OTA PROGRAM GOALS AND RELATED OUTCOMES .....	12-13
GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF OTA PROGRAM CURRICULUM DESIGN .....	14
OTA PROGRAM CURRICULUM DESIGN .....	15-24
TABLE OF OTA PROGRAM CURRICULUM DESIGN .....	25-27
OTA PROGRAM OPTIONS OF STUDY .....	28-32
COURSE MATERIALS .....	32-33
FIELDWORK, SERVICE/CIVIC LEARNING .....	33
LEVEL I FIELDWORK .....	34-36
LEVEL II FIELDWORK .....	36-37
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN LEVEL I AND LEVEL II FIELDWORK .....	38-39
HEALTH INSURANCE, HEALTH RECORDS, LIABILITY INSURANCE, CORI/SORI FORMS, SCREENING MEASURES, STUDENT DATA FORMS, AND CP3710 .....	40-44
ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY .....	44
STUDENT CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR POLICIES .....	45-46

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS: ACADEMIC COMPONENT .....	46-47
PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS: FIELDWORK COMPONENT .....	48-49
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS .....	49-50
ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR (APB): POLICY & PROCEDURE.....	50-52
APB FACULTY -ASSESSMENT .....	53-57
APB STUDENTS SELF-ASSESSMENT .....	58-62
APB ACTION PLAN .....	63-64
APB BEHAVIORAL LEARNING CONTRACT .....	65
POLICY REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS .....	66
PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELDWORK ATTENDANCE & PROMPTNESS POLICY.....	67
CLINICAL/FIELDWORK CANCELLATION POLICY .....	68
CLINICAL/FIELDWORK WAIVER FORM .....	69
POLICY REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS .....	70-71
GRADES, PASSING CRITERIA FOR OTA COURSES AND STUDENT RECORDS .....	71-72
ACADEMIC STANDING POLICY .....	72-73
REGISTRATION, ENROLLMENT, AND COMPLETION OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS .....	74
TRANSFER CREDIT & CREDIT BY EXAMINATION .....	74-75
STUDENT ADVISEMENT .....	75
WITHDRAWAL .....	76
RE-ADMISSION POLICY (COLLEGE) .....	76
OTA PROGRAM READMISSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES .....	77-79
OTA PROGRAM READMISSION FORM .....	80
APPLICATION TO GRADUATE AND ASSOCIATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS .....	81

COMMUNICATIONS, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE POLICY .....	81-82
OTA PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART .....	83
CONFLICT RESOLUTION/COMPLAINT FORM .....	84
ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES .....	85-86
OTA DEPARTMENT RESOURCE LIBRARY .....	86
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: AOTA, NBCOT, MAOT, SOTA .....	86-88
OTA LABORATORY AND SIMULATION .....	88-89
STUDENT EMAIL POLICY .....	89-90
TELEPHONE CALLS AND CELL PHONE POLICY .....	90-91
CAMPUS SAFETY .....	91
CORONAVIRUS POLICY .....	91
IRB .....	92
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE .....	92-93
TRANSFER OPTIONS .....	93
POLICY FOR WAITLISTED AND DEFERRED OTA APPLICANTS .....	93
STUDENT REQUEST FORM FOR REFERENCE LETTERS .....	94
STUDENT AGREEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT HANDBOOK .....	95
STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM .....	96



**WELCOME  
to the  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

Welcome to North Shore Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program. We are pleased that you have chosen to pursue this most rewarding health and human service profession.

This orientation handbook is intended to provide information about the OTA Program within the context of the College and Division of Health Professions. Information contained within this handbook pertains to your direct participation in any option of study within the OTA Program. In addition to reviewing this important information, as part of the application process, we expect you to utilize this program resource, along with the College's Catalog and Student Handbook, as you engage in the process of your OTA education. Each student is responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of North Shore Community College and the OTA Program.

We look forward to the mutually rewarding experience of helping you successfully reach your career goal.

Sincerely,

Shauna Manthorn OT, MOT, OTR Full Time Faculty, OTA Program Director  
Julie Hamlin, OT, MS, OTR, Full-Time Faculty, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator  
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## 2024-2025 TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

**To the student:** As you reflect upon the general job description of an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) and pursue application to the OTA Program, please carefully assess your personal physical, sensory, communication, and cognitive/behavioral and social/behavioral abilities in reference to the Technical Standards identified for program participation. All OTA students must meet these defined Technical Standards.

**General Job Description:** Works under the supervision of Occupational Therapist(s) in the delivery of occupational therapy services within a variety of institutional and community-based settings for persons of all ages whose functional performances (occupational performances) in home, school, workplace or community life are hindered by physical, developmental and/or emotional disability. Assists in the evaluation, planning, and implementation of skilled interventions that are designed to facilitate a client's meaningful participation in life by restoring, reinforcing and enhancing performance in daily life activities, diminishing or correcting pathology, and promoting and maintaining health. Intervention includes therapeutic use of self; therapeutic use of preparatory methods and tasks; occupations and activities; education and training; advocacy and groups.

Throughout the performance of your duties as a healthcare provider, you will be exposed to infectious diseases in all practice settings. Although you will learn practices and procedures to minimize the risk of exposure, you should be aware of the risk and take it into consideration when deciding to enter this program and profession.

PHYSICAL STANDARDS		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
LIFT:	medium work strength to carry/maneuver heavy equipment	O
LIFT:	fully/partially support weight of client during transfers to and from various surfaces (bed, chair, wheelchair, ma, toilet, tub, car, etc.) and when engaging client in functional ambulation	F
BEND/ STOOP:	to adjust body parts, clothing and/or equipment when engaging clients in functional daily activities in all areas of occupation (ADL, IADL, Work, education, Play/Leisure, and Social Participation); for developmental activities	F
KNEEL:	to assist clients who may fall or faint; to perform C.P.R.; to assist clients with mat activities, developmental activities and functional daily life activities in all areas of occupation (ADL, IADL, Work, education, Play/Leisure, and Social Participation)	F
PHYSICAL STANDARDS		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
CROUCH:	to manage wheelchair parts and hospital beds, equipment adjustment, storing materials; to assist with lower body ADL training; to assist client in seated activities from bed, chair, wheelchair and/or mat	O

PHYSICAL STANDARDS CONTINUED		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
CRAWL:	for developmental interventions; engage in mat activities	O
REACH:	For retrieval of items in closets, cabinets, etc.; to adjust equipment; to guard clients	F
PHYSICAL STANDARDS		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
HANDLE:	sustained grasp and manipulate body parts during intervention; grasp and manipulate tools/equipment and modalities used in OT service delivery, including but not limited to pens/pencils, craft supplies, educational supplies, personal care items; positioning devices, functional mobility equipment, physical agent modalities, PB cuffs, protective gloves, gowns and masks; computers and assistive technology; adaptive equipment; suspension equipment, etc.	C
DEXTERITY:	use fine motor skills when performing standardized tests (dynamometer, goniometer, etc.); constructing orthotic devices/splints; writing/documenting; adjusting knobs, dials, and BP cuffs; donning and doffing protective gloves, masks and gowns.	F
STAND:	stand extended periods of time and for majority of working shift	C
WALK:	within facility environment (internal) for assigned shift	C
WALK:	within facility environment (external grounds – even and uneven surfaces) for functional mobility training	O
PUSH/ PULL:	wheelchairs, hospital beds, scooters, Hoyer lifts, and other equipment but not limited to IV poles, oxygen tanks, portable devices	F
BALANCE:	To assist clients with functional activities, including mobility (even & uneven surfaces)	F
ENDURANCE:	To manage full-time equivalent Level 2 fieldwork experiences and assigned work shifts	C
SENSORY STANDARDS		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
TACTILE:	<i>Feel</i> to palpate muscle contractions and circulatory pulses; palpate bony landmarks and identify joint articulation; exert the necessary pressure to form splints; to discern skin texture and temperature to discriminate hot and cold modalities	F
AUDITORY:	<i>Hear</i> verbal directions and requests from health care team and clients/families; hear heart sounds through a stethoscope; <i>hear</i> breath sounds; <i>hear</i> client distress sounds and calls for assistance up to 10 feet away; <i>hear</i> environmental safety alarms; <i>hear</i> for effective communication between clients/families/co-workers	C

SENSORY STANDARDS CONTINUED		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
VISUAL:	<i>See</i> in detail to observe and detect client's movements, facial expressions and performance during individual and group interventions; <i>see</i> to observe and attend to the behaviors and needs of up to 10 individuals in a group session; <i>see</i> from a distance to observe client behaviors and performance; <i>see</i> in detail to detect changes in skin integrity, sweating, skin color, swelling, muscle atrophy and gestures of non-verbal communication; <i>see</i> to detect safety hazards in the environment (water on floor, cords, and other small items) that could pose danger to a client's mobility/functional performance; <i>see</i> in detail to detect/assess BP (manometer dial) and ROM (goniometer)	C
VISUAL:	<i>Read</i> numbers, letters, printed, typed and cursive writing in fine print, <i>read</i> paper and computer files/records; <i>read</i> dials on modality equipment; <i>read</i> manuals and forms for administering and scoring standardized tests; <i>read</i> client records; <i>read</i> to collect information and screening data in English, <i>read</i> directions accompanying equipment, <i>read</i> to research subject matter	C
COMMUNICATION STANDARDS		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
SPEAK:	in English language in clear and concise manner; to communicate in person and by phone with clients, families, significant others, the health care team, and community (report factual data orally; interview clients/family; explain role of occupational therapy and purpose of interventions)	C
RESPOND:	to clients with communication disorders (aphasia, hearing loss), or those who use ELL	F
COMPREHEND:	oral and written language, including health care terminology in order to communicate with clients, families, significant others, health care providers, and community	C
WRITE:	in English, clearly and legibly for recording client specific data and general service delivery information in handwritten charts and computerized systems of documentation; in proper English use various electronic communication systems (email, etc.) to communicate with educational and professional community	C
COGNITIVE/BEHAVIORAL and SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS		Expected Level of Performance Freq*
Think critically for sound clinical judgement in the delivery of occupational therapy services (plan and implement appropriate client-centered interventions; problem solve to make adjustments in therapeutic interventions based on appropriate and inappropriate physiological and psychological responses by clients; determine need for consultation with occupational therapist and other health care providers/team members).		C
Function safely, effectively, and calmly under demanding and stress situations.		C



<b>COGNITIVE/BEHAVIORAL and SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS</b>	<b>Expected Level of Performance Freq*</b>
Remain alert to surroundings, potential emergencies; respond to client situations including falls, pain, changes in physical and/or mental status.	C
Prioritize multiple tasks and maintain composure while managing multiple tasks simultaneously.	C
Sustain concentration to attend to demanding and continuous tasks throughout work shift (direct client care and service management tasks).	C
Exhibit skills necessary to interact effectively with clients, families, supervisors, co-workers and community members of the same or different cultures with respect, compassion, politeness, tact, collaboration, teamwork, and discretion.	C
Maintain personal hygiene consistent with close personal contact associated with client care.	C
Display attitudes/actions consistent with the core values and ethical standards of the occupational therapy profession.	C
Display attitudes/actions to effectively engage in the supervisory process including acceptance of feedback, modifying behavior in response to feedback, and providing feedback.	C
Display attitudes/actions to approach workplace problems in a mature and responsible manner; seek and utilize effective strategies to resolve problems.	C
Abide by established policies and procedures of educational and healthcare institutions.	C
<b>IMMUNIZATIONS</b>	
<p>Health science students must meet immunization requirements under state law, MGL Chapter 76, Section 15C and its regulations at 105 CMR 220.000 – 220.700. Students must also meet any additional immunization requirements required by clinical affiliates.</p> <p>According to MGL Chapter 76, Section 15C, a health science student who is in contact with patients may be exempt from the immunization requirements imposed under state law pursuant to a medical or religious exemption. Submission of documentation will be required and, if sufficient to qualify for a medical or religious exemption, it will be granted. <b><u>PLEASE BE ADVISED</u></b> that, while the college will make a reasonable effort to place you in a clinical facility, <b>clinical placement cannot be guaranteed in light of an un-immunized status. If a clinical placement cannot be secured, then you will be unable to complete the program's clinical requirement. Thus, you will be unable to progress and will fail out of the program.</b></p>	

**\*Performance Level: O = occasionally 50-74%; F = frequently 75-89%; C = constantly 90-100%**

Applicants who are offered admission must document their ability to perform all essential tasks with or without reasonable accommodation in order to begin the professional courses. If you are an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who seeks a reasonable accommodation, you need to contact Accessibility Services for eligibility determination for reasonable accommodation(s). For those applicants offered admission into the program, you will be asked to self-certify that you meet the Technical Standards.

## **NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: COLLEGE MISSION, VISION AND VALUES**

### **MISSION**

North Shore Community College is a diverse, caring, inclusive community that inspires our students to become engaged citizens and to achieve their personal, academic, and career goals through accessible, affordable, rigorous educational opportunities that are aligned with our region's workforce needs and will prepare them for life in a changing

### **VALUES**

The Faculty and Staff at North Shore Community College exemplify the highest academic and institutional integrity through our commitment to:

**Access and Opportunity.** We provide access to quality higher education by offering clear and flexible pathways to academic success for the diverse populations we serve.

**Respect and Inclusion.** We seek to create a respectful, welcoming, and appreciative learning environment in which each person and every group belongs, is accepted, has value, and actively contributes.

**Educational Excellence and Innovation.** We embrace the highest standards in developing dynamic learning environments through excellent faculty and staff, academic freedom, innovative teaching methods, quality facilities, and engaging technologies.

**Student Learning and Success.** We are devoted to maximizing our students' ability to learn and achieve academic, personal, and professional success through appropriate support and services.

**Purposeful Life and Global Citizenship.** We are dedicated to empowering students to become lifelong learners and engaged citizens, to understanding the global landscape, and to equipping them for transformative careers.

**Social Responsibility and Justice.** We are committed to developing productive, collaborative relationships within the college and among our various constituencies so that we may serve to improve the quality of lives in the North Shore communities.

**Sustainability and Resourcefulness.** We uphold our heritage for tenacity, sustainability, responsible stewardship and equitable distribution of our resources.

## **DIVISION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS MISSION**

The Division of Health Professions and Human Services enriches lives and the community through high quality health and human service degree and certificate programs that are responsive to societal and workforce needs. The Division strives to inspire student success and lifelong learning through interpersonal, interprofessional, and community collaboration needed for impactful and sustainable employment. We facilitate student learning, scholarship, and leadership with a commitment to excellence in person-centered care.

## **NSCC OTA PROGRAM MISSION**

The Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program provides students with a professional foundation grounded in the concept of *occupation* as a powerful influence on one's health and wellbeing. The OTA curriculum integrates technical level occupational therapy theory with the knowledge and skills required for practice as a culturally competent clinician in diverse settings within contemporary health and human service delivery systems. The broad-based curriculum design is a systematic process of personal and professional development that facilitates cultural humility, embraces the individual student's personal vision, seeks to develop leadership qualities, and instills a commitment of service to the profession and to the community. The program recognizes the dynamic nature of occupational therapy practice and, along with the development of entry-level competence, fosters a commitment to ongoing professional development for continued competency in ever changing contexts and roles of the occupational therapy assistant.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

North Shore Community College's (NSCC) Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program is based on the philosophical construct that occupation, or meaningful and purposeful activity, is a central determinant of one's health and wellbeing (AOTA, 2017a; AOTA, 2020; AOTA, in press; Meyer, 1922; Trombly, 1995). Meaningfulness pertains to the personal significance of the activity to the individual and provides a source of motivation for performance. Purposefulness pertains to the individual's personal reason for doing the activity and organizes the individual's performance towards his or her intended goal (Fisher, 1998; Trombly, 1995). The actual doing of meaningful life role occupations is known as occupational performance. Engagement in occupation allows one to influence the state of their health by supporting or their participation in desired or needed life role activities (AOTA, in press). Therefore, occupational therapy's contextual view of health is centered on occupation and occupational performance for participation in life.

Models of practice that are organized with a person, environment, and occupation focus are intended to promote competence, self-efficacy, and self-satisfaction in one's occupational performance (Christiansen, Baum, & Bass 2015; Pizzi & Richards, 2017; Wagenfeld, 2016). OTA education is a specialty practice area of occupational therapy grounded by professional practice models and aligned with the profession's philosophy of education (AOTA, 2018). As such, NSCC's OTA program applies the constructs of occupation in its curriculum to enhance each student's role performances as an emerging occupational therapy assistant. Engagement in occupation-based learning activities throughout the OTA curriculum affords opportunity for students to achieve competence and satisfaction in their occupational performances. Student self-efficacy is therefore at the core of NSCC's occupation-based education. Within this philosophical framework, NSCC's OTA education, with its broad-based curriculum offered in three options of study, is a student-centered systematic process of personal and professional development leading to each student's self-efficacy and self-satisfaction in their

occupational performances. This level of engagement in occupation is intended to support each student's participation within and contribution to the constantly evolving occupational therapy profession.

The principles of active learning and student engagement provide the theoretical framework for the teaching-learning process within NSCC's OTA Program. Brown and Ellison (1995, p. 39) capture the essence of active learning,

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

And, in order for students to engage most fully in learning activities, they must encounter trusting relationships with enthusiastic teachers who also engage - with students, with their subjects and with the teaching process (Bryson & Hand, 2007).

These principles of active learning and student engagement are embedded in NSCC's OTA curriculum. Believing in the power of occupation, the faculty of the OTA Program embraces the active nature of the teaching-learning process and their responsibility in facilitating student engagement. Faculty engage with students in a variety of learning activities utilizing diverse teaching methodologies that are responsive to individual differences and needs, that promote student responsibility, that stimulate participation and motivation, that rely on individual and group effort, and that prepare students for professional practice. Such activities include research and evidence-based practice, writing, technology use, observation, discussion, collaboration, peer teaching, group projects, lab practice, simulation, fieldwork, service learning, and reflection. These learning experiences are designed to inspire and challenge the OTA student to engage in role related occupation-based activities that will lead to each student's ability to help meet society's occupational needs by promoting health, wellbeing and quality of life for individuals, families, communities and populations (AOTA, 2017a; AOTA, 2017b).

Within these intentional learning activities, occupational therapy theory and OTA technical skills are facilitated along with the cultivation of literacy (including information technology literacy), scholarship, critical thinking and problem solving, clinical and professional reasoning, professional behaviors, values and ethics, multicultural understanding and respect, intra- and interprofessional collaboration, leadership, advocacy, and personal responsibility for lifelong learning and civic engagement. All of these skills and values are required of the occupational therapy assistant in practice in order to meet their professional and social responsibilities aimed at improving health outcomes (AOTA, 2018; Gupta & Rice, 2008). In keeping with the philosophy of education as established by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2018), NSCC's OTA Program shapes each student's professional identity so that they are prepared to "collaborate with clients to achieve health, well-being, and participation in life through engagement in occupation" (p.1). This education results in the development of each student's knowledge, competence and self-efficacy for personal satisfaction and for employability and best practice as an entry-level Occupational Therapy Assistant.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program views all persons as occupational beings in that:

1. The person is a holistic and occupational being with unique biological, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions.
2. The person engages in occupation within temporal, cultural, social, physical, and virtual environments that are situated within the unique context of one's personal self and surroundings.
3. The person both influences and is influenced by their environment and context.
4. Engagement in occupation fulfills a person's basic needs while creating meaning and purpose in their life.
5. A person's engagement in occupation influences their health and well-being.
6. A person's engagement in occupation supports their participation in life.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program views occupational therapy as a facilitator of a client's health and well-being in that:

1. Occupational therapy serves clients with a humanistic client-centered approach and commitment to caring, engaging persons in their everyday lives.
2. Occupational therapy respects the values, rights and potential of every client.
3. Occupational therapy clients can be individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, or populations.
4. Occupational therapy engages in a collaborative process with multiple health and human service workers from different professional backgrounds to promote the best health outcomes for clients.
5. Occupational therapy employs interventions that are based on occupational therapy principles and research evidence drawn from biological, social, behavioral, and health sciences.
6. Occupational therapy approaches include therapeutic use of self, therapeutic use of occupations and activities as well as preparatory methods and tasks [interventions that support occupations], education and training, advocacy, group interventions and virtual interventions.
7. Occupational therapy employs interventions that are enriching, preventive, remedial, compensatory, and supportive in nature to maximize a client's occupational performances for optimal health and well-being.
8. Occupational therapy is a teaching-learning process that employs the use of occupation to assist clients in achieving mastery and competence in life role performances (occupational performances) for participation in life.
9. Occupational therapy engages in a collaborative process with the client so that the client is empowered to identify their occupational performance priorities and to solve their occupational performance issues.

10. Occupational therapy's engagement with clients contributes to the health and wellbeing of all people, communities and populations

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program views Occupational Therapy Assistant education as an occupation-based teaching-learning process in that:

1. OTA education views the student as an occupational being seeking achievement of competence and self-efficacy in their OTA student and practitioner roles (occupational performance).
2. OTA education is the study of the principles of occupational therapy, biological, social, behavioral, and health sciences and the application of these principles in the care of clients under the direction of faculty and fieldwork educators.
3. OTA education is the systematic development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and professional behaviors that result in desired behavioral changes and progress towards the student's potential.
4. OTA education recognizes and builds on previous learning while integrating new knowledge, skills and understanding.

Learning is:

1. A continuous process during which behavior is changed through experiences.
2. Best facilitated when the learning experiences are selected on the basis of the learner's needs and abilities, are meaningful and purposeful to the student, and relate to the curriculum requirements, practice expectations and their OTA roles.
3. Most effective when the student and teacher are engaged in the teaching-learning process and the environment is democratic.

**The teacher's role is:**

Engaged facilitator of the learning process during which they strives to stimulate and guide the student in purposeful and meaningful learning activities. This involves ongoing assessment, self-reflection and modification of learner-centered teaching practices by faculty.

**The student's role is:**

Engaged participant in the learning process during which they assume shared responsibility with teachers (classroom instructors and fieldwork educators) for their learning. This involves student self-reflection and openness to feedback for modification of action/conduct required for professional skill development.

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# **NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

### **OTA PROGRAM GOALS AND RELATED OUTCOMES**

**Goal 1:** The OTA Program will provide appropriate learning opportunities for students to acquire the theoretical knowledge and application skills needed for competent entry-level practice as an occupational therapy assistant within the roles of direct care provider, educator, manager, leader and advocate.

- 1.1 Students will demonstrate a core understanding of and an appreciation for human occupation and the domain of occupational performance, whereby health and participation in life are supported through engagement in occupation.
- 1.2 Students will demonstrate a knowledge and understanding about the problems that prevent people from engaging adequately in their life role occupations.
- 1.3 Students will apply their knowledge and understanding of human performance to programs and activities designed to serve diverse individuals, groups, communities and populations with occupational dysfunction or at risk for occupational dysfunction.
- 1.4 Students will analyze, select and utilize various culturally sensitive therapeutic occupations and activities appropriate for client-centered OT intervention.
- 1.5 Students will effectively use occupational therapy terminology, technology, professional literature and scientific research to make informed practice decisions and to communicate in a professional manner.
- 1.6 Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of various service delivery models and systems in which occupational therapy services can be rendered and assist in the management of these services.
- 1.7 Students will actively participate in various environments to promote the health and well-being of individuals and populations through preventive and restorative programming focused on occupational performance.
- 1.8 Students will apply the principles of occupational therapy while integrating the knowledge gained through the study of biological, behavioral, and health sciences in meeting the needs of diverse clients within the unique context and environment [cultural, personal, temporal, virtual, physical and social] of their daily occupations.
- 1.9 Students will adhere to safety measures when involved in client care.
- 1.10 Students will demonstrate an effective use of self in the process of therapeutic intervention.
- 1.11 Students will function effectively as collaborative team members.
- 1.12 Students will actively advocate for the consumer of occupational therapy services and for the occupational therapy profession.
- 1.13 Students will demonstrate leadership skills in their practice roles.



**Goal 2:** The OTA Program will endeavor to instill in the student a sense of commitment to the occupational therapy profession's core values and ethical standards.

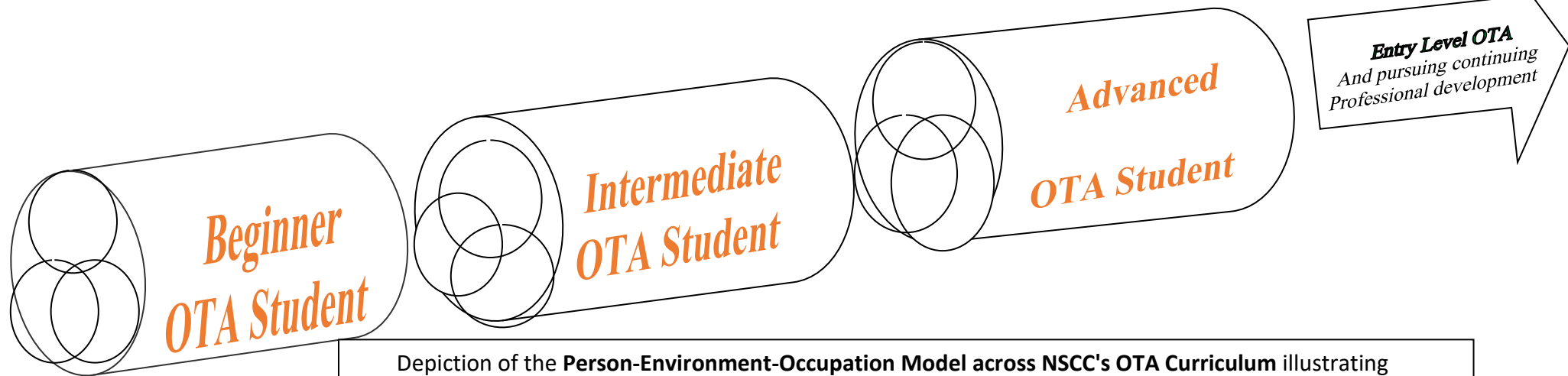
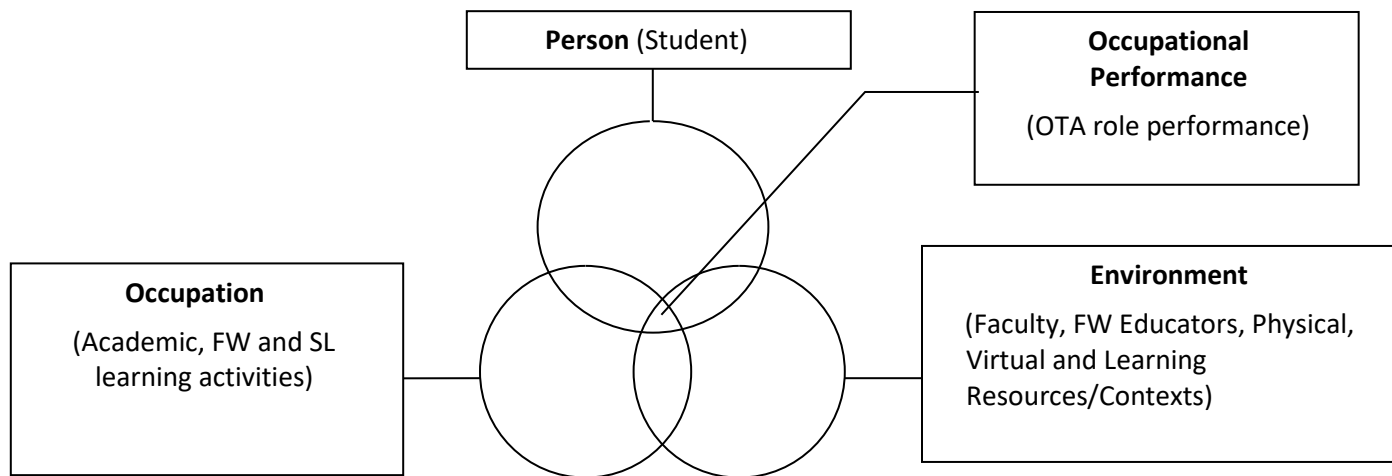
- 2.1 Students will abide by the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics.
- 2.2 Students will adopt the Core Values and Attitudes of the occupational therapy profession.
- 2.3 Students will adhere to the Occupational Therapy Standards of Practice.
- 2.4 Students will demonstrate professional behavior and conduct.
- 2.5 Students will function appropriately within the guidelines of the OTA role established by the AOTA and state licensure regulations.
- 2.6 Students will demonstrate cultural humility and act upon the principles of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in their interactions and endeavors.

**Goal 3:** The OTA Program will endeavor to promote in the student a sense of self-efficacy and self-satisfaction in their occupational performance along with a sense of commitment to their profession and to continued professional development for best practice in the field of occupational therapy.

- 3.1 Students will demonstrate the ability to self-reflect and self-assess their own performance.
- 3.2 Students will demonstrate competent performance (and a level of self-satisfaction) for entry level practice as an occupational therapy assistant.
- 3.3 Students will assume responsibility for their own professional development and continued competence.
- 3.4 Students will be members of the SOTA Club and of MAOT [or home state association] and AOTA

**Goal 4:** The OTA Program will prepare students with the minimum requirements necessary to qualify for the national certification examination and licensure to practice as a certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA).

- 4.1 Students will successfully complete the competency-based OTA Program and earn an Associate in Science Degree in Occupational Therapy in order to be eligible for the process of certification and licensure.



Depiction of the **Person-Environment-Occupation Model across NSCC's OTA Curriculum** illustrating the expected changes in a student's occupational performance at each stage of the curriculum design. The inner-related circles represent the influences on occupational performance, while the outer area within the cylinder represents the temporal context within which the person-environment-occupation transactions (student learning) takes place. Threaded throughout the curriculum are learning opportunities to promote the development of each student's cognitive, affective and psychomotor/sensorimotor and social domains (educational taxonomies) for maximum occupational performance. The inconsistent dashes in the lines represent the dynamic nature of development.

Note: Adapted from Law, et al., 1996, figure 1b.

## **Curriculum Design**

**(Revised 2021)**

### **THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS AND THEMES UNDERLYING CURRICULUM PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION**

North Shore Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program utilizes an active learning and student engagement pedagogy in response to Yerxa's (1998) challenge to offer a curriculum that is centered on the idea of occupation and designed to facilitate the development of student autonomy and independence in learning; with renewed commitment to Hooper's, et al (2015) advocacy for diligence in educational programming that has occupation at its core with continual assessment that ensures occupation is the explicit focus of education; and in alignment with Gupta and Rice's (2008) challenge to employ educational pedagogy that is "value-based and fosters self-directed and intentional learning; sound clinical reasoning; critical thinking; cross-disciplinary collaboration and communication; use of technology in the management and processing of data; information and knowledge; and, finally, civic engagement at the professional and societal level" (p. 2). Believing in both Yerxa's recommendation and Hooper's, et al more recent plea for a renewed commitment to occupation within educational programs, embracing subject-centered education (Hooper, 2010) with occupation as the distinct focus and applying active learning constructs (Hooper 2006; Griffith & Ursick, 2003; Weimer, 2012), the OTA Program utilizes a practice-oriented rationale for its curriculum design to explicate the idea of occupation, the view of humans as occupational beings, and the thought process of occupational therapy. In addition, the accreditation standards for occupational therapy assistant programs (ACOTE, 2017) direct curriculum concepts and content that is explicitly connected to occupation. In essence, NSCC's OTA Program attempts to apply the Subject-centered Integrative Learning Model (SCIL-OT) described by Hooper, Molineux and Wood (2020) in its curriculum and instructional design by facilitating student engagement (Bryson & Hand, 2007; Gilfoyle, Grady & Nielson, 2011) focused on occupation within classroom and community learning activities in order to meet professional and societal expectations and needs. This approach aligns with and is designed to support the mission of North Shore Community College and the OTA Program.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program's curriculum design is based on systems theory using the Person-Environment-Occupation Models of Occupational Performance (Christiansen & Baum, 2005, 1997; Baum & Law, 1997; Law, Cooper, Strong, Stewart, Rigby & Letts, 1996). Systems theory recognizes the constant interplay between individuals and their environments. The individual is viewed as an open system that influences and is influenced by the environment. Human performance and participation in life, through engagement in occupation and the process of adaptation, is the resultant behavior of this transaction. Christiansen and Baum (2005, 1997) posit that the individual possesses unique neurobehavioral, physiological, cognitive, psychological and emotional, and spiritual characteristics that serve as his/her/their intrinsic performance enablers. These scholars also attest to the environment being composed of physical properties (built and natural environments), societal factors, and cultural elements that serve as extrinsic enablers of performance. Because the contexts of society and culture have a profound influence on a person's engagement in occupation for health-promoting participation in life, the OTA curriculum design supplements the theoretical tenets of the Person-Environment-Occupation Models of Occupational Performance with concepts outlined in Black and Wells' (2007) Cultural Competency Model to strengthen awareness and develop skills needed for the practical application of cultural sensitivity and social change. In conjunction with these occupational therapy (OT) practice models, the curriculum aligns with Dettmer's (2006) suggestion of a unified

educational taxonomy consisting of the cognitive domain, affective domain, psychomotor/sensorimotor domain, and social domain.

As taxonomies guide student learning through the cognitive, affective, psychomotor/sensorimotor and social domains toward mastery of educational objectives, the Person-Environment-Occupation and Cultural Competency Models facilitate the development of OTA role performance through meaningful and purposeful activities related to occupational requirements. Together these theoretical constructs provide a framework for understanding the teaching-learning process inherent in education and in occupational therapy practice. And, together these constructs provide a framework for NSCC's curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation designed with the curricular threads/themes of literacy; critical thinking and problem-solving; clinical and professional reasoning; professional behaviors, values and ethics; multicultural understanding and respect; intra- and interprofessional collaboration; and leadership. These OTA Program curricular threads/themes embed the knowledge and skills described within the general education outcomes expected of all NSCC students (NSCC, n.d.) while developing the distinct skill set expected of an occupational therapy assistant in contemporary practice as noted in the OTA Program goals and related outcomes. The curriculum is designed to prepare students as entry-level generalist occupational therapy assistants.

### **CURRICULAR THREADS/THEMES**

**Literacy** encompasses a complex set of skills that enables one's ability to "access, evaluate and integrate information from a wide range of textual sources" (Reardon, Valentino & Shores, 2012). **Critical thinking** is the ability to analyze and evaluate thinking with a view to improving it. This involves being open-minded, raising vital questions, gathering and assessing relevant information, and offering well-reasoned conclusions and solutions to complex problems (Paul & Elder, 2014). **Clinical reasoning** is the complex process of an OT practitioner's thinking and acting in the midst of practice, and involves several forms of thinking and perceiving (Mattingly & Fleming, 1994; Schell & Cervero, 1993) and expands into Professional Reasoning which is the "process that practitioners use to plan, direct, perform, and reflect on client care" (Schell, 2019, p. 482).

**Professional behaviors, values and ethics** involve abidance to the high standards of conduct within the occupational therapy profession as outlined in the 2020 Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020a).

**Multicultural understanding and respect** refer to the ability to acknowledge and interact effectively with people of diverse values, beliefs and behaviors (Black and Wells, 2007; Wells, Black, & Gupta, 2016).

**Intraprofessional collaboration** refers to occupational therapist (students) and occupational therapy assistant (students) working together in a cooperative manner that engenders mutual respect, trust, communication and personal/professional development within the process of meeting learner and/or client-centered outcomes (AOTA, 2018, Barnes, Bushey, Nardella, & MacLachlan, 2016; Dillon, 2001). **Interprofessional collaboration** is the integrative cooperation of different health professionals, blending complimentary competence and skills for the best use of resources to benefit clients [both individuals and communities] in service delivery (AOTA, 2015; Samuelson, Tedeschi, Aarendonk, de la Cuesta, & Groenewegen, 2012; Paul & Peterson, 2001). And, **leadership** refers to the process of engaging with others toward a common purpose in a way that engenders admiration, respect and trust; envisioning the purpose and establishing a direction to meet goal(s); empowering the right people and resources to pursue the goal(s); motivating others in the process of meeting goal(s); encouraging innovation and creativity in approach to achieving goal(s); and achieving results and celebrating collaborative efforts (Dennis & Meola, 2009).

Each NSCC OTA student is considered the primary person in this conceptual design and the OTA Program selectively admits students based on established criteria so that he/she is considered ready to engage in the educational process of the curriculum. This admission process aims to select students who possess intrinsic enablers of performance that best match the extrinsic elements and demands of the educational and practice environments. NSCC facilities, resources, faculty, fieldwork sites, service learning sites, and cultural community

comprise the environmental context for student performance and participation. The OTA Program's curriculum design recognizes the important influence of this environmental context on each student and strives to create an environment that supports student performance while maintaining educational and professional standards.

The OTA curriculum is offered in three options of study (traditional full-time two-year option, part-time three-year option, and accelerated 14-month option) to meet the scheduling desires and performance needs of students. Selected learning activities throughout the curriculum are the occupations woven into the curriculum design. Careful attention is applied to planning and implementing a curriculum that maximizes student performance in tasks and activities related to his/her/their future occupational role as an entry-level occupational therapy assistant. Within the curriculum the student is transitioned into this terminal role through the stages of Entry Level OTA Student, Intermediate OTA Student, and Advanced OTA Student. These stages mirror the levels of role performance previously described by the American Occupational Therapy Association for OTA practitioners (AOTA, 2002) and more recent guidelines for roles and supervision levels of OTA practitioners (AOTA, 2020b). Maximizing the fit among the person, environment, and occupations is the ultimate challenge of the curriculum throughout each stage, one that is constantly dynamic by the nature of all elements involved. It is believed that maximizing the fit maximizes performance (Law, et.al, 1996).

Maximizing student performance in OTA role tasks and activities is the program's focus as this is their occupational performance. To achieve this goal, the OTA Program attempts to promote the student's sense of efficacy and self-esteem by developing competency. Competency develops by enabling the student to engage in goal directed activities that are accomplished by that student, that produce a feeling of satisfaction, and that lead to the ability to control one's behavior to function both independently and interdependently. The OTA curriculum, comprised of its academic, fieldwork and service-learning components, is therefore competency-based. These competencies are inclusive of the cognitive domain that stresses knowledge and intellectual skills, affective domain that emphasizes attitudes and values, sensorimotor domain that focuses on the integration of senses and movement for functional motor skills as well as the social domain that attends to sociocultural interactions (Dettmer, 2006). Achievement of these competencies throughout the curriculum culminates in the mastery and performance of skills and behavior patterns expected of the entry-level OTA practitioner.

The prescribed program of study affords opportunity to develop sound knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors expected of an entry-level OTA practitioner. Courses are strategically developed and sequenced within a developmental learning format in that content, competencies and related learning objectives flow from foundations to applications with levels of understanding moving from basic to complex. Despite a developmental strategy in course structuring and sequencing, the teaching-learning process of the curriculum is not considered linear. Rather, the educational process remains fluid and dynamic to embrace the transactional approach of systems theory inherent in Bloom's taxonomy and the Person-Environment-Occupation models of occupational performance. Active learning is utilized increasingly throughout the curriculum via individual and group classroom assignments, simulations, Level I and level II fieldwork experiences, service learning projects; and various modes of feedback via formative and summative assessment are integrated to promote the development of each student's performance skills and performance patterns. Performance skills and performance patterns are observed performances one carries out when engaging in occupations (AOTA, 2020c). Development of performance skills and performance patterns expected of the entry level occupational therapy assistant is critical to each student's successful participation in the curriculum and in his/her/their role competence as an OTA.

Believing in the transactive approach to occupational performance, the OTA curriculum takes special consideration to the materials and learning activities (occupations) offered to the students as well as to the learning environment in which the students are expected to perform and participate. Diverse lab supplies and academic support tools are intended to enable practice with the various types of OT interventions including occupations and activities, preparatory methods and tasks to support occupations, education and training, group interventions, and virtual interventions (AOTA, 2020c). Emphasis is placed on engaging students with the occupation-based materials in the lab so that focus can be directed to use of occupations in OT intervention. Diversity of settings for fieldwork and service learning engagement afford student exposure to a variety of practice contexts along with the opportunity for students to exercise all behaviors associated with the program's curricular themes. The curricular themes are embedded within OTA courses that infuse web support, writing support, research, laboratory skills practice, and field/service learning throughout the curriculum and strategic initiatives are currently driving efforts to further enhance educational technology and simulation experiences, leadership development, cultural competency, intraprofessional collaborative learning experiences with local occupational therapy programs, interprofessional collaborative learning experiences with other health and human service programs, research and evidence-based practice skills, while enhancing the program's teaching, learning and assessment practices. The OTA Program's Scholarship Agenda, focused on the scholarship of application (AOTA, 2009; AOTA, 2019), engages faculty in evidence-based teaching and learning practices to maximize the effectiveness of all curricular threads and student learning outcomes.

Course syllabi are important tools in the teaching-learning process as they identify the expected student learning outcomes [competencies] and related learning objectives for the students and the faculty. In addition, each OTA course syllabus outlines the specific content to be addressed, the assigned reading and additional references for preparation, the methodology of instruction, and the assessment and evaluation methods employed. Providing this information affords students the opportunity to best prepare themselves for course work and employ relevant strategies for maximum performance in each course. OTA course syllabi are also designed with a rationale for each competency in an effort to help the student appreciate the purpose of the competence by connecting it to the role of the occupational therapy assistant. The intent is for the student to see each competency's direct relevance to their self-chosen future role. In this way the student is more likely to consider the selected learning activities as meaningful and purposeful (occupation) and therefore ignite their own motivation to engage and perform. Motivation has a critical underpinning in the occupational performance model as comprising the innate drive to explore the environment and demonstrate mastery within it (Christiansen & Baum, 2005; 1997). Motivation as a key factor in the development of student exploration and mastery therefore underlies our curriculum planning and implementation.

Curriculum planning and implementation is considered the program's occupational performance and the OTA faculty engage in the scholarship of application to maximize the effectiveness of learning activities to produce the desired student learning outcomes. The program's performance must also be afforded feedback in order to optimize its effectiveness. Utilizing a systematic process of assessment and evaluation, the OTA Program monitors and determines the performance effectiveness of its curriculum in meeting program outcomes and strategic goals. Major indicators of program effectiveness related to curriculum design, planning and implementation include OTA course-specific assessments and evaluations, student monitoring form, AOTA's student evaluation of fieldwork experience, Level II fieldwork evaluation, Level I fieldwork evaluation, student exit survey, NBCOT results, graduate survey, and employer survey. In addition, faculty evaluations completed by students and supervisors are reviewed and discussed with appropriate persons. Annual advisory board meetings afford opportunity for external review of program with feedback and recommendations. The structural framework of the evaluation plan is designed to allow for ongoing curriculum review, assessment and strategic planning. In turn, this system enables timely and efficient response to assessment findings so that effectiveness of the program's occupational performance is maximized.

## **CONTENT, SCOPE AND SEQUENCE**

General education courses are offered concurrently with OTA technical courses (traditional 2-year option and part-time 3-year option) or prior to OTA technical courses (accelerated option). These courses focus on knowledge and skill acquisition embedded in the liberal arts and sciences including communication, critical thinking and problem solving, human growth and development, human behavior, and structure and function of the human body. Computer and information technology literacy is demanded of students in web supported and hybrid designed OTA technical courses throughout the curriculum as well as in specific course assignments.

OTA technical courses are structured in a way to acquire knowledge, promote understanding, and develop attitude and skill for professional formation. The newly enrolled student begins in the role of Entry Level OTA Student they are expected to develop basic knowledge and skills, socialize into academic and professional climates, and accept responsibility and accountability for his/her/their own behaviors in role-related learning activities. In this entry-level stage of development, students begin to engage in the curricular themes/threads of literacy; critical thinking, problem-solving and clinical reasoning; professional behaviors, values and ethics; multicultural understanding and respect; intra and interprofessional collaboration; and leadership. The first technical courses offered in the curriculum focus on foundational OT concepts and basic practice skills of the occupational therapy assistant. Occupation as the core concept of occupational therapy is introduced and emphasized in OTA 101, Orientation to Occupational Therapy, through historical perspectives, theoretical and practice models, contemporary professional practice initiatives, research article reviews, and the process of activity analysis. Level I fieldwork affords opportunity to integrate learning via observation, selective/directive participation, reflection, and discussion of experiences. Occupational performance is grounded as the focus of the OT process and students begin to recognize personal, contextual and environmental factors that support or hinder a person's performance in life role activities. Further socialization into the profession is facilitated through review of and discussion regarding culture, ethical principles, core values, attitudes, and behaviors. Introductory lab courses [OTA 103, Occupational Therapy Interventions 1 and OTA 105, Introduction to Group Process] provide opportunity to develop awareness and beginning skill in therapeutic assessments, interactions and interventions linked to occupational performance. OTA103 employs laboratory practice in standard (universal) precautions, biomechanical principles of movement and function, activity analysis, assistive devices and engages students in a community mobility experience with reflection pertaining to physical as well as psychosocial impact of living life with mobility impairment. OTA 105 engages students in the planning and leading of activity-based groups emphasizing goal-oriented activity selection, effective communication, cultural awareness and respect, team building, and group dynamics.

The general education courses offered concurrent in this stage of the curriculum within the traditional option of study [Composition 1 – CMP101, General Psychology – PSY102, and Anatomy & Physiology 1 – BIO211] provide foundational knowledge and skills to think critically, write effectively, and develop an understanding of human behavior and body functions (neuromusculoskeletal and sensory) in order to enhance the student's performance and participation in OTA courses. These general education courses are pre-admission requirements for the accelerated option of study and therefore students enrolled in the accelerated option possess this foundational knowledge and skills to support their performance and participation in Entry Level OTA courses.

As students gain foundational knowledge and an appreciation for fundamental OT concepts, process, and interventions, they engage in OTA courses that integrate more contextual information for consideration. Here the student begins the transition into the Intermediate OTA Student role where they are expected to demonstrate increased level of literacy; problem solving and critical thinking; clinical reasoning; independence

and interdependence; professional behaviors, values and ethics; multicultural understanding and respect; collaboration; and leadership. OTA 109, Medical Conditions in OT Practice, focuses on common neurological, medical, and orthopedic conditions that lead to dysfunction in occupational performance. Researching diagnoses and thinking about these conditional factors when planning evidence-based OT interventions is facilitated.

Activity programming is incorporated into OTA 110, Planning and Implementation of Programs for Health and Wellbeing, where students consider the impact of normal aging, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and chronic conditions associated with the adult/older adult population. A combination of Level I fieldwork and service learning experiences serve to develop each student's appreciation for the influence of occupation-based activity on an adult's/elder's health and wellbeing as well as skills in program development, group leadership, and health education.

OTA 111, Leadership and Management in Occupational Therapy emphasizes the importance of leadership qualities in all occupational therapy practitioners with efforts to develop each student's leadership skills within this course and expand throughout all stages of the curriculum. Review of research principles and evidence-based practice expands the student's knowledge and understanding for application within the curriculum and in practice. The inclusion of business concepts, public policy, ethics, credentialing, and service management responsibilities pertinent to various practice environments and consideration to the nature of various health care delivery systems and practice settings contribute to the student's awareness of some of the internal and external factors influencing service delivery and practice roles of an occupational therapy assistant.

OTA 104, Occupational Therapy Interventions 2, expands the student's understanding and appreciation of traditional OT assessment and intervention skills with greater consideration to client factors, performance skills, performance patterns, context and environment, and activity demands (AOTA, in press) that influence occupational performance and participation. Laboratory practice and simulation promotes technical skill development and procedural reasoning along with some conditional reasoning. Remedial, adaptive and preventive approaches in OT intervention are emphasized.

The general education courses offered concurrent in this stage of the curriculum within the traditional option of study [Composition 2 elective – CMP 102-150, Human Growth and Development – PSY 204, and Anatomy & Physiology 2 – BIO 212] provide expanded foundational knowledge and skills to think more critically, write more effectively, better understand human development across the lifespan, and understand the functions of additional body systems (digestive, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, urogenital) in order to enhance the student's performance and participation in OTA courses. These general education courses are pre-admission requirements for the accelerated option of study and therefore students enrolled in the accelerated option possess this expanded foundational knowledge and skills to support their performance and participation in Intermediate Level OTA courses.

As the student moves through the Intermediate OTA Student role stage, they are expected to increase responsibility in the learning process to further develop and refine his/her/their skill set relative to all curricular themes/threads. Appreciation for mental health concepts and programming is developed through OTA 203, Mental Health Concepts in Occupational Therapy Practice. Knowledge of mental illness, psychiatric disorders, addictions, and psychological and social factors that place persons at-risk for occupational dysfunction is reinforced within this course and professional skills are developed through Level I fieldwork experiences. Awareness of mental health issues and occupational therapy programming within the contexts of medical, community, and social systems is promoted through class and field learning activities.

OTA 202, Advanced Group Process, is a laboratory course expanding on the student's knowledge and skill in group dynamics with the application of group interventions within occupational therapy practice. Therapeutic



value, therapeutic use of self, and group leadership are emphasized in the development and implementation of therapeutic groups designed to promote overall health and wellness.

OTA 207, Occupational Therapy for Pediatric Populations, also combines classroom, Level I fieldwork, and service learning experiences to promote knowledge, understanding, and practice skills related to OT intervention with children (birth to young adulthood) in early intervention, school and community-based practice settings. Common diagnoses and conditions, laws and regulations, and service delivery models pertaining to practice are discussed.

OTA 201, Occupational Therapy Interventions 3, is the final laboratory course in the academic component of the curriculum and is offered (along with OTA 202, OTA 203 and OTA 207) just before students enter level II fieldwork. This course utilizes a modified problem-based learning approach to assimilate knowledge and skill for clinical practice and professional development. Students are facilitated in the development of their clinical reasoning skills, employing greater situational consideration (conditional and pragmatic reasoning) along with procedural thinking. Skill and confidence for clinical practice are enhanced through a variety of experiential lab activities, case studies, simulations, and case-based performance evaluations to promote readiness for level II fieldwork. Focus is on client-centered and evidence-based intervention planning, implementation and documentation, along with student-centered professional development that enhances performance relative to all curricular themes.

OTA 220, Special Topics in Occupational Therapy, extends the students' knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for specialty practices and entrepreneurship in the field of occupational therapy. This course provides a closer study of topics of special interest in contemporary OT practice including but not limited to practice in academia, assistive technology, orthotics and prosthetics, ergonomics and universal design, driver rehabilitation, pharmacology, care coordination and case management, entrepreneurship, complementary and integrative health practices, community and primary care programs, telehealth, and topics related to emerging areas of practice. Clinical/professional reasoning incorporating research evidence is emphasized in the process of studying these topics with diverse specialists in the field.

As the student transitions into the Advanced OTA Student Role, he/she/they begin level II fieldwork (OTA 204 and OTA 208) where students are immersed in the integration and application of all curricular themes within the field practice of occupational therapy. Students are afforded the opportunity to identify their professional interests for consideration in placement and faculty provides input into the placement process, which is led by the academic fieldwork coordinator. The intent is to "maximize the fit" between student and available field site for maximizing student performance and satisfaction. In conjunction with Level II fieldwork, the curriculum enables students to stay connected with each other and with the academic institution through hybrid designed OTA 206, Seminar in Occupational Therapy. In addition to being a support system, this course contributes to mastery of learning and assists in the student's transition to entry-level practice. Professional behaviors, professional relationships, supervision, ethics, standards of practice, application of theory and evidence-based practice, ongoing leadership development and contemporary issues related to the real practice world are primary topics of discussion (online and in classroom). In addition, resume writing and job search, and licensure and certification processes are discussed. The culmination of work leads to the creation of student portfolios. Each student graduating from the OTA program is able to display pieces of his/her/their professional self through an individualized portfolio that reflects the program's curricular themes. Development of this portfolio not only equips the student with an effective tool to support qualifications for an entry-level OTA job, it serves to pave the way for ongoing professional development and competency tracking recommended for best practice in the field of occupational therapy.

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# North Shore Community College

## Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

**TABLE PRESENTATION OF CURRICULUM DESIGN**  
**(2021)**

Occupational Performance (OTA Student Role Stages)	Sequence	Courses	Scope	Teaching-Learning Process ( <i>Person-Environment-Occupation</i> )
<b>Entry Level OTA Student</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop knowledge and skills</li> <li>Academic and Professional Socialization</li> <li>Acceptance of responsibility and accountability</li> </ul>	<u>Semester 1</u> Fall (Traditional and Accelerated OTA)  <u>Semesters 1, 2, 3</u> Fall - Spring - Fall	OTA 101 OTA 103 OTA 105 General Ed (OTA) CMP 101 PSY 102 BIO 211	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACOTE Standards (Introduction of foundational content; theoretical perspectives; OT tenets; referral, screening, evaluation and intervention planning and implementation; context of service delivery; leadership and management; scholarship; professional values, ethics and responsibilities; Level I fieldwork)</li> </ul> NSCC Degree Requirements	<p><i>Person (student):</i> readiness with skill set with emerging OTA skill set</p> <p><i>Environment (faculty, Level I fieldwork educators, course materials and resources):</i> impart knowledge, model professional attitudes and behaviors, introduce core concepts, multicultural understanding and practice skills, support learning and collaboration, foster literacy, stimulate critical thinking and problem solving, facilitate self-reflection</p> <p><i>Occupations:</i> classroom learning activities, laboratory practice, Level I fieldwork, individual and group assignments</p>

Occupational Performance (OTA Student Role Stages)	Sequence	Courses	Scope	Teaching-Learning Process ( <i>Person-Environment-Occupation</i> )
<b>Intermediate OTA Student</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased independence, interdependence and responsibility</li> <li>Ability to consider and respond to various conditions/situations</li> <li>Enhanced knowledge and skills</li> <li>Mastery of basic role functions</li> </ul>	<u>Semesters 1 &amp; 2</u> Fall (Accelerated OTA)  <u>Semesters 2 &amp; 3</u> Spring – Fall (Traditional OTA)  <u>Semesters 2, 3, 4, 5</u> Spr- Fall-Spr- Fall (Part-time OTA)	OTA 109 OTA 110 OTA111 OTA 104 OTA 201 OTA 202 OTA 203 OTA 207 OTA 220 General Ed (OTA) CMP 102-148 PSY 204 BIO 212	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACOTE Standards</li> <li>(Expansion of foundational content; theoretical perspectives; OT tenets; referral, screening, evaluation and intervention planning and implementation; context of service delivery; leadership and management; scholarship; professional values, ethics and responsibilities; Level I fieldwork)</li> <li>NSCC Degree Requirements</li> </ul>	Person (Student): developing and refining OTA skills.  Environment (faculty, Level I fieldwork educators, service-learning affiliates, course materials, and resources): impart knowledge, model professional attitudes and values, expand upon core concepts, multicultural understanding and practice skills, facilitate independence and interdependence, support learning, promote problem solving critical thinking and clinical reasoning, cultivate collaboration and leadership.  Occupations: classroom activities, case-based learning activities, lab practice, simulations, intra- and interprofessional collaborations, individual and group assignments, Level I fieldwork, service-learning projects.

Occupational Performance (OTA Student Role Stages)	Sequence	Courses	Scope	Teaching-Learning Process (Person-Environment-Occupation)
<b>Advanced OTA Student</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refinement and mastery of skills</li> <li>Understanding of more complex issues in service delivery</li> <li>Assumption of professional roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<p>Semester 3 Summer (Accelerated OTA)</p> <p>Semester 4 Spring (Traditional OTA)</p> <p>Semester 6 <u>Spring</u> (Part-time OTA)</p>	<p>OTA 204 OTA 206 OTA 208</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACOTE Standards</li> <li>(Completion of/Applied foundational content; theoretical perspectives; OT tenets; referral, screening, evaluation and intervention planning and implementation; context of service delivery; leadership and management; scholarship; professional values, ethics and responsibilities; level II fieldwork)</li> <li>NSCC Degree Requirements</li> </ul>	<p>Person (student): refining and mastering skill set.</p> <p><i>Environment (faculty, Level II fieldwork educators, course materials, and resources):</i> impart knowledge, model professional attitudes and behaviors, mentor, support learning, promote clinical/professional reasoning and professional development, <i>cultivate collaboration and leadership.</i></p> <p><i>Occupations:</i> immersion in situational learning activities within Level II fieldwork, EBP, intra and interprofessional collaboration, reflection and discussion related to professional practice and professional self, development of student portfolio, exploration/initiation of certification and licensure process.</p>

# **NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

### **OTA PROGRAM OPTIONS OF STUDY**

The OTA Program is offered in three options of study (variations in curriculum sequence) to meet the needs of students. These variations include:

- 1) Traditional full-time (two year) option,
- 2) Part-time (three year) curriculum sequence, and
- 3) Accelerated (14 month) option.

Program requirements are the same for each option and all options of study lead to an Associate in Science (A.S.) degree, with a major in Occupational Therapy.

Students are encouraged to follow the sequence of courses as presented in the designed curriculum advising sheets located on the following pages and to complete the course of study within the time frames identified (3+ semesters – accelerated OTA; 4 semesters - traditional OTA; and 6 semesters - part-time OTA). Students are expected to complete all program requirements, including Level II Fieldwork, within 4 years of entering the program.

All options of study within the OTA Program require a total of seventy credits (50 OTA credits and 20 general education credits).

### **TRADITIONAL OPTION**

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program's Traditional Option is the two-year curriculum presented on the official program of study sheet (linked to the OTA web page). Although packaged in four semesters to align with the traditional design of associate degree programs, students are advised to take as many of the general education courses as possible in advance and/or during summer sessions to reduce the heavy credit load in the first year.

#### **First Year**

<b>Fall:</b>		<b>Credits</b>
OTA 101*	Orientation to Occupational Therapy	4
OTA 103	Occupational Therapy Interventions 1	4
OTA 105	Introduction to Group Process	1
BIO 211	Anatomy & Physiology 1	4
CMP101	Composition 1	3
PSY 102	Introductory (General) Psychology	3



<b>Spring</b>		<b>Credits</b>
OTA104	Occupational Therapy Interventions 2	4
OTA 109	Medical Conditions in OT Practice	3
OTA 110*	Planning & Implementation of Programs for Health & Well-Being	4
OTA 111	Leadership and Management in OT	3
BIO 212	Anatomy & Physiology 2	4
CMP 102-150	Composition 2 Elective	3
PSY 204	Human Growth and Development	3

## **Second Year**

### **Fall:**

OTA 201	Occupational Therapy Interventions 3	3
OTA 202	Advanced Group Process	1
OTA 203*	Mental Health Concepts in Occupational Therapy Practice	3
OTA 207*	OT for Pediatric Populations	4
OTA 220	Special Topics in Occupational Therapy	2

### **Spring**

OTA 204	Level II Fieldwork Practice 1	6
OTA 206	Seminar in Occupational Therapy	2
OTA 208	Level II Fieldwork Practice 2	6

<b>Total Program Credits ==&gt;</b>	<b>70</b>
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**Note: \* Indicates course with a Level I Fieldwork component (each Level I Fieldwork experience requires a total of 30 hours over the semester).**

### **PART-TIME OPTION**

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program's Part-time Option enables student participation in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program on reduced semester course load (with the exception of the final semester in which Level II fieldwork must be completed in full-time equivalent hours), a desirable option for students who are unable to meet the demands of the traditional option. This option of study is designed to be completed in 3 years as outlined in the following sequence of course work. This course sequence is subject to change contingent upon whether or not the Accelerated Option of Study is offered, as some courses may be interchangeable within the schedule.

#### **First Year**

<b>Fall:</b>		<b>Credits</b>
OTA 101*	Orientation to Occupational Therapy	4
OTA 105	Introduction to Group Process	1
BIO 211	Anatomy & Physiology 1	4
CMP101	Composition 1	3
<b>Spring</b>		
OTA 109	Medical Conditions in OT Practice	3
OTA 110*	Planning & Implementation of Programs for Health & Well-Being	4
BIO 212	Anatomy & Physiology 2	4
PSY 102	Introductory (General) Psychology	3

#### **Second Year**

<b>Fall:</b>		
OTA 103	Occupational Therapy Interventions 1	4
OTA 202	Advanced Group Process	1
OTA 203*	Mental Health Concepts in Occupational Therapy Practice	3
PSY 204	Human Growth & Development	3
<b>Spring:</b>		
OTA 104	Occupational Therapy Interventions 2	4
OTA 111	Leadership & Management in OT	3
CMP 102-150	Composition 2 Elective	3

**Third Year**

<b>Fall:</b>		<b>Credits</b>
OTA 201	Occupational Therapy Interventions 3	3
OTA 207*	OT for Pediatric Populations	4
OTA 220	Special Topics in Occupational Therapy	2
<b>Spring:</b>		
OTA 204	Level II Fieldwork Practice 1	6
OTA 206	Seminar in Occupational Therapy	2
OTA 208	Level II Fieldwork Practice 2	6
<b>Total Program Credits ==&gt;</b>		<b>70</b>

**Note: \* indicates course with a Level I Fieldwork component (each Level I Fieldwork experience requires a total of 30 hours over the semester).**

### **ACCELERATED OPTION**

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program's Accelerated Option is designed to enable completion within an extended 3-semester time frame, typically 14 months pending fulfillment of Level II fieldwork requirements. Admission requirements into the accelerated option of study include successful completion of all General Education courses required in the traditional Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program. OTA courses constitute all of the credit hours within the extended 3 semesters as outlined in the following sequence of course work.

<b>Pre-Admission</b>		<b>Credits</b>
<b><i>CMP 101</i></b>	<b><i>Composition 1</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>CMP 102-150</i></b>	<b><i>Anatomy and Physiology 1</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>BIO 211</i></b>	<b><i>Anatomy and Physiology 2</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>BIO 212</i></b>	<b><i>Anatomy and Physiology 2</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>PSY 102</i></b>	<b><i>Introductory (General) Psychology</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>PSY 204</i></b>	<b><i>Human Growth and Development</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>Total Pre-Admission Credits ==&gt;</i></b>		<b><i>20</i></b>
<b>Fall:</b>		
OTA 101*	Orientation to Occupational Therapy	4
OTA 103	Occupational Therapy Interventions 1	4
OTA 105	Introduction to Group Process	1
OTA 109	Medical Conditions in OT Practice	3
OTA 110*	Planning & Implementation of Programs for Health & Well-being	4
OTA 111	Leadership and Management in OT	3

<b>Spring:</b>		<b>Credits</b>
OTA 104	Occupational Therapy Interventions 2	4
OTA 201	Occupational Therapy Interventions 3	3
OTA 202	Advanced Group Process	1
OTA 203*	Mental Health Concepts in Occupational Therapy Practice	3
OTA 207*	OT for Pediatric Populations	4
OTA 220	Special Topics in Occupational Therapy	2
<b>Summer:</b>	<b>[extended into fall semester]</b>	
OTA 204	Level II Fieldwork Practice 1	6
OTA 206	Seminar in Occupational Therapy	2
OTA 208	Level II Fieldwork Practice 2	6
 <b>Total Program Credits ==&gt;</b>		 <b>70</b>

**Note: \* indicates course with a Level I Fieldwork component (each Level I Fieldwork experience requires a total of 30 hours over the semester).**

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

It is the policy of the OTA Program to provide each student with a course syllabus on the first meeting of every course either in hard copy or posted within Blackboard. Each OTA course syllabus includes specific student learning outcomes that align with ACOTE standards along with OTA role-related rationales, content, related learning objectives, teaching-learning methodologies, and assessment and evaluation methods. In addition, course-specific policies and procedures are included in the syllabus and professional behavior expectations are highlighted. Course assignments, projects, quizzes, and tests are also included with course materials and the weighting of all components factored into the final grade is indicated. Each student is responsible for accessing course materials in Blackboard and maintaining their copy of course materials distributed by faculty, along with abiding by the policies, procedures, and schedule identified within them.

The course syllabus is intended to be a tool for student learning. Students should constantly reference the syllabus when preparing for class as well as when preparing for tests.

The OTA Program infuses web supported materials into each course. Each student is responsible for accessing and utilizing relevant course materials through his/her/their MyNorthshore account into "Blackboard." An orientation to "Blackboard" will be provided to all students.

### **PROGRAM MATERIALS**

Materials related to general OTA program operations and activities including but not limited to academic technology resources, advising, program handbooks and manuals, health forms, general fieldwork information, Assessment of Professional Behaviors, SOTA club, Assembly Student Delegate continuing education, special events and job opportunities are posted to the OTA Program site in Blackboard. Specific OTA program and fieldwork requirements to be submitted by students will be

uploaded into CastleBranch/Sentry MD or in a separate Blackboard site, which will be designated by faculty. Orientation materials for required websites/applications are available to students.

### **FIELDWORK**

Fieldwork is an integral part of NSCC's OTA Program and is designed to provide students with the opportunity to integrate classroom learning with practice as well as to develop their professional selves and carry out OTA role responsibilities under the supervision of a qualified occupational therapy practitioner or other professional as permitted by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). Settings/sites are selected and used based on their ability to provide fieldwork experiences that align with NSCC's OTA Program curriculum design and fieldwork objectives. Processes and procedures for selecting, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of fieldwork placements is the responsibility of the OTA Program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) in collaboration with the department chair and faculty. The AFWC directs students in the process of preparing for and engaging in all fieldwork experiences.

Students are not to seek out their own fieldwork site or initiate contact with any potential new fieldwork site or supervisor. If a student has a personal contact or information regarding a potential fieldwork site or supervisor, he/she/they is to convey this information to the AFWC as all communication with potential fieldwork sites to be generated and confirmed by the AFWC following established protocols.

OTA students engage in Level I fieldwork and Level II fieldwork as outlined in the OTA Program curriculum design as well as on the following pages of this student handbook. The integration of fieldwork within NSCC's OTA Program exposes students to a variety of practice areas and populations as identified below.

Traditional Area of Practice = common and well-developed current practice environments for OT practitioners (role- established settings).

Nontraditional/Emerging Area of Practice =Describe nontraditional new and/or developing practice environments for OT practitioners, primarily in community settings where OT did not previously exist (role- emerging or alternative practice settings).

Populations = children, adolescents, adults, elderly.

### **SERVICE LEARNING/CIVIC LEARNING**

In addition to fieldwork, OTA students engage in various community-based service learning and civic learning experiences that are integrated within the curriculum to meet specific learning outcomes or objectives. Faculty guide students in all service learning/civic learning experiences with the support of the college's Service Learning Office.

## **LEVEL I FIELDWORK**

LEVEL I FIELDWORK (FW) is coordinated with 4 specific OTA courses and is an integral part of the Occupational Therapy Assistant curriculum. The goal of Level I fieldwork experience is to augment the academic components of knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior. The emphasis is on providing students with introductory experiential learning opportunities within a variety of service delivery models. All Level I FW experiences incorporate on-site observations, virtual and simulated activities, and/or collaborative and independent activities that are faculty-led to engage students in meeting the FW objectives of each course.

The general outcomes of LEVEL I FIELD EXPERIENCE will:

1. Provide the opportunity for students to observe and participate/engage in various health care settings and service delivery models in concert with the theoretical concepts learned in the classroom.
2. Provide opportunity for supervised observation, practice of selective skills (as appropriate), and the application of knowledge learned in the classroom with actual clients in need of services.
3. Provide students with the opportunity to develop awareness, appreciation and demonstration of professional behaviors, including the ability to receive and respond to constructive feedback.
4. Provide students with the opportunity to develop awareness, appreciation and demonstration of professional communication skills, including collaborative interaction with clients, families, supervisor(s), department members and interdisciplinary team.
5. Provide students with the opportunity to develop personal responsibility for continued learning by seeking out appropriate resources and persons, and initiating independent study.
6. Provide students with the opportunity to develop awareness of and an appreciation for the interpersonal skills and attitudes necessary for working with persons having physical, cognitive, psychosocial, and/or developmental needs.
7. Provide students the opportunity to arrive at a realistic assessment of one's own strengths and weaknesses in the process of becoming a professional occupational therapy assistant.
8. Provide students appropriate opportunities to evaluate their interest in and potential for practice in the field of Occupational Therapy.

Each course syllabus with a Level I FW component includes specific student learning outcomes and FW objectives. Assessment of student performance relative to outcomes and objectives are conducted through various course assignments and fieldwork performance evaluation. All Level I fieldwork experiences require a minimum of 30 hours, except OTA 110, which requires 24 hours of fieldwork with an additional service learning project that contributes to the field learning experience for Level I. Level I fieldwork is affiliated with each of the following courses:

OTA 101: ORIENTATION TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

OTA 110: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

OTA 203: MENTAL HEALTH CONCEPTS IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTICE

OTA 207: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOR PEDIATRIC POPULATIONS

The Level I Fieldwork experience in ORIENTATION TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY provides an introduction to clients and practice within the medical model across the continuum of care [acute care hospitals, outpatient settings, rehabilitation facilities, skilled nursing facilities (short- and long-term care) and community agencies (e.g., Home Health Agencies, Day Care Centers, etc.)].

The Level I Fieldwork experience in PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING will expose students to activity programming with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as other adult and older adult populations requiring direct care. The corresponding service-learning experience (health education program development and implementation) will be connected with various community settings for higher functioning community-dwelling older adults including senior centers and housing complexes.

The Level I Fieldwork experience in MENTAL HEALTH CONCEPTS IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTICE will engage students in therapeutic group interventions designed for persons of all ages with various psychological and social issues hindering their occupational performance.

The Level I Fieldwork experience in OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOR PEDIATRIC POPULATIONS will engage students in OT programming for children and families.

As the student progresses through these Level I Fieldwork experiences, he/she/they develops increased comfort with various client groups and becomes more aware of the different needs of clients. These field experiences contribute to the development of the student's professional self throughout the curriculum in preparation for Level II Fieldwork. Level I Fieldwork is not substituted for any part of Level II Fieldwork.

Upon completion of each Level I Fieldwork experience, the fieldwork educator/fieldwork educator will evaluate the student on forms provided by the College's OTA Program. A copy of this evaluation form will be provided to the student as part of course materials. Scores on the Level I Fieldwork Performance Evaluation are factored into the student's final course grade. Any unsatisfactory rating warrants a meeting between the student, academic fieldwork coordinator, course instructor and department chair. When unsatisfactory ratings pertain to professional behaviors, a formal behavioral learning contract will be developed for the student outlining specific expectations of performance and consequences for not adhering to behavioral learning contract.

In addition to the fieldwork educator's assessment of student performance, the student will be expected to complete a student evaluation of fieldwork experience for the OTA Program. Students are responsible for making their own copies of all evaluation forms prior to submitting them.

For all fieldwork, students must accept and be prepared to engage in virtual or telehealth programming as well as travel to the site assigned by the academic fieldwork coordinator (within 60 miles of NSCC's Danvers campus and/or the student's residential address). In addition, students must comply with the responsibilities outlined on the "Student Responsibilities and Agreement for Participation in Level I and Level II Fieldwork."

## **LEVEL II FIELDWORK**

LEVEL II FIELDWORK PRACTICES 1 AND 2 (OTA 204 and OTA 208) are the final component of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. Level II Fieldwork is the culmination of academic and Level I field learning in a supervised, service delivery experience within the health field. This in-depth field experience provides the final opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge with clinical practice as an OTA student. The goal of Level II Fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level skills as a generalist occupational therapy assistant. The emphasis, therefore, is on application of knowledge, skills attitudes and behaviors expected of an entry level occupational therapy assistant in the delivery of occupational therapy services.

Students engage in Level II Fieldwork during the final semester of their chosen curriculum sequence [Fourth semester (Spring) for traditional OTA students, sixth semester (Spring) for part-time OTA students, and the third (Summer/Fall) semester for accelerated OTA students]. Only under extenuating circumstances can Level II Fieldwork be delayed for personal reasons and the delay can be no longer than one semester. With the exception of delays caused by natural disasters and/or public health restrictions, all Level II Fieldwork must be completed within 12 months following completion of the didactic portion of the program.

Regardless of the option of study, Level II Fieldwork is comprised of two, eight-week full-time experiences in settings that afford student exposure to different populations and/or service delivery models. The student must follow their fieldwork educator's schedule which may include early morning, evening, weekend or holiday hours, and meet full-time equivalency requirements. The student must be prepared to travel to his/her/their assigned fieldwork site within 60 miles of NSCC's Danvers campus and/or student's residential address.

Students collaborate with the academic fieldwork coordinator prior to engaging in this fieldwork experience. This affords the student opportunity to self-assess strengths and weaknesses as well as discuss areas of interest in order to prepare self for placement and assist in the placement assignment. Along with student interest, faculty input and availability of field placements are major determinants in placement assignments. Facility reference files are available for student review and can be accessed upon request to the academic fieldwork coordinator.

The OTA Program will distribute a Level II Fieldwork Manual to each student prior to the start of Level II Fieldwork Practices 1 and 2. This Manual outlines the specific expectations, competencies, policies and procedures relative to Level II Fieldwork. Student performance will be evaluated by the fieldwork



educator midway through and at the end of each placement. In addition, students are expected to complete a formal evaluation of their field experience to share with their fieldwork educator and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

To meet the primary goal of developing a competent, entry level, generalist occupational therapy assistant, Level II Fieldwork is designed to:

1. Provide a concentrated experience in Occupational Therapy intervention planning and implementation, utilizing skills gained through academic and Level I fieldwork experiences.
2. Provide professional role models for the student in direct and indirect service roles.
3. Provide opportunity for the student to assist in the evaluation of clients within the OTA role.
4. Provide opportunity for the student to plan and implement occupational therapy services designed to enhance a client's occupational performance.
5. Provide opportunity for the student to promote his/her/their technical skills, clinical reasoning/professional reasoning, ethical practice, professional development, and leadership.
6. Provide opportunity for the student to develop his/her/their interpersonal skills, communication skills, attitudes and values necessary for working effectively with clients, families, and professional colleagues.
7. Provide the student with feedback that contributes to the development of his/her/their professional self in preparation for entry level practice.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND AGREEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PARTICIPATION IN  
LEVEL I & LEVEL II FIELDWORK**

1. The student is responsible for completion and submittal of all health forms, American Heart Association's Basic Life Support (BLS) certification at the health care provider level, and personal health insurance prior to fieldwork rotations, consenting to the release of this information to field sites as requested. In addition to submitting documentation, the student is responsible for maintaining a copy of all forms.
2. All students will be assigned to a fieldwork placement [Level I or Level II fieldwork] within 60 miles of NSCC's Danvers campus **or** a student's known address as documented on the student's Navigate profile. Students are responsible for updating and reporting their address changes to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator throughout their enrollment in the OTA Program. Students are responsible for all costs associated with travel. Student refusal of any field placement following the 60 miles policy or for any reason, will require a meeting with the OTA Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to discuss concerns. Students who continue to refuse their placement after meeting with the OTA Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator are considered to have a disruption in their curriculum sequence. Disruption in the curriculum sequence requires implementation of the OTA Program's Readmission Policy and procedure as outlined in the current OTA Program Student Handbook
3. The student will engage in each fieldwork assignment in a professional manner by displaying a positive attitude, openness to learning and effective interactions with other students, AFWC, faculty, fieldwork educators, clients and all other personnel within the college and fieldwork setting/site.
4. The student must follow their fieldwork educator's schedule. Level II Fieldwork schedules may include weekend and holiday hours.
5. The student must comply with all site-specific requirements needed for participating in fieldwork including but not limited to pre-placement orientations, screenings, and/or trainings.
6. The student must follow the policies, rules and standards of practice of the fieldwork setting/site [hospital/agency/school, etc.]
7. The student must follow all of the OTA Program's policies and professional behavior expectations outlined in the OTA Student Handbook; Level I FW information in course syllabi and Level II Fieldwork Manual during fieldwork.
8. The student must maintain as confidential all patient/client/student records and all other data to which the student has access within the fieldwork setting/site.
9. The student must accept individual and independent assignments requested or assigned by fieldwork educator.

10. The student must review and acknowledge the evaluation(s) conducted by fieldwork educator(s)/educator(s) regarding his/her fieldwork performance and ability to function within the fieldwork setting/site as an OTA student. The student shall respond professionally to feedback and evaluations. If a student believes they are evaluated unfairly, the student shall follow the communications policy and grievance policy outlined in this handbook and in the college's student handbook.
11. The student is responsible for communicating with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator regarding their performance in the fieldwork experience and submitting a copy of his/her mid-term evaluation [Level II only] to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator for review as well as ensuring that the final FW performance evaluation is submitted.
12. The student is responsible for supplying own uniforms, or required dress as indicated by fieldwork setting/site.
13. The Institution or College may remove any student from the fieldwork experience upon reasonable notice. The fieldwork setting/site may, without notice, unilaterally remove the student whose continued presence threatens the clients, staff, policies or programs of the setting/site. In the event of such removal, the fieldwork educator and/or coordinator of the setting/site will immediately contact NSCC's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and promptly provide the college with a written explanation of the reason for such actions.
14. In the event of injury or episodic illness, the student is responsible for payment of health care services provided by the fieldwork setting/site and/or own health care provider.
15. The student shall, for all purposes, be deemed independent contractors and not employees of the fieldwork setting/site, but, nevertheless, shall abide by all applicable policies and procedures of the fieldwork setting/site.

STUDENT NAME [PRINT]: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

### **HEALTH INSURANCE, HEALTH RECORDS, LIABILITY INSURANCE, BLS CERTIFICATION, CORI/SORI FORMS, DRUG SCREENING, OTHER SCREENING MEASURES AND STUDENT DATA FORMS**

All students must provide evidence of HEALTH INSURANCE and maintain health insurance throughout one's enrollment in the OTA Program.

#### **HEALTH PACKET**

A health packet is provided to each student at the OTA Program's Incoming Orientation meeting. This packet includes the following immunizations for which students must comply. Two (2) doses of live MMR [Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, German Measles (Rubella)] or positive blood titers. One (1) dose of adult Tdap after 2005 with update if Tdap/TD >10 years old; Hepatitis B positive immune titer or 2 or 3 dose series with positive immune titer report. Two (2) doses of chicken pox (Varicella) or positive blood titer report (Hx: chicken pox disease unacceptable); 2- step Tuberculin Skin Test (TST or IGRA - serology; Seasonal Influenza documentation form indicating vaccination record OR declination/exemption; COVID-19 vaccination documentation form indicating vaccination record or declination/exemption.

In addition, a physical (Medical Certificate) within 12 months (and annually while enrolled) indicating good health along with signed Technical Standards are required.

All forms within this health packet must be completed by each student and/or healthcare provider and submitted/uploaded to CastleBranch/Sentry MD prior to the beginning of the first semester. The specific date for submission will be posted on the OTA Program Health Packet and reviewed with students during the New Student Orientation. Each student is responsible for keeping a copy of his/her/their own completed packet for personal needs and back up. Throughout a student's enrollment in the OTA Program, complete and updated health records are required and must be submitted in order to participate in Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. Blank health forms are posted to the OTA Program site in Blackboard for students to access when needed.

#### **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Liability insurance is required to participate in fieldwork. NSCC establishes a blanket policy for all enrolled students and any costs for which the student is responsible will be communicated.

#### **BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS) CERTIFICATION**

A Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification through the American Heart Association at the healthcare provider level is required to begin fieldwork. Students must submit a copy of their current BLS certification by uploading into CastleBranch or Sentry MD.

**CRIMINAL OFFENSE RECORD INVESTIGATIONS (CORI) AND SEXUAL  
OFFENSE RECORD INVESTIGATIONS (SORI)**

CORIs and SORIs are required for participation in the OTA program.

1. As an OTA student you will be required to undergo a State of MA CORI/SORI as well as a National Criminal Offender Record Investigation (CORI). Please refer to CP3710 Selective Program Admission and Continued Participation Requirements on page 47-48.
2. NSCC Human Resources Department and/or Dean of Health Professions will direct you in this process at the incoming [new student] orientation. In addition, OTA students will be required to undergo a state and national CORI/SORI background check annually while enrolled in the program.
3. In addition, a student may be required to undergo a specific fieldwork facility's background check prior to engaging in a Level I or Level II fieldwork experience. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will direct students in this process if indicated.
4. A student must pass all required CORI/SORI screenings [state and national background checks] to remain enrolled in the OTA Program as fieldwork is an integral program requirement.

**DRUG SCREENING**

OTA students are required to undergo and pass a 10-panel drug screening analysis in order to remain in the program and be eligible for participation in fieldwork. Additional random and scheduled drug screenings may be required throughout a student's enrollment. Please refer to CP3710 Selective Program Admission and Continued Participation Requirements on page 47-48.

**OTHER SCREENING MEASURES**

Other screening measures including but not limited to interviews, fingerprints and COVID vaccination may be required by the Fieldwork site prior to a student's participation. The academic fieldwork coordinator will direct students in the process of all screening measures. A student must pass all screening measures to remain enrolled in the OTA Program as fieldwork is an integral program requirement.

**COVID VACCINE STATEMENT FOR NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
HEALTH PROFESSION STUDENTS**

**COVID REQUIREMENT**

Although currently, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts doesn't mandate the COVID Vaccine, students in a health profession program are **required** to have the vaccine and show proof of the vaccine.

Please be advised, while the college will make a reasonable effort to place you in a clinical facility; clinical placement cannot be guaranteed in an un-immunized status. If the college cannot secure a clinical placement due to your un-immunized status, you will be unable to complete the program's clinical requirement. Thus, you will be unable to progress and will fail out of the program.

### **MEDICAL/RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION**

**Students** who cannot be vaccinated for COVID-19 because of a medical reason or religious belief may request an exemption through the College. **Exemptions or reasonable accommodations are not guaranteed.** Personal and philosophical reasons for not getting vaccinated are insufficient, and requests of this nature will be denied.

Individuals who wish to submit a medical exemption must provide a letter from either their MD, NP or PA that states administration of COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be detrimental to the individual's health. For religious exemption, students must state in writing how this vaccine conflicts with his/her/their religious belief.

### **FALSIFYING VACCINATION RECORDS**

As you may have read, there have been instances of people submitting falsified vaccination records to various institutions. This is fraud. We will be checking the veracity of any card that appears suspicious, and submission of a falsified card will result in disciplinary action.

**NOTE: NSCC OTA Program fees will cover the costs of all screening measures.**

### **STUDENT DATA FORMS**

Student data forms provided to all newly enrolled students by the OTA Program, are to be completed by the student and uploaded into CastleBranch/Sentry MD or Blackboard Orientation Site. Returning students may be instructed to upload updated Student Data Forms into a specific program site within Blackboard. These forms are used for urgent and/or emergency notification and include current phone numbers, address, health insurance, health care provider and emergency contact information. One form remains in the student's folder/electronic file, and duplicate forms are sent to assigned fieldwork sites/supervisors. **\*\*STUDENTS MUST THE NOTIFY ACADEMIC FIELDWORK COORDINATOR OF ANY CHANGES IN THEIR PERSONAL DATA INFORMATION AND UPLOAD A NEW STUDENT DATA FORM.**

#### **NOTE:**

**Failure to comply with the above program requirements will prevent a student's engagement in fieldwork, which will affect their status in the OTA program.**

\*Fieldwork settings/sites will not be procured/confirmed until all required forms are submitted.

**CP3710 SELECTIVE PROGRAM ADMISSION AND CONTINUED PARTICIPATION  
REQUIREMENTS**

**REQUIRED DRUG TESTING**

The Division of Health and Human Services is committed to high quality education and providing excellent clinical experiences for all students in Nursing and Allied Health professions. Students are expected to perform at their highest functional level during all educational and clinical experiences in order to maximize the learning environment and ensure both patient and student safety. Thus, a student's performance at all times must be free of any impairment caused by prescription or non-prescribed drugs, including alcohol or marijuana.

Students enrolled in Nursing and Allied Health programs are required to undergo and pass a college-endorsed ten panel drug and/or alcohol screening analysis in order to remain in the program and be eligible for placement in a clinical facility. Students assigned to clinical education experiences at the College's contracted facilities may also be required to undergo and pass additional random and scheduled drug screenings in order to remain at that clinical facility and in the program. Students who fail a screening, or refuse to submit to a screening within the designated time frame will be ineligible for clinical placement, which will affect their status in the program. Students with a positive drug test may appeal the results of the test within five (5) days of notification of the drug test results. This appeal must be in writing and delivered to the college's Dean of Health Professions. An appeal by a student who claims that he/she/they tested positive due to a prescription drug and was unable to clarify this matter with the medical review officer (MRO) from the drug testing lab shall include evidence from a health care provider of the type of prescription, dates of permissible use and dosage amounts. Students whose appeals are denied may re-apply for re-entry into the program after one year. Requests for re-admission will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with program criteria.

Students who are notified of a "negative-dilute" result will submit to a random drug test within 24 hours of the previous test in order to confirm the negative status of the screening. Additional random testing may also be required under the guidelines listed in your program's handbook.

Students who test positive for marijuana are unable to continue in a clinical placement, which will affect their status in the program. While the use of marijuana is permitted in Massachusetts, marijuana remains classified as a controlled substance under federal law and its use, possession, distribution and/or cultivation at educational institutions remains prohibited. A student who has a prescription for Medical Marijuana and tests positive for marijuana will be referred to the Office of Accessibility Services for consideration as to whether the student's off-campus use of Medical Marijuana constitutes a reasonable accommodation under state law. If it is determined based on an interactive process with the student that his/her/their continued off-campus use of Medical Marijuana could impair his/her/their clinical performance, pose an unreasonable safety risk to patients, or violate the terms of a clinical facility's affiliation agreement with the College, then the student's continued use of Medical Marijuana will not constitute a reasonable accommodation under the law.

A NSCC student's program fees will cover the cost of drug testing and retests. Students will be responsible to pay for additional drug screening conducted as part of an appeal. All students will be required to sign a Drug Screening Release Form. By signing this form, students authorize NSCC to

conduct the ten-panel urine test for drug screening. The student will be provided additional information regarding the procedure through their program's handbook and during program orientation. If assistance is needed with this drug screening process, please contact Lori A. Vinci, the Dean of Health Professions.

### **REQUIRED CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Students enrolled in Nursing and Allied Health programs are required to undergo and pass a National Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) background screening in order to remain in the program and be eligible for placement in a clinical facility. Students assigned to clinical education experiences at our contracted facilities may also be required to undergo and pass additional random CORI screenings in order to remain at that clinical facility and in the college program. Students who fail a screening, or refuse to submit to a screening within the designated time frame will be ineligible for clinical placement, which will affect their status in the program. Any appeal of a CORI screening will be reviewed and decided by the North Shore Community College CORI Board.

Please refer to the College Policy 22200 and Administrative Procedure 22200 for information concerning the CORI appeal process. Program fees cover the initial National CORI for admissions purposes and the subsequent costs for state and local CORI checks.

For more information, please contact Lori A. Vinci, the Dean of Health Professions

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

Members of the North Shore Community College community are expected to act within the standards of academic honesty. Any willfully dishonest behavior is subject to disciplinary action, which may range from that which the instructor imposes relative to the specific course to dismissal from the college, depending on the seriousness of the act.

Dishonest academic behavior includes, but is not limited to:

1. Cheating: Use of unauthorized notes during an examination; giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on an examination; copying from someone else's examination, term paper, homework, or report; theft of examination materials; falsification of works or records.
2. Plagiarism: Using the words, data or ideas of another, as one's own, without properly acknowledging their source.

In addition to action taken relative to the specific course, the instructor may bring any matter related to academic honesty to the assistant provost for further disciplinary action. The assistant provost will review the case and determine if further action is to be taken.

Disciplinary action may be appealed by the affected student/s. A full description of the student grievance process be found in the North Shore Community College Student Handbook:

[North Shore Community College - Coursework Policies \(smartcatalogiq.com\)](http://smartcatalogiq.com)



## **STUDENT CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

All students in the OTA Program are expected to adhere to all of the policies and procedures related to student rights, responsibilities, conduct, disciplinary action and due process stated in the NSCC Catalog and Student Handbook. These policies apply for both the academic and fieldwork experiences. Students are also expected to adhere to the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics published by the American Occupational Therapy Association and introduced to each student in the ORIENTATION TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY course (OTA101).

The OTA Program stresses professional behavior throughout the academic and fieldwork components of the program. As a future OTA practitioner, each student must display the professional attitudes and behaviors expected within the occupational therapy profession. Academic preparation for entrance into the occupational therapy profession includes the development of these professional attitudes and behaviors. Feedback regarding professional attitude and behavior will be provided throughout the program via peer, faculty, and field supervisor assessments. A formal Assessment of Professional Behavior (APB) will be conducted each semester during a student's enrollment. Please read all components of this handbook for the policy, procedure and forms used in the APB.

Each student must demonstrate professional behavior through the process of becoming an entry level Occupational Therapy Assistant. Professional behavior includes but is not limited to:

1. Being courteous and respectful towards clients, their families, facility staff, fellow students, FW educators and faculty/staff of NSCC. This includes verbal and non-verbal (body language) communication within physical and virtual environments.
2. Performing procedures, administering therapy, and completing assigned work in accordance with established standards, policies and procedures.
3. Demonstrating the ability to work independently and collaboratively with diverse groups of people in academic and fieldwork activities.
4. Constructively utilizing scheduled or structured time as well as free or unstructured time for optimal learning (i.e., using lab and fieldwork time effectively).
5. Demonstrating appropriate behavior/approaches to individuals requiring services, including family members and staff. Appropriate behavior includes maintaining a comfortable personal space, sustaining eye contact, identifying self and status, stating instructions clearly and concisely with appropriate pronunciation, using a friendly and pleasant tone of voice, and respectful language delivered with calm verbal and body expression.
6. Maintaining client confidentiality at all times both in and out of facility or fieldwork setting.
7. Following established protocols pertaining to the health and safety of all persons, including infection control, emergency and evacuation procedures, and practice activities within the role of the OTA. (Refer to the College's and fieldwork facility's policy and procedure manuals; AOTA's official documents including the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice for Occupational Therapy,

Guidelines for Supervision, Roles and Responsibilities During the Delivery of Occupational Services and Licensure Regulations, etc.)

8. Adhering to attendance and promptness policies.
9. Meeting due dates for all assignments/tasks (manage time effectively to meet responsibilities).
10. Effectively communicating with faculty fieldwork educators as well as others involved in learning experiences.
11. Accepting and responding constructively to feedback provided by faculty and fieldwork educators; modifying behavior in response to feedback.

NOTE: Students who do not demonstrate expected levels of professional behavior during class, fieldwork or service learning (as reported and documented by a classroom instructor or fieldwork educator) will be placed on a learning contract. If a student fails to comply with the established learning contract, he/she will be dismissed from the program.

If a student fails a Level II Fieldwork Course (OTA204 or OTA208) due to professional behaviors, he/she/they will be dismissed from the OTA program.

**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS ACADEMIC COMPONENT**

**The student is expected to assume RESPONSIBILITY for the academic learning process by:**

1. Following written and verbal directions.
2. Organizing self and materials to effectively manage program tasks.
3. Personally contacting/notifying each instructor prior to absence or tardiness and following up with each instructor to review material/experiences missed.
4. Bringing necessary and appropriate materials to class in preparation for classroom participation.
5. Reading assigned chapters, articles, etc. in preparation for classroom discussion.
6. Completing all required assignments in a timely manner.
7. Communicating with instructor/AFWC in advance if extenuating circumstances prevent meeting responsibilities and due dates.
8. Initiating communication with faculty/AFWC to address uncertainties and/or concerns.
9. Understanding course syllabi, course requirements, and course guidelines.
10. Appropriately asking questions and seeking guidance from faculty responsible for the course.

11. Doing own share of work in group projects.
12. Returning borrowed items (i.e., books, media, and activity supplies) the next day after use.
13. Properly maintaining classrooms and laboratory areas and returning supplies and equipment to designated areas.
14. Checking NSCC email on a daily basis and responding to all emails within 24-36 hours.

**The student will DEMONSTRATE INTEREST in the academic process by:**

1. Seeking and utilizing suggestions and constructive feedback from field supervisors and faculty.
2. Participating in class discussions and interactions.
3. Enthusiastically engage in learning experiences.
4. Responding to needs of peers, clients, and faculty.
5. Using class time to work in groups, read assigned material, and discuss information with peers and instructors.
6. Interacting and collaborating with students and with faculty and other professionals appropriately.
7. Working cooperatively with others.
8. Actively listening, by expressing points of views when appropriate and by reiterating what has been said to clarify understanding.
9. Maintaining attention and displaying appropriate eye contact and body language.
10. Adapting to changes in situations.
11. Avoiding side conversations during class.
12. Avoiding use of cell phones and personal electronic devices during class unless authorized for application to the classroom learning experience.

**Note: Please refer to Assessment of Professional Behaviors (APB) on pages 57-71 for additional expectations.**

## **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FIELDWORK COMPONENT**

**The student will assume RESPONSIBILITY for the field experience learning process by:**

1. Fulfilling all pre-placement requirements in a timely manner.
2. Consistently arriving on time and remaining within fieldwork setting for scheduled fieldwork hours as well as for completion of all required tasks (refer to attendance and promptness policy).
3. Being prepared for all OT interventions and other field learning assignments, including supervision sessions.
4. Following written and verbal directions provided by FW supervisor and AFWC.
5. Organizing self and materials to effectively manage fieldwork tasks.
6. Notifying the fieldwork educator prior to absence or tardiness and also notifying the academic fieldwork coordinator that same day.
7. Contacting Academic Fieldwork Coordinator in a timely manner if fieldwork educator has expressed concern regarding student's performance as well as to share any personal concerns related to fieldwork experience.
8. Completing assigned tasks initiated by the field supervisor/educator that are appropriate in developing competency in area of expected performance.
9. Communicating with FW supervisor and AFWC in advance if extenuating circumstances prevent meeting responsibilities and due dates.
10. Initiating communication with FW supervisor and/or AFWC in a timely manner to address uncertainties or concerns.
11. Appropriately asking questions and seeking guidance from AFWC and FW Educator.
12. Following dress code requested by fieldwork educators or coordinators of settings.
13. Abiding by the policies and procedure of fieldwork settings.
14. Maintaining clinical area, supplies, and equipment.
15. Checking NSCC email on a daily basis and responding to all emails within 24-36 hours.

**The student will demonstrate INTEREST in the field experience learning process by:**

1. Engaging in all fieldwork activities with a positive attitude, attention, energy and enthusiasm.
2. Displaying verbal and non-verbal (body language) behavior that reflects professional levels of attention, energy, attitude and enthusiasm.
3. Seeking and utilizing suggestions and constructive feedback from field supervisors and faculty.
4. Participating in fieldwork-related discussion and interaction with those involved in or connected with fieldwork experience.
5. Responding to the needs of peers, clients, staff, and faculty with professional courtesy and respect.
6. Conducting research to share with FW supervisor and staff; sharing resources with others.
7. Adapting to changes in FW schedule and/or situation within fieldwork setting.
8. Seeking out additional field learning experiences.
9. Working collaboratively with others.
10. Utilizing time when not involved with direct observation or intervention (with supervisor approval) to read related material and discuss related questions with appropriate persons.
11. Collaborating with clients, families, OT staff, and other professionals.
12. Researching appropriate evaluation and intervention methods and discussing application of programming. Sharing research articles with FW educators.
13. Actively listening by expressing appropriate personal views and reiterating what has been said to clarify understanding.
14. Avoiding use of cell phones and personal electronic devices during fieldwork unless authorized for application to the field learning experience.

**PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

In order to comply with the current Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020), the student will demonstrate professional ethics in the academic and field work settings by:

1. Interacting with others in a manner that is guided by the seven core values of the occupational therapy profession- altruism, equality, freedom, justice, dignity, truth and prudence.
2. Demonstrating courtesy, civility, value and respect in all forms of communication- face-to-face, email, social media etc.

3. Maintaining confidentiality of information regarding clients, peers and other professionals.
4. Demonstrating responsible conduct, respect and discretion when engaging in digital media and social networking.
5. Respecting authority of supervision in class and fieldwork by:
  - being flexible to changes.
  - performing assignments when required.
  - seeking out assigned faculty or supervisor for direction and/or clarification following organizational chart.
  - being open to constructive feedback.
  - modifying behavior in response to feedback/supervision.
  - separating personal needs from client or class needs.
  - handling personal and professional frustrations.
6. Respecting the human and non-human components of the learning environment by:
  - promoting equality and inclusion in all actions and interactions.
  - listening to the opinion of classmates.
  - being truthful in all communications.
  - being honest in all academic and fieldwork assignments and tests.
  - maintaining attention to all speakers with appropriate eye gaze, facial expression, and body language.
  - caring for equipment and supplies
  - adhering to safety measures in actions and interactions so as not to jeopardize the wellbeing of others.
  - abiding by all classroom and fieldwork professional behavior statements and policies.

### **ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS: POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Purpose: The purpose of this Assessment of Professional Responsibility (APB) is to systematically provide feedback to each student throughout his/her enrollment in the OTA Program. The behaviors identified in this assessment are those that are important to professional practice as an occupational therapy assistant and are reflected in the core values and standards of conduct outlined in AOTA's Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (2020). Professional behaviors are a curricular thread within NSCC OTA Program's Curriculum Design and this assessment is a means of facilitating formative assessment [faculty generated feedback as well as student self-review] for student growth and development.

Policy: Every OTA student will be assessed each semester using the established Assessment of Professional Behaviors forms [and accompanying Action Plan form and/or formal Behavioral Learning Contract as indicated].

#### Procedure:

1. At or around mid-term of each semester (prior to the college's established advising period), OTA faculty will jointly complete the Faculty Assessment of Professional Behaviors (APB) form on each student. When warranted, the APB form can be completed at any time during the student's enrollment.
2. At this same time, each student will complete a self-assessment using the Student Assessment of Professional Behaviors form.
3. Academic advisors will formally review the faculty assessment and student self-assessment with each student during the formal advising session.
4. Student and academic advisor will sign the Assessment of Professional Behaviors forms at the time of formal review.
5. Signed copies of Faculty generated Assessment of Professional Behaviors and Student Self-Assessment will be uploaded by advisor to a secure digital repository for record keeping. Signed copies of both will be provided to the student either digitally or printed.

#### Process for Indicating the Need for an Action Plan and/or formal Behavioral Learning Contract:

- When one (1) - two (2) items are rated at a 1 [by faculty] in Section 1, an Action Plan will be warranted.
- When three (3) or more items are rated at a 1 [by faculty] in Section 1, a formal Behavioral Learning Contract along with an Action Plan will be established that documents the expected level of performance for continuation in the OTA Program and criteria for program dismissal.
- When a student is repeatedly [2 times] scored a 1 on any item [during his/her enrollment and implementation of the Assessment of Professional Behaviors], a formal Behavioral Learning Contract will be established to accompany an Action Plan.
- When one (1) item is rated NO [by faculty] in Section 2, an Action Plan will be warranted. If this same item is rated a NO [by faculty] in subsequent APB reviews, a formal Behavioral Learning Contract will be established that documents the expected level of performance for continuation in the OTA Program and criteria for program dismissal.
- When two (2) or more items are rated NO [by faculty] in Section 2, a formal Behavioral Learning Contract along with an Action Plan will be established that documents the expected level of performance for continuation in the OTA Program and criteria for program dismissal.
- An Action Plan and/or Behavioral Learning Contract will be determined based on specific behaviors that are identified on the APB as described above.

#### **SPECIFIC PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING ACTION PLANS:**

1. Within one (1) week of the advising session when the APB was reviewed and the student was notified of the need for an Action Plan, the student will prepare a written action plan identifying

specific steps that he/she can take to improve the behaviors identified. The student will submit his/her action plan to the academic advisor and department chair. Faculty advisor and department chair will contribute to the student's action plan [add and/or modify the plan] in order to facilitate desired behaviors.

2. Within 1 week after the student submits his/her action plan, final Action Plans will be reviewed and signed by the student, academic advisor and department chair. The student is responsible for arranging the meeting with academic advisor and department chair.
3. Action Plans will be shared with OTA faculty and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.
  - Action Plans will be incorporated into each subsequent Assessment of Professional Behaviors. A collaborative written summary is to be completed during the meeting by both student and faculty of student's progress relative to the established action plan which will be signed and submitted to a secure digital repository. Signed copies will be provided to the student.

#### **SPECIFIC PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING FORMAL BEHAVIORAL LEARNING CONTRACTS**

1. Within ten (10) days of the advising session when the APB was reviewed and the student was notified of the need for a formal Behavioral Learning Contract along with Action Plan, the faculty advisor and department chair will jointly prepare and share in a meeting with the student a written learning contract identifying specific behavioral expectations, consequences of behavior and criteria for continued enrollment in the OTA Program.
2. Behavioral Learning Contracts with accompanying Action Plans will be shared with OTA faculty and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.
3. Behavioral Learning Contracts with accompanying Action Plans will be incorporated into each subsequent Assessment of Professional Behaviors (APB) process. Students on Behavioral Learning Contracts and Action Plans will be required to meet with their primary academic advisor and OTA Department Chair each semester to review Behavioral Learning Contract, Action Plan and student progress.



# NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

## FACULTY ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty contributing to this assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 1** – Review each category below and complete using the following rating scale to score each item. **If rating a student at a 1 or 3, provide a rationale to justify the rating. Use specific examples.**

1. Does Not Meet Expectations for current stage of curriculum [refer to OTA Program Curriculum Design] → Needs improvement
2. Meets Expectations for current stage of curriculum [refer to OTA Program Curriculum Design] → On target
3. Exceeds Expectation for current stage of curriculum [refer to OTA Program Curriculum Design] → Considered a role model by others

Lifelong Learning Behaviors				
				Rationale:
Is attentive and participates in all learning activities	1	2	3	
Follows written and verbal directions	1	2	3	
Prioritizes tasks effectively	1	2	3	
Manages time to meet demands	1	2	3	
Seeks clarification and assistance at an appropriate level	1	2	3	
Demonstrates resourcefulness – seeks and utilizes available resources to meet needs	1	2	3	
Able to problem solve in new or challenging situations	1	2	3	

Is prepared for projects, presentations, and SL/FW sessions	1	2	3	
Seeks out new and further learning experiences	1	2	3	
Responds appropriately to constructive feedback	1	2	3	
Interacts effectively with others	1	2	3	
Demonstrates consideration for the needs of others	1	2	3	
Does own share of work as a part of group	1	2	3	
Open and receptive to new ideas	1	2	3	
Shows flexibility- able to change approaches and responses as situation requires	1	2	3	
Enthusiastic and productively engages in learning experiences	1	2	3	
Works cooperatively with others	1	2	3	
Deals with conflict in a professional manner – respectfully addressing concerns directly with individual(s) involved, appropriately following chain of communication	1	2	3	

Communication and Interpersonal Skills				
				Rationale:
Uses non-judgmental language	1	2	3	
Uses respectful language and appropriate tone of voice when interacting with others	1	2	3	
Demonstrates active listening techniques	1	2	3	
Non-verbal communication ( eye contact, body language, affect, facial expression, etc.) is consistently appropriate	1	2	3	
Handles disagreements with others in a respectful and tactful manner	1	2	3	
Written work, assignments, and communications are neat, professional. Proper grammar, spelling and punctuation are used	1	2	3	
Uses professional language and tone in written communication with others	1	2	3	
Contacts faculty and classmates in a timely manner when initiating and/or responding to emails	1	2	3	

**Section 2 -Yes/No scale. A Yes requires 100% compliance. If rating the student NO, a rationale is required to justify this rating.**

**Use specific examples.**

Rate the following: Y = Yes (100% compliant)

N = No (falls below 100% compliance)

Personal Responsibility, Safety and Ethics			
			Rationale:
Wears neat, clean and appropriate clothing for setting/situation	Y	N	

Exhibits good hygiene (hair, body odor, breath, and fingernails are clean; no lingering odor of cigarettes or other tobacco products; no excessive perfume, aftershave or makeup; tattoos and piercings are concealed)	Y	N	
Adheres to OTA program policy re: attendance and promptness for all classes and FW	Y	N	
Comes to class, lab and FW prepared (completes assigned readings and activities, etc.)	Y	N	
Submits assignments on time (including Health Compliance and Fieldwork forms)	Y	N	
Uses technology appropriately (cell phones, tablets, social networks)	Y	N	
Follows through with commitments and responsibilities	Y	N	
Accepts responsibility for own actions	Y	N	
Demonstrates emotional control/handles personal situations appropriately: Personal situations do not interfere with participation in classes, groups, or fieldwork	Y	N	
Aware of and adherent to safety precautions in class, lab and FW	Y	N	
Demonstrates standard precautions in all encounters	Y	N	
Footwear, clothing and accessories do not impede safe participation in activities	Y	N	
Prepares environment for safe activity engagement	Y	N	
Cleans up after self and maintains a clean, safe workspace	Y	N	

Demonstrates respect for the beliefs, values, and customs of others	Y	N	
Maintains the confidentiality of others	Y	N	
Follows NSCC's Academic Honesty policies	Y	N	
Follows OT Code of Ethics and Ethics Standards	Y	N	

We have reviewed the Student and Faculty Assessments of Professional Behavior.

An Action Plan is needed at this time [based on criteria outlined in policy and procedure]. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If Action Plan is warranted, due date for student to prepare action plan steps: \_\_\_\_\_

A formal Behavioral Learning Contract is warranted at this time [based on criteria outlined in policy and procedure].

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

## STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 1** – Review each category below and complete using the following rating scale to score each item. **If rating a student at a 1 or 3, provide a rationale to justify the rating. Use specific examples.**

4. Does Not Meet Expectations for current stage of curriculum [refer to OTA Program Curriculum Design] → Needs improvement
5. Meets Expectations for current stage of curriculum [refer to OTA Program Curriculum Design] → On target
6. Exceeds Expectation for current stage of curriculum [refer to OTA Program Curriculum Design] → Considered a role model by others

Lifelong Learning Behaviors				
				Rationale:
Is attentive and participates in all learning activities	1	2	3	
Follows written and verbal directions	1	2	3	
Prioritizes tasks effectively	1	2	3	
Manages time to meet demands	1	2	3	
Seeks clarification and assistance at an appropriate level	1	2	3	
Demonstrates resourcefulness – seeks and utilizes available resources to meet needs	1	2	3	
Able to problem solve in new or challenging situations	1	2	3	

Is prepared for projects, presentations, and SL/FW sessions	1	2	3	
Seeks out new and further learning experiences	1	2	3	
Responds appropriately to constructive feedback	1	2	3	
Interacts effectively with others	1	2	3	
Demonstrates consideration for the needs of others	1	2	3	
Does own share of work as a part of group	1	2	3	
Open and receptive to new ideas	1	2	3	
Shows flexibility- able to change approaches and responses as situation requires	1	2	3	
Enthusiastic and productively engages in learning experiences	1	2	3	
Works cooperatively with others	1	2	3	
Deals with conflict in a professional manner – respectfully addressing concerns directly with individual(s) involved, appropriately following chain of communication	1	2	3	

Communication and Interpersonal Skills				
				Rationale:
Uses non-judgmental language	1	2	3	
Uses respectful language and appropriate tone of voice when interacting with others	1	2	3	
Demonstrates active listening techniques	1	2	3	
Non-verbal communication ( eye contact, body language, affect, facial expression, etc.) is consistently appropriate	1	2	3	
Handles disagreements with others in a respectful and tactful manner	1	2	3	
Written work, assignments, and communications are neat, professional. Proper grammar, spelling and punctuation are used	1	2	3	
Uses professional language and tone in written communication with others	1	2	3	
Contacts faculty and classmates in a timely manner when initiating and/or responding to emails	1	2	3	

**Section 2 -Yes/No scale.** A Yes requires 100% compliance. **If rating the student NO, a rationale is required to justify this rating.**

**Use specific examples.**

Rate the following: Y = Yes (100% compliant)

N = No (falls below 100% compliance)

Personal Responsibility, Safety and Ethics			
			Rationale:
Wears neat, clean and appropriate clothing for setting/situation	Y	N	



Exhibits good hygiene (hair, body odor, breath, and fingernails are clean; no lingering odor of cigarettes or other tobacco products; no excessive perfume, aftershave or makeup; tattoos and piercings are concealed)	Y	N	
Adheres to OTA program policy re: attendance and promptness for all classes and FW	Y	N	
Comes to class, lab and FW prepared (completes assigned readings and activities, etc.)	Y	N	
Submits assignments on time (including Health Compliance and Fieldwork forms)	Y	N	
Uses technology appropriately (cell phones, tablets, social networks)	Y	N	
Follows through with commitments and responsibilities	Y	N	
Accepts responsibility for own actions	Y	N	
Demonstrates emotional control/handles personal situations appropriately: Personal situations do not interfere with participation in classes, groups, or fieldwork	Y	N	
Aware of and adherent to safety precautions in class, lab and FW	Y	N	
Demonstrates standard precautions in all encounters	Y	N	
Footwear, clothing and accessories do not impede safe participation in activities	Y	N	
Prepares environment for safe activity engagement	Y	N	
Cleans up after self and maintains a clean, safe workspace	Y	N	

Demonstrates respect for the beliefs, values, and customs of others	Y	N	
Maintains the confidentiality of others	Y	N	
Follows NSCC's Academic Honesty policies	Y	N	
Follows OT Code of Ethics and Ethics Standards	Y	N	

We have reviewed the Student and Faculty Assessments of Professional Behavior.

An Action Plan is needed at this time [based on criteria outlined in policy and procedure]. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If Action Plan is warranted, due date for student to prepare action plan steps: \_\_\_\_\_

A formal Behavioral Learning Contract is warranted at this time [based on criteria outlined in policy and procedure].

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS: ACTION PLAN**

Concerning behavior	Desired behavioral outcome(s)	Specific action steps to achieve desired outcomes	Review of outcomes with date(s)

Concerning behavior	Desired behavioral outcome(s)	Specific action steps to achieve desired outcomes	Review of outcomes with date(s)

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF ACTION PLAN [YELLOW COLUMNS]

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### REVIEW OF OUTCOMES [GREEN COLUMN]

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

## APB - BEHAVIORAL LEARNING CONTRACT

for  
[student]  
[date]

As a condition of continued enrollment within the OTA Program, this behavioral learning contract is established. This learning contract is developed based on the Assessment of Professional Behaviors (APB) policy and combines the criteria of the OTA Program's policies along with the specific behavioral expectations necessary to maintain continued enrollment in the OTA Program in accordance with policies published in the current OTA Student Handbook.

[Student], due to the serious nature of your professional behavior(s), this behavioral learning contract has been established outlining the expectations for your continued participation in the OTA Program. You must consistently demonstrate behaviors expected of OTA students as outlined in the Assessment of Professional Behaviors along with current OTA Program Student Handbook and course syllabi. In particular, you must consistently:

- Meet professional behavior expectations by scoring at least a 2 (meets expectations) or YES by faculty on each item of the Assessment of Professional Behaviors form  
  
\*\*\*Upon further rating of 1 (not meeting expectations) by faculty on any item in Section 1 of the Assessment of Professional Behaviors form and/or upon further rating of NO by faculty in Section 2 of Assessment of Professional Behaviors form, you will be dismissed from the OTA Program.
- Follow the APB Action Plan you established in collaboration with your Academic Advisor and OTA Department Chair to enhance your performance.  
  
\*\*\*Upon evidence of not consistently following this Action Plan, you will be dismissed from the OTA Program.
- Meet the academic grade requirement of each course you are enrolled in with a grade of "C" (minimum of 73) or higher and/or fieldwork grade requirement of "pass"

It is recommended that you utilize the OTA Tutor, Student Support and Advising Center and Accessibility Services as needed for assistance in meeting these expectations.

From this point forward, any demonstration of behavior that is not in compliance with this behavioral learning contract and/or failure of any academic coursework or fieldwork will be considered grounds for your dismissal from the OTA Program.

In addition, behaviors not in compliance with other program policies and expected professional behaviors [as published in the NSCC Student Handbook, OTA Student Handbook, course syllabi, OTA Lab Safety Manual, Fieldwork objectives and performance evaluations, and/or as instructed by the OTA faculty, AFWC, FW Supervisor(s) and Department Chair] will be considered accordingly and may also result in your dismissal from the OTA Program.

Your signature below indicates that this behavioral learning contract has been reviewed with you by your Academic Advisor and the OTA Department Chair, and that you are aware of the conditions of your continuation in the OTA Program as well as the consequences of your behavior.

---

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

Academic Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

OTA Department Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

### POLICY REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

Attendance and promptness are mandatory for all classes and fieldwork in order to meet the requirements for competency. Attendance and promptness will be monitored and documented (correlated to the Assessment or Professional Behaviors Policy and Procedure).

1. An **excused absence and an excused tardy\*** from class is one in which the student has planned and given advance notice to the instructor or the student notifies the instructor by phone or email the morning of any unplanned absence or tardy (or prior to scheduled class). Student must personally notify the instructor for each course in which he/she will be absent or tardy.
2. An **excused absence and an excused tardy\*** from field placement/experience is one in which the student has planned and given advance notice to the field supervisor/educator and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator or the student notifies the field supervisor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator the morning of any unplanned absence or tardy.
3. An **unexcused absence or unexcused tardy** from class or field placement is one in which the student fails to follow the excused absence and excused tardy policy.
4. Students are allowed a **maximum of 1 excused absence** from OTA courses that meet 1x per week; a **maximum of 2 excused absences** from OTA course that meet 2x per week; and a **maximum of 3 excused absences** from OTA courses that meet 3x or more per week. With each additional absence beyond the allowable limit, 5 points will be deducted from the student's final grade. If a course meets 2x over the same day, the absence will be counted as one. Please see more specific attendance policy information for fieldwork published within the Fieldwork Attendance and Promptness Policy on next page.
5. Each **unexcused absence** and each **unexcused tardy** will result in an automatic 5 point deduction from the student's final grade.
6. A tardy student is considered tardy if he/she/they arrives to class or FW after the instructor/fieldwork educator has taken attendance or leaves before the class/field experience officially ends.
7. A tardy student is expected to enter and/or exit the classroom in an undistruptive manner. Faculty will dismiss the student if entrance/exit is in any way disruptive to the class and dismissal will be considered an unexcused absence.
8. Students are allowed a **maximum of 1 tardy** from OTA courses that meet 1x per week; a **maximum of 2 tardiness** from OTA course that meets 2x per week; and a **maximum of 3 tardiness** from OTA courses that meet 3x or more per week. With each additional tardiness beyond the allowable limit, 5 points will be deducted from the student's final grade. If a course meets 2x over the same day, each meeting is separate. Please see more specific tardy information for fieldwork published within the Fieldwork Attendance and Promptness Policy on next page.
9. If tardy or absent, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain all information missed.

\*An **excused absence** includes any reason for which a student misses class and/or fieldwork including illness, appointment, car trouble, childcare, etc. with appropriate notification to the instructor/AFWC, faculty.

**NOTE: Serious and/or extenuating circumstances that interfere with compliance to above policies must be discussed with the instructor and/or academic fieldwork coordinator in advance to avoid penalty.**

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

### FIELDWORK ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS POLICY

[Specific policy requirements in addition to program policy noted on page 72 of this handbook]

1. The student must complete the required number of fieldwork hours as evidenced by course requirements. Pre-placement orientations are not included as fieldwork hours.
2. Students must follow FW Educator's schedule and are not permitted to request a change in supervisor's schedule.
3. Tardiness is unacceptable. The student must arrive on time and remain onsite or within fieldwork experience setting following established schedule, assuring all required tasks are completed before leaving the site/setting. Repeated tardiness is sufficient cause for suspension and/or termination and failure in Fieldwork Experience.
4. If the student is unable to report to the Fieldwork setting/site at the required time, tardy or absent, then he/she must notify the Fieldwork educator at least one half (1/2) hour prior to that required time, and **MUST NOTIFY THE ACADEMIC FIELDWORK COORDINATOR (AFWC) THAT SAME DAY**.
5. It will be the responsibility of the student to arrange make-up time with the Fieldwork Supervisor/Educator. Make-up time must be completed as soon as possible after the absence at the convenience of the Fieldwork educator. All make-up time must be completed in order to successfully pass each fieldwork experience.
6. Upon the first unexcused absence from a Level II fieldwork session, the student will immediately be placed on a learning contract. The student will continue in the fieldwork experience but must adhere to all components of the learning contract. If the student fails to abide by the learning contract, he or she may be terminated from the fieldwork experience (and receive a failing grade for the Level II FW course).

\*An "UNEXCUSED ABSENCE" occurs when a student misses an entire fieldwork session:

1. without prior approval of the Fieldwork educator and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.
- OR -
2. without personally and directly notifying the Fieldwork educator and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

**NOTE: Serious and/or extenuating circumstances that interfere with compliance to above policies must be discussed with the instructor and/or academic fieldwork coordinator in advance to avoid penalty.**

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

**CLINICAL/FIELDWORK CANCELLATION POLICY**

1. If mandatory college closing (classes cancelled) is required prior to the start of scheduled clinical/fieldwork, the student will not be required to attend clinical/fieldwork for the duration of the cancellation.
2. If mandatory college closing (classes cancelled) during the day/evening, after the student has arrived at clinical/fieldwork site, the student is required to complete assigned procedures prior to leaving the site. The student must ensure patient safety is not compromised and documentation is completed.
3. If mandatory college closing (classes cancelled) is required, the student may have to make up hours/time in order to fulfill program requirements (per program policy).
4. If classes are not cancelled, but there is questionable weather, the student will use their own discretion as to their ability to travel safely to and from clinical/fieldwork site. Should the student decide that travel is not prudent, they are to follow the program's attendance policy regarding absence from clinical/fieldwork.
5. Students may attend clinical/fieldwork on holidays that are not typically observed by health care agencies (i.e. Evacuation Day, College Professional Day, Patriot's Day, and Bunker Hill Day) or any other day at the program's discretion.
6. Students may access the college adverse weather/emergency closings by:
  - calling the college adverse weather hotline at (978) 762-4200
  - accessing the college website
  - local television and radio stations

This policy should be communicated to all clinical affiliates and to all students.



**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
(referred to as "College" below)

**CLINICAL/FIELDWORK WAIVER FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (student name), a student at North Shore Community College enrolled in a Health Professions Program, understand and agree that I am fully responsible for the cost of any physical, emotional, or property injury resulting from my transportation, safe conduct to and from the Clinical Agency for/or my participation in clinical activities and thus, will in no way hold the College or faculty/staff member responsible for any injuries and/or losses incurred during transit or while participating in any clinical activities including but not limited to medical and dental expenses incurred as a result of my participation in this program; and, further, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the said College against any and all claims, damages and liabilities arising therefrom.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROGRAM (Please circle the Program you are enrolled in):**

Medical Assisting

Nurse Education

Occupational Therapy Assistant

Physical Therapist Assistant

Practical Nursing

Radiologic Technology

Respiratory Care

Surgical Technology

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's consent if the student is under 18 years of age:

\_\_\_\_\_

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**POLICY REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS**

1. Completion of **all** assignments (papers, reports, projects, evaluation forms, tests etc.) are a mandatory requirement of the OTA Program to meet standards set forth by ACOTE (Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education). They are due on the date specified by the classroom instructor, academic fieldwork coordinator and/or field supervisor.
2. Late assignments will automatically be deducted 25 points beginning 1 minute after the due date/time and for each consecutive 24 hour period beyond the assigned due date/time. Assignments not submitted within 4 days of the due date will receive a ZERO. If a student requires additional time for an assignment due to *extenuating circumstances*, this must be agreed upon by instructor and student prior to the due date. Instructors do their best to provide timely feedback on assignments to students. Unapproved extended time or late submission of an assignment delays the instructor's ability to complete timely grading.
3. If a student is absent (with an excused absence) on a test day, he/she must make arrangements with the instructor to take the test on or before the next class day. If the test is not made up by the next class day, the grade for that test becomes a zero. Make up tests may be different or may include an alternative assignment.
4. Online tests must be completed during the activation period for which the test is set.
5. Online tests not completed and submitted within the activation period will result in a zero.
6. Any test missed by an unexcused absence will automatically be graded zero.
7. Students under academic accommodations will work collaboratively with faculty to take each test on the test date scheduled, making arrangements to begin and/or end test within scheduled class time. Failure to do so will result in a zero.
8. All students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policies of the college with respect to assignment and test completion as well as the OTA Program Honor Code published within the OTA Student Handbook. Dishonest academic behavior includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement (Students will utilize and follow APA format and will need actual citation if one is required. APA resources are provided on the OTA Program Site in Blackboard). It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. This would also include material that is obtained from the computer (NSCC Student Handbook). Students will complete an academic integrity pledge acknowledging the honesty and plagiarism policy and procedures. Any student in violation of the policy will receive a ZERO for the test/assignment and be referred to the OTA program Department Chair and Dean of Health and Human Services with no exceptions.

9. The OTA Program expectations are consistent with the ethical code of the profession and, as such, consider cheating a serious offense, which may result in **immediate dismissal** from the program. Refer to the NSCC Student Handbook and OTA Program Student Handbook.
10. Test questions are constructed by the instructor and, therefore, are the property of the instructor. Major tests will be accessible for students to review, but not to keep. Students can access completed tests during faculty office hours throughout the semester and/or during scheduled time frames.

**\* Serious and extenuating circumstances that interfere with compliance to above policies must be discussed with the instructor in advance to avoid penalty.**

**\*NOTE: The OTA Program faculty collects student samples of classroom assignments and tests as evidence of meeting accreditation standards established by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE).**

### **GRADES AND PASSING CRITERIA FOR OTA COURSES**

A student must complete all OTA courses with a 73% "C" or better grade or a "pass" grade for OTA204 and OTA208 [Level 2 Fieldwork courses are pass/fail]. Although a "D" is generally considered a passing grade by the college, a "D" is not a passing grade for an OTA Program course.

Receiving a failing grade ("C-", "D" or "F") in an OTA Program course will prevent a student from progressing on to the next sequence of courses. This interruption in course/program sequence requires the student to follow the OTA Program's Readmission Process and Procedures. The student should also keep in mind that the receipt of a course grade below a "C" may not be transferred for credit into a four-year college program of study.

### **GRADING POLICY FOR CREDIT COURSES**

A 4.0 (93-100)	C 2.0 (73-76)
A- 3.7 (90-92)	C- 1.7 (70-72)
B+ 3.3 (87-89)	D+ 1.3 (67-69)
B 3.0 (83-86)	D 1.0 (63-66)
B- 2.7 (80-82)	D- 0.7 (60-62)
C+ 2.3 (77-79)	F 0 (below 60)

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records containing relevant information pertaining to a student's admission, enrollment and achievement in the OTA Program (copy of submitted health records, acknowledgement forms, waiver forms, liability insurance, fieldwork performance evaluations, readmission forms, etc.) will be

maintained in a secure file within CastleBranch/Sentry MD and/or the OTA Department Chair's office or secure digital repository.

This record will be maintained for five (5) years after a student's program completion/graduation. After five years, the student's program file will be securely disposed. Students are advised to maintain their own copies of information/documentation within their student program files. Final grades and credits for courses will be recorded on each student's official transcript and permanently maintained by the college.

## **ACADEMIC STANDING POLICY**

### **CRITERIA FOR GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

To be considered in good academic standing and to be making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate, a matriculated student must:

1. Maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.0 OR ABOVE, AND
2. Successfully earn 67% of credits attempted each semester. (Credits attempted are defined as credits enrolled at the end of the Add-Drop period.)

Please note: the criteria for maintaining financial aid eligibility is different. Please refer to the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress policy in the NSCC Student Handbook for further information

## **ACADEMIC SUSPENSION AND APPEAL PROCESS**

A student must meet certain criteria in order to be in good academic standing. Academic suspension is triggered when a student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) drops below a 2.0 or when a student fails to complete 67% of their attempted credits.

### **ACADEMIC STANDING POLICY:**

To be considered in good academic standing and to be making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate a student must:

1. Successfully earn 67% of credits attempted. (Credits attempted are defined as credits enrolled in at the end of the Add-Drop period.)
2. Maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.0 or above.

The **first** semester a student does not meet this criteria, he/she will be placed on academic probation and will receive a letter of notification. **Academic Probation** directs a student to meet with an advisor to review the student's academic progress and to discuss use of the College's student support and advising services in order to improve academic performance. A student who does not meet these criteria for **two** consecutive semesters will be placed on **Academic Suspension**.

### **ACADEMIC SUSPENSION PROCESS:**

1. At the end of each semester grades are entered and rolled.
2. A list of suspended students is run by Academic Affairs.
3. A suspension letter is emailed to each student alerting them of their suspended status and next steps to follow to appeal their suspension. This letter outlines the steps a student should take if they wish to appeal their suspension and return the following semester.
4. A SU hold is put on the student's account preventing them from registering and alerting them that they are suspended.
5. Student will use an Academic Suspension Appeal Form to let us know that they would like to appeal.
6. Note: Students may be required to reduce credit load down to no more than 7 credits, and have mandated support services that are appropriate to the given student's situation.
7. Academic Affairs expires the suspension hold and puts the student on probation for the following semester. An AC hold (advisor hold) is placed on the student's record preventing them from registering without meeting with an advisor. Once the student's CGPA goes above a 2.0 the AC hold can be removed.
8. Students who are denied are emailed a formal letter from the College with specific conditions needed in order to re-appeal at a later date.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

Students have the right to appeal the Academic Review Committee's decision to the Assistant Provost. This decision is a final decision.

### **ACADEMIC WARNING SYSTEM: EARLY AND MID- TERM ALERTS**

By the third week of the semester and again by mid-term faculty will report students who are not attending class and/or are having academic difficulty. Faculty may also submit on-line alerts at any point in the semester for students having difficulty in their classes. Students and their Academic Advisors registered for 15-week classes will be notified via email of early and mid-term alert reports and will be advised to take appropriate action.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, REFER TO THE ACADEMIC POLICIES FOR CREDIT PROGRAMS LOCATED IN THE CURRENT COLLEGE CATALOG AND STUDENT HANDBOOK.**

**NOTE: Active versions of the OTA Program must be completed so that graduates are prepared with current knowledge and skills for competent entry level practices as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. In addition, students are expected to complete all program requirements, including Level II Fieldwork, within 4 years of entering the OTA Program [unless disrupted due to natural disasters and/or state, national, or global health emergencies].**

## **REGISTRATION, ENROLLMENT, AND COMPLETION OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

All students are assigned an OTA program code upon acceptance to the OTA Program. Accepted students are required to attend the mandatory incoming student orientation(s) where representatives from the Enrollment Center, Student Financial Services, Division of Health Professions and Human Services, Human Resources and the OTA Program review the NSCC website, the course registration process in MyNorthshore, cost of attending NSCC, financial aid, health insurance availability, health and immunization requirements, CORI/SORI processes, study skills, professionalism and program specific information required to prepare students for engagement in the OTA Program.

Students who do not attend the mandatory incoming student orientation(s) may forfeit their enrollment in the OTA Program. And, accepted students who find themselves in situations where they cannot commit to enrollment in the OTA Program as planned must formally notify the OTA Department Chair in writing (letter or email) to request a program withdrawal or deferral. Students can only defer their acceptance once to the following year.

Information on current charges (tuition and fees, health insurance costs, etc.), payment options, financial aid and refund policies can be found on the college's Student Financial Services web page. All costs associated with attending NSCC are subject to change.

**NOTE:** Active versions of the OTA Program must be completed so that graduates are prepared with current knowledge and skills for competent entry level practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. In addition, students are expected to complete all program requirements, including Level II Fieldwork, within 4 years of entering the OTA Program [unless disrupted due to natural disasters and/or state, national, or global health emergencies]. OTA-coded courses that have been completed more than 4 years ago must be repeated in order to meet OTA program graduation requirements.

### **TRANSFER CREDIT**

Students wishing to transfer credits from other accredited academic institutions must meet the requirements and follow the procedure outlined on the Registrar Office web page [Transferring Courses into NSCC].

Authorized staff within the Enrollment Center conducts the official review for transfer credit of the general education course requirements within the OTA curriculum [CMP101, CMP102-150, PSY102, PSY204, BIO211, BIO212]. General education courses do not have a time limit for receiving transfer credit. However, students are expected to have a working knowledge of course content.

The OTA Department Chair conducts the official review of occupational therapy coursework for transfer credit. Occupational therapy courses have a four (4) year time limit in order to be eligible for transfer credit. In addition to the official transcripts, students must submit course syllabi, course assignments and related course materials so that a careful and complete assessment of previous coursework can be performed to assure the OTA accreditation standards, student learning outcomes/competencies and requirements of applicable OTA courses are met. When feasible,

contract learning experiences (formal course work) may be designed to combine with previous occupational therapy coursework for potential transfer credit.

### **CREDIT BY EXAMINATION**

Four of the six general education courses in the OTA program are eligible for credit by examination, either through CLEP or through NSCC's Department Exams. These include CMP101, CMP102, PSY102 and PSY204. Please access the Center for Alternative Studies and Educational Testing (CAS) webpage for further information and email [cas@northshore.edu](mailto:cas@northshore.edu) for further information.

### **STUDENT ADVISEMENT**

Each OTA student is assigned an OTA faculty member as an academic advisor. If a student has been assigned to a non-OTA faculty advisor, please bring this to the attention of the OTA Department Chair and the error will be corrected. The OTA Department Chair (or faculty advisors) will notify each student of his/her/their advisor assignment and advisory assignments will be posted on the OTA Program site within Blackboard.

The role of the advisor is to:

1. Review your degree evaluation,
2. Counsel you on course selection,
3. Review Assessment of Professional Behavior (APB) and related documents,
4. Make referrals for you to appropriate academic and student wellness and success services,
5. Develop an academic plan that is most appropriate for you; i.e., advising on the number of credits that you will likely be able to manage successfully, taking into account your other responsibilities with job, family, etc.

Office hours for the Department Chair and Faculty Members are posted outside their office doors and/or posted online within Blackboard and course syllabi. If you have a conflict with their schedules, you must bring this to the attention of the faculty member and an attempt will be made to provide for a more suitable time to meet.

**\*NOTE:** Students should meet with their primary OTA faculty advisor before altering any established course schedule (i.e. before withdrawing from a course, adding a course, etc.). Alteration of a schedule may interrupt the student's curriculum sequence and warrant readmission. Alteration of a schedule may also impact one's financial aid.

## **PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL**

A student may withdraw from the OTA Program at any time. Prior to taking action, it is in the best interest of the student to consult with his/her/their academic advisor and the Department Chair concerning withdrawal. To officially withdraw from the OTA Program, a letter or email containing reasons why the decision to withdraw was made must be addressed to the Department Chair. It is then the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from all registered courses. Withdrawal from courses can be conducted online through MyNorthshore or students can be assisted by staff in the Enrollment Center. Depending on the timing of a student's withdrawal, he/she/they may or may not be eligible for a refund. Please refer to the college's refund policy on the Student Financial Services web page.

## **COURSE WITHDRAWAL**

With the exception of Level II Fieldwork (OTA204 and OTA208) and other part of term courses, a student may officially withdraw from any full semester (15-week course) course before the twelfth week of the semester and receive a "W" grade. Withdrawal dates are posted to the college's academic calendar available on the web page. A STUDENT SHOULD MEET WITH HIS/HER/THEIR COURSE INSTRUCTOR AND OTA FACULTY ADVISOR FOR ADVISEMENT PRIOR TO WITHDRAWING FROM ANY COURSE. Failure to officially withdraw may result in an "F" grade; and withdrawal may affect academic standing and financial aid. Withdrawal from OTA courses will result in an interruption of a student's curriculum sequence which requires readmission. Please refer to the Readmission Policy and Specific Readmission Process and Procedures of the OTA Program in this handbook.

## **READMISSION POLICY**

### **COLLEGE POLICY:**

The following students must apply for readmission prior to registration in any given semester:

1. Students who have not been matriculated and enrolled in the College within the previous five years,
2. Students who have graduated from the College; and students in selective admission programs (Nurse Education, Physical Therapist Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Care, Medical Assisting Certificate, Veterinary Technology, Surgical Technician Certificate, and Practical Nursing Certificate) who have interrupted their sequence of professional courses with a course withdrawal, course failure, and/or semester stop out.

Students in Health Professions programs seeking readmission must meet current Program and College admission requirements, and follow the specific policies and procedures defined by individual programs\*. Readmission to health professions programs is not automatically guaranteed. If readmitted, students are permitted only one readmission to their program on a space available basis with approval by the Program Director/Department Chair.

**\* Individual Program policies and procedures are documented in program manuals/handbooks.**



## OTA PROGRAM READMISSION POLICY

In accordance with the college's readmission policy, all matriculated students have one opportunity to be readmitted to the OTA Program. Readmission will be based on academic and fieldwork performance, personal circumstances, documented plan for future success and space availability.

Depending on the circumstances described below, readmission to the OTA Program is completed through an internal process and procedures or through formal reapplication to the program following all steps outlined in the current OTA Application packet. The **internal process** of OTA program readmission is intended for students who individually drop a course during add/drop period, withdraw from a course, fail a course, or stop-out for a semester with advisor and department chair notification and/or recommendation. Students who switch options of study at any time during enrollment in the OTA program will also be required to engage in the internal readmission process.

Regardless of situation, students are permitted only one opportunity to engage in the internal readmission process. If granted readmission, students will be placed on a formal *Learning Contract* with *Action Plan* that will identify steps to be successful as well as define the performance expectations for the student and outline the conditions (student performances/behaviors) for which program dismissal may occur.

Internal readmission eligibility to the OTA Program is as follows:

1. Students who drop and/or withdraw from courses with advisor and department chair notification and/or recommendation in a single semester are eligible.
2. Students who fail one course in a single semester are eligible.
3. Students who engage in a semester stop-out with department chair approval are eligible.
4. Students who are advised by OTA faculty and department chair to reduce course load.

Internal readmission Ineligibility to the OTA Program is as follows:

1. Students who drop and/or withdraw from courses without advisor and department chair notification and/or recommendation **are not eligible.**
2. Students who fail 2 or more courses in a single semester are not eligible.
3. Students who are on a separate/previous learning contract when they fail a course are not eligible.
4. Students who fail a Level 2 Fieldwork course (OTA 204 or OTA 208) due to professional behaviors are not eligible.

If ineligible for internal readmission, students will be **dismissed** from the OTA program. Students wishing to return to the OTA program after being *dismissed* by the Department Chair must officially reapply to the program by following and completing all steps of the current OTA Application packet.

Students who are readmitted must meet current program requirements including technical standards, updated health forms, proof of health insurance, proof of AOTA membership, proof of required trainings/certifications, dependable transportation, etc. for participation in fieldwork. Students who have utilized their one opportunity for readmission (internal process or formal reapplication) will be terminated from the OTA program upon subsequent failure to comply with program policies and standards of performance or subsequent interruption in curriculum sequence including dropping a course during add/drop period, course withdrawal, course failure and/or semester stop out.

### **INTERNAL PROCESS AND PROCEDURES FOR OTA PROGRAM READMISSION**

A student not dismissed by the OTA Department Chair but who has interrupted his/her/their sequence of courses as designed in the option of study for which he/she initially enrolled (part-time, traditional or accelerated) by any of the following:

1. Dropping a required course [during add/drop period]
2. Course failure
3. Course withdrawal
4. Semester stop out
5. Faculty/department chair recommendation to reduce course load [steps 1 and 2 below are not required]

The formal internal readmission process and procedures **require** the student to initiate and complete **all** of the following steps:

1. Set up an initial meeting with the OTA Program Department Chair and faculty (those teaching designated courses) within 10 days of dropping a required course, a course withdrawal and/or failure and within one (1) month of the end of the “stop out” semester.
2. Submit a detailed letter addressing specific changes he/she/they will make and/or have made to enhance academic success if readmitted to the OTA Program within 10 days of meeting with Program Director and faculty.
3. Participate in a follow-up meeting with the OTA Department Chair to discuss the determination of his/her/their readmission status and conditions of continued enrollment (including a formal *Learning Contract with Action Plan* developed by the OTA Department Chair) within 10 days of receipt of letter.
4. Complete and submit the OTA Program Readmission Form to Enrollment Services.

Any student granted readmission after failing or withdrawing from a Level II Fieldwork course (OTA204 or OTA208) must agree to, sign and follow an individual learning contract in order to engage

in a repeat fieldwork experience. Cumulative development of practice skills and consistency of performance is expected of Level II Fieldwork students to demonstrate competence as an entry-level occupational therapy assistant. Therefore, successful completion of the repeat Level II Fieldwork will be determined from a combination of the student's performance as rated by the fieldwork educator and the student's performance related to the specific items identified on his/her *individualized* learning contract as rated by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

Failure of the student to comply with any aspect of this learning contract may result in dismissal and/or failure of the [repeat] Level II Fieldwork experience, regardless of satisfactory performance reported by site supervisor. The learning contract for a repeat Level II Fieldwork experience will be based on the following categories of performance and be *individualized* for each student based on his/her previous fieldwork performance.

1. Fundamentals of Practice – Ethics and Safety
2. Professional Behaviors – Self-Responsibility; Work Behaviors; Interpersonal Skills; Time Management; Response to Feedback
3. Communication – Verbal and Non-Verbal
4. OT Intervention – Planning and Implementation
5. Communication with AFWC - Each student will be responsible for submitting weekly email updates to the OTA Program Academic Fieldwork Coordinator regarding his/her/their performance relative to each specific item noted on his/her *individualized* learning contract. The specific due date(s) and time for submission of weekly updates will be documented on the student's *individualized* learning contract.

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM  
OTA PROGRAM INTERNAL READMISSION FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ has interrupted his/her/their sequence of courses with a: (please circle)  
Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| • Course(s) dropped during add/drop period | Course(s) Number/Title _____ |
| • Course(s) withdrawal                     | Course(s) Number/Title _____ |
| • Course(s) failure                        | Course(s) Number/Title _____ |
| • Semester stop out                        | Reason for Stop-out _____    |
| • Faculty/department chair recommendation  | Reason _____                 |

Above action results in a switch of OTA Option of Study: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Option of study initially enrolled: Traditional Full-time [2 yr]      Part-time [3 yr]      Accelerated [14 month]

Option of study after above action: Traditional Full-time [2 yr]      Part-time [3 yr]      Accelerated [14 month]

After engaging in the internal readmission process and procedures defined by the OTA Program, the following decision with related implications is determined (please circle):

- Readmission granted – Final opportunity to continue in the OTA program. Enrollment and Student Records office will file notice of this one readmission in student's record and maintain OTA program code.
- Readmission denied – Unable to continue in the OTA program. Program code will be changed to "unspecified", which may impact financial aid status. Student advised to consult financial aid counselor.

***By signing this form, I (student) understand the above decision. If readmission has been granted, I understand and agree to abide by the Learning Contract with Action Plan. I also understand that any further interruption in sequence of OTA courses (dropping a required course during add/drop period, course withdrawal, course failure, stop out, etc.) or behavior that is not in compliance with the established Learning Contract, Action Plan and/or program policies will result in program dismissal.***

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

OTA Program Department Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**APPLICATION TO GRADUATE**

In order for a student to graduate, an application to graduate form must be completed and submitted to the Registrar's office within the established/published timeframe. Application to Graduate forms are obtained from the Registrar's webpage and must be submitted online by the required deadline. After receiving the completed form, the Registrar's office will review the student's academic record and will respond to the student as to whether all courses required for graduation have been completed. Questions about Application to Graduate can be directed to [graduation@northshore.edu](mailto:graduation@northshore.edu).

**ASSOCIATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for a degree, all NSCC students must have: earned at least 60 hours of credit with CQPA of 2.00 or higher; completed at least 25% of coursework in residence at North Shore; fulfilled all requirements designated in the applicable active program requirements; met the particular detailed career course and grading requirements in the curriculum selected; and met all other specific requirements set by the College.

NOTE: Active versions of the OTA Program must be completed so that graduates are prepared with current knowledge and skills for competent entry level practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. And, students are expected to successfully complete all OTA program requirements, including Level II FW, within 4 years of entering the program [unless disrupted by a natural disaster or state, national and/or global health emergency]. OTA-coded courses that have been completed more than 4 years ago must be repeated in order to meet OTA program graduation requirements.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE REFER TO THE NSCC COLLEGE CATALOG AND STUDENT HANDBOOK.**

**COMMUNICATIONS, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE POLICY**

A student who wishes to discuss an issue of academic or professional concern should adhere to the following procedure:

1. The student should first have a discussion with the instructor who is responsible for the course in which there is a concern. Most circumstances that arise can and should be addressed with the instructor who is directly involved. Rarely, will situations occur that require more than a calm, open, and professional discussion between the student and his/her/their instructor. If another faculty member is contacted before any discussion is had with the instructor in question, then the student will be referred, immediately, back to the instructor for the appropriate discussion/resolution.

2. If, after approaching the faculty member with whom there is a concern, the student does not believe that the issue has been resolved in a reasonable and satisfactory way, the student may discuss and record it with the person who supervises the instructor. (See the organization chart and OTA Conflict Resolution/Complain Form on the following pages.) The supervisor will attempt to gather all necessary information from all available sources in order to determine the appropriate resolution of the problem.

Allegations of mistreatment related to the abridgment of a student's rights can be made as a complaint or grievance. A student who wishes to file a formal complaint or grievance against the OTA Program or any faculty/staff member within the program must follow the grievance procedures outlined in the College's Student Handbook.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR OTA PROGRAM

DEAN OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND HUMAN SERVICES

**Lori A. Vinci**

[lvinci@northshore.edu](mailto:lvinci@northshore.edu)

HPSS-319 - Extension 4160



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

OTA Program Director/Department Chair

**Sauna Manthorn**

[smanthor@northshore.edu](mailto:smanthor@northshore.edu)

HPSS-322 – Extension 4168



<b>Kayla Wolf</b> <a href="mailto:kwolf@northshore.edu">kwolf@northshore.edu</a>	<b>Julie Hamlin</b> <a href="mailto:jhamlin02@northshore.edu">jhamlin02@northshore.edu</a>
Full time Faculty	Academic Fieldwork Coordinator
HPSS-337	HPSS-337
Ext 4236	Ext 4174

<b>Joyce Brandon</b> <a href="mailto:jbrandon01@northshore.edu">jbrandon01@northshore.edu</a>
Adjunct Faculty Part Time Core Faculty
HPSS-337
Ext 4236

OTA Program Tutor, Lynne Kulakowski: [lkulakow01@northshore.edu](mailto:lkulakow01@northshore.edu)

Note: All offices are located within the Health Professions Faculty Suite accessed through HPSS-318.

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION/COMPLAINT FORM**

Name of Person(s) Presenting Complaint:

Date Complaint presented to OTA Department Chair or Dean of Health Professions and Human Services:

Reason for Complaint:

Recommended Action [include mutually agreed upon resolution measures and/or referral to Grievance Officer] :

Signature of Person(s) Presenting Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of OTA Program Department Chair or Dean: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**  
**ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES**

**1. ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Refer to Student Advising on page 82.

**2. ACADEMIC COMPUTING LABS**

The academic computer labs available in the Health Professions and Student Services building and the Berry building provide computers and internet access for students. Qualified lab assistants are available to assist students. More information is available at

[www.northshore.edu/technology/labs/](http://www.northshore.edu/technology/labs/)

**3. ACADEMIC TUTORING**

[tutoring@northshore.edu](mailto:tutoring@northshore.edu)

In addition to free tutoring services available on the Danvers and Lynn campuses for general support, OTA students have access to a free OTA-specific tutor 4-6 hours per week. Information regarding the OTA tutor is posted to the OTA program site in Blackboard.

**4. BLACKBOARD LEARN**

Blackboard Learn is NSCC's learning management system used to support face-to-face courses as well as to deliver hybrid and online courses within the OTA program. Through Blackboard Learn, students can see announcements from instructors, access learning materials and supplemental resources, participate in online discussions with other students, submit assignments, take quizzes and tests, and view grades. Students that have questions or need assistance with Blackboard Learn can contact [bbhelp@northshore.edu](mailto:bbhelp@northshore.edu)

**5. LIBRARY**

The NSCC library is located in the Berry building on the Danvers campus with a second location on the Lynn campus. The library contains a robust collection of textbooks and required course materials, available either physically within the Library or online. All students are supported by knowledgeable staff within the libraries. More information is available at

<http://library.northshore.edu> OTA students are provided an orientation to the College's Library including online access and resources established within the *Therapy LibGuide*.

**6. CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE STUDIES AND EDUCATIONAL TESTING- CAS**

The Center for Alternative Studies and Educational Testing (CAS) provides services to students seeking admission to NSCC and those who wish to accelerate their progress toward a degree or certificate. The Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) exam required for the OTA application is offered within CAS. In addition, students may opt to take a CLEP exam or Departmental Exam to fulfill general education requirements within the OTA curriculum including Composition 1 and 2, General (Introductory) Psychology and Human Growth and Development. Students with extended testing time approved through Accessibility Services as well as students approved for make-up exams/tests will be proctored through CAS. Please access more information at

[www.northshore.edu/cas](http://www.northshore.edu/cas)

## **7. ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

Students with disabilities who anticipate the need for accommodations are encouraged to visit [www.northshore.edu/accessibility](http://www.northshore.edu/accessibility) and follow the outlined procedure to request services at least six weeks before the start of classes. Accessibility Services provides academic accommodations and services for students with disabilities so that they have equal access to programs and activities. Through collaboration, Accessibility Services works toward assisting students in maximizing their academic potential, while also promoting self-awareness, self-advocacy, and ultimately, personal responsibility and independence. Assistive technology is available to qualified students within the College's assistive technology labs.

For more information on Accessibility Services, please visit the website:

[www.northshore.edu/accessibility](http://www.northshore.edu/accessibility)

Email: [accessibility@northshore.edu](mailto:accessibility@northshore.edu)

TTY Danvers Campus 978-762-4140 Lynn Campus 781-477-2136

### **OTA DEPARTMENT RESOURCE LIBRARY**

As a supplement to the main Library, a collection of Occupational Therapy resources is maintained in the OTA laboratory. Students may check out any of these resources with a faculty member. Also, the Department Chair and Faculty have resources in their offices that may be loaned to students with permission. Students are encouraged to independently seek out resources and utilize various resources for their academic and professional development. A networked computer is available for student use in the laboratory. Educational software can be shared among all programs within the Division of Health Professions and Human Services. Access to the College Library can be gained from this computer. All students are expected to abide by the College's Computer Use Policy found in the College Catalog and Student Handbook.

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **AOTA**

AOTA - The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200

North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929

Phone: Members 1-800-SAY-AOTA (729-2682); Non-members 301-652-6611

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

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is a national professional organization, established in 1917 for the purpose of advancing and improving the quality of occupational therapy service. Student membership is an OTA Program requirement and applications for membership are available on the AOTA website.

The annual conference of the AOTA is held each spring, usually in April during OT Month. At the conference, the Association of Student Delegates (ASD) provides the mechanism for the expression of student concerns and offers a way whereby students can have effective input into the affairs of the

AOTA. The Pre-conference meetings have one representative from each educational program in the country; the representative is identified as the Delegate.

The OTA Program encourages student involvement in AOTA and the ASD. The NSCC student body of the OTA Program elects a representative each year to be the ASD Delegate. Financial support is received from the SOTA Club as available. The chosen Delegate is required to be a student in Good Academic Standing and whom is not currently on an Action Plan or Behavior Learning Contract. The Delegate may have to share the financial costs of travel and housing.

### **ACOTE**

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

c/o American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)

7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E

Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: 301-652-2682

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

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education is the accreditation agency for all entry level occupational therapy education programs including NSCC's OTA Program.

### **NBCOT**

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)

One Bank Street, Suite 300

Gaithersburg, MD 20878 Phone:

301-990-7979

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

The National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) is the independent national credentialing agency that certifies eligible persons as occupational therapists registered (OTR) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA). The NBCOT is not affiliated with the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). The mission of NBCOT is to serve the public interest by providing high standards for the certification of occupational therapy practitioners. NBCOT develops and administers the certification examination, based on current and valid standards that provide reliable indicators of competence for the practice of occupational therapy. Demonstrated continued competency attained through professional development units (PDUs) is required for recertification every three years. NBCOT outlines the criteria for which recertification is based.

### **MAOT**

Massachusetts Association of Occupational Therapy

57 Madison Road

Waltham, MA 02154 Phone:

781-647-5556 [www.maot.org](http://www.maot.org)

The Massachusetts Association of Occupational Therapy (MAOT) is the professional organization in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for those who practice and teach occupational therapy. Student membership is strongly encouraged and application forms can be found on the MAOT website.

## **SOTA**

All OTA students are considered members of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) Club focus on engagement and promotion of Occupational Therapy through the following goals:

1. Service to the college community
2. Service to North Shore or external community
3. Service to the profession of occupational therapy

The college officially recognizes the SOTA club within the Office of Student Engagement (OSE) and an OTA faculty member serves as the club's advisor. Student members elect officers and plan the club's activities. Active members and leaders of the SOTA club may qualify for college service awards. An awards ceremony is held each spring.

**NOTE:** All occupational therapy assistant students are expected to develop leadership skills during their enrollment in the OTA Program. Appreciation for all professional associations and membership within AOTA and MAOT (or other state OT association) contributes to leadership development. And, active participation in the SOTA Club demonstrates leadership and a student's commitment to service within the profession of occupational therapy.

## **OTA LABORATORY**

The Occupational Therapy Laboratory is used primarily for laboratory practice and for selected therapeutic activities and modalities. Occasional lectures to clarify procedures may be warranted. An OTA Lab Safety Manual is within the laboratory and each student is provided a copy of this manual through their lab courses in Blackboard. Each student must sign and submit the "Student Acknowledgement Page" indicating his/her/their agreement to abide by all safety information, policies and procedures. Faculty will train students in safety measures and appropriate use of laboratory equipment when the specific equipment is introduced and practiced within each laboratory course.

The kitchen and laundry facilities are used for therapeutic practice and problem-solving adaptations and modifications. The responsibility of the student is to make certain that all areas of the Lab are left clean and that the equipment used is put back in its appropriate storage place. Failure to maintain a clean and organized laboratory area will result in revocation of the student's use of the laboratory facility.

It is an expectation that students take advantage of open lab times to practice skills introduced in laboratory courses. Students are encouraged to use the laboratory beyond his/her scheduled class hours for practice of skills or to complete class assignments. The OTA Department Chair and Faculty have keys to the laboratory.

No items are to be removed from the laboratory unless permission is obtained from the OTA Faculty or the Department Chair. Students must sign out items and a faculty member must sign and confirm that the item was returned.

## **SIMULATION**

As part of laboratory experience, OTA students are required to fully participate in patient simulation scenarios designed to closely replicate the healthcare workforce environment, which will prepare students to perform required competencies and care for patients/clients. These scenarios are video recorded and viewed in debriefing sessions that allow for reflective learning, peer-to-peer learning, and evaluation by faculty/staff. In addition to human client actors used in simulation experiences, students are expected to respect and care for the high and low fidelity patient simulators as if they were live patients, as well as to respect their fellow classmates during scenarios and debriefing sessions.

## **STUDENT EMAIL POLICY**

North Shore Community College students are offered free student email accounts that can be accessed through "MyNorthshore." All OTA students are required to have a NSCC email account and internet access in order to engage in web supported courses within the OTA curriculum. Computers are available on campus for student use as needed. Faculty will utilize student NSCC email accounts only for all email communications.

Students are expected to check their NSCC email accounts on a daily basis during the academic year and three times per week when on breaks, including summers and winter intersessions. Students are required to professionally return emails and respond within 24-36 hours. **Students are also expected to utilize their NSCC email accounts when communicating with faculty and fieldwork educators/educators or others affiliated with the OTA Program.**

1. All email communications are considered a form of clinical writing in the OTA Program. Emails should be regarded with the same professionalism as if you are providing clinical documentation.
2. Students are required to check email every day. A good strategy is to set aside scheduled times during the day that you check and respond to emails.
3. Per the NSCC OTA Program Policy, emails should be acknowledged within 24-36 hours of receipt. This requirement is in alignment with clinical practice and professional standards. Additionally, email communications is formally assessed on Assessment of Professional Behaviors (please see student handbook for reference).

### **ALL EMAILS SHOULD BE FORMATTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Always include a subject that provides clarification to your email
2. All emails should have an introduction using appropriate titles. Example "Hey", "Howdy" etc., are not acceptable or professional. "Hi" "Hello" "Dear" or simply referring to the person by name, are acceptable.

3. The opening paragraph should include your information. How do you know the recipient, and your basic inquiry.
4. The second paragraph (or body of the email) should contain details. You will elaborate on your question or your comment.
5. Last paragraph, or sentence, contains your call to action. What are you asking of the recipient? Are you asking for clarification? What are you asking them to send in response to your email? Are you seeking to confirm information?
6. All emails need a salutation or closing. You can use “Best” “Thank you” “Very Respectfully” etc.
7. If you are questioning if a salutation or introduction is appropriate, do not use it. Formality is always better in professional emails
8. Professional writing is the voice of your email that will sound differently to how you speak. Read the body of the email out loud and make sure it sounds appropriate.
9. Do not use slang, emojis or acronyms that are otherwise non-professional communication or conversational in nature.

#### **AN EXAMPLE THAT FOLLOWS THE EMAIL POLICY:**

Subject: Clarification about Chapter 11

Hi Dr. Wolf,

My name is Nick Wolf, I am a student in your OTA 101 class. I am reaching out regarding a question about the assignment associated with Chapter 11 in the Wagenfeld text.

For the assignment associated with chapter 11, you have asked us to answer the questions on page 110. Do you want us to answer questions 5 and 10, or 5 through 10? If you could clarify that would be appreciated.

Thank you for your time.

Best,  
Nick Wolf

#### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

The policy of the OTA Program requires ALL students to adjust their cell phone to “vibrate” or “silent” mode PRIOR to entering class unless otherwise instructed by the faculty member to engage in a specific learning activity. If your cell phone doesn’t have this feature, you are required to turn your cell off while class is in session. If an instructor allocates time for a break, you may access/make calls during this time only.

Under NO circumstances should you be text messaging or using your cell phone for some form of entertainment while class is in session. One warning will be given. Any further violations will result in a five (5) point deduction from your final grade. Violations during an examination, test or quiz will result in an automatic zero for that exam/test/quiz and may result in program dismissal. Violations of cell phone policy during fieldwork may result in termination from fieldwork and failure of the course for which the fieldwork experience is affiliated.

### **CAMPUS SAFETY**

The Campus Police and Public Safety Department coordinates campus safety and security in response to medical emergencies, fire/fire alarm emergencies, public safety emergencies and environmental emergencies.

Students are directed to the Campus and Public Safety web page for further information related to emergency situations and procedures for campus evacuation.

[www.northshore.edu/safety](http://www.northshore.edu/safety)

In the wake of recent campus shootings across the nation, the college has added an Emergency Number to report potentially violent situations. This emergency number is (781) 477-2100 and students should program this number into their cell phone. Emergency extension 6222 is the College's version of 911 and can be accessed from any college phone. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to enroll in the college's Emergency Messaging System to be notified of campus emergencies. Students can enroll in this system in within the Emergency Notification System app in MyNorthshore.

### **NSCC HEALTH PROFESSIONS COVID VACCINE AND BIVALENT BOOSTER POLICY**

This policy applies to all NSCC health profession students enrolled in clinical programs. In 2022, field placement, clinical and practicum site agencies began requiring COVID bivalent boosters consistent with CDC recommendations for healthcare settings. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health also began requiring COVID vaccine boosters for long-term care facilities.

Accordingly, students in health professions programs are required to have proof of a COVID vaccination series and one booster. For students who did not complete the COVID immunization series prior to April 23, 2023, one Bivalent COVID immunization is required.

This policy may be updated as guided by the Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

Written proof of documentation status must be submitted by established deadlines for students to participate in clinical. These requirements are in addition to other state immunization requirements for healthcare program students.

## **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)**

The OTA Program may conduct research to contribute to the knowledge of occupational therapy education and practice. In order to implement a research study involving human subjects, the OTA Program follows the college's policies and procedures outlined by its Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure appropriate standards are met in the treatment of human subjects. Information about the college's IRB and the policies and procedures used for human subject research can be accessed from the NSCC website at <http://www.northshore.edu/irb/>. When engaged in research studies, the principal investigator and/or co-investigator(s) will orient students to the IRB principles and process, following NSCC's IRB policies and procedures.

## **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE**

### **CERTIFICATION**

Successful completion of, and graduation from the academic program, are separate processes from professional certification as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. The professional credential, COTA is obtained through national certification. Upon successful completion of all course requirements (Academic and Fieldwork) of NSCC's OTA Program, students are eligible to sit for the national certification examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Each student must personally complete the certification application process detailed on the NBCOT web site at <http://www.nbcot.org>.

THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCESSING THE CANDIDATE HANDBOOK AND COMPLETING ALL STEPS OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS. All fees are posted in the NBCOT candidate handbook.

The certification exam application contains "character" questions to ensure that all OT practitioners meet standards of professional conduct. All candidates are required to answer these character questions and a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the certification examination or attain state licensure. The Qualifications and Compliance Review Committee of NBCOT makes a determination to accept or deny the candidate's opportunity to take the examination. NBCOT will conduct an early determination review upon request and applicants/students wishing clarification of their potential exam eligibility status are encouraged to contact NBCOT directly. Students wishing more information can access the NBCOT website at [www.nbcot.org](http://www.nbcot.org).

All certification examinations are administered "on demand" via computerized testing at designated test sites. Testing sites are posted on the NBCOT web site and it is the student's responsibility to schedule their own testing after receiving NBCOT's Authorization to Test letter.

### **LICENSURE**

In addition to the national certification, the OTA who plans to work in Massachusetts must apply for state licensure. As with national certification, a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to attain state licensure.

Massachusetts's licensure applications are processed by Professional Credential Services, Inc. (PCS), P. O. Box 198689, Nashville, TN 37219-8689. Information and applications can be accessed via the web at



[www.pcshq.com](http://www.pcshq.com). Requests to PCS can be made by telephone at (877) 887-9727 or by email at [otlicense@pcshq.com](mailto:otlicense@pcshq.com).

Licensure laws govern the practice of occupational therapy in Massachusetts and are overseen by the COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE - BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, 1000 Washington Street, Suite 710, Boston, MA 02118-6100.

The board's phone number is (617) 701-8605. The website is [www.mass.gov/orgs/board-of-allied-health-professionals](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/board-of-allied-health-professionals) and email contact is [alliedhealth@mass.gov](mailto:alliedhealth@mass.gov)

The Massachusetts licensure application procedure involves completing the form and submitting a fee to PCS (current fees are posted within the application). For proof of completion of the OTA Program at NSCC, an official transcript must accompany the application and indicate the graduation date and the degree granted. A temporary license may be granted initially (as long as candidate is waiting for results or is deemed eligible by NBCOT to take the certification examination) with transference to a permanent license upon receipt of successful (passing) examination results.

To practice as an OTA in other states, the graduating student should contact the appropriate licensing bureau within those states.

### **TRANSFER OPTIONS**

There is the possibility for an OTA graduate to transfer to a professional level OT program. Professional entrance into the field of occupational therapy as an occupational therapist requires minimum of a master degree. NSCC has an official transfer agreement between NSCC's OTA Program and the OTA-OT Bridge programs at:

Bay Path University (OTA to OT Bridge Program)  
New England Institute of Technology (OTA to OT Program)  
Salem State University (OTA to OT Program)

### **POLICY FOR WAIT LISTED AND DEFERRED OTA APPLICANTS**

Any **wait-listed** or **deferred** applicant to the Occupational Therapy Assistant (**traditional**) program will only be guaranteed admission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant (traditional) program for the following year.

Any **wait-listed** or **deferred** applicant to the Occupational Therapy Assistant (**traditional**) program wishing to be considered for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (**accelerated**) option, must submit updated college transcript(s) with proof of Occupational Therapy Assistant (**accelerated**) option pre-admission course work completed by the application due date published in the OTA application packet for that desired year. These applicants will then be evaluated along with all new Occupational Therapy Assistant (**accelerated**) option applicants for the twelve available spots [acceptance into the accelerated option of study is not a guarantee].

### **STUDENT REQUEST FORM FOR REFERENCE LETTERS**

Students requesting a letter or reference (including electronic references from a potential employer, licensing board, or scholarship/award committee, etc.) from a faculty member or fieldwork educator may be asked to complete this form as part of the request. As a professional courtesy, requests for a reference letter should be submitted two weeks before due date.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Requested: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date for Letter: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Reference (Job/Position/Scholarship, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Academic History and GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Qualities and Attributes: \_\_\_\_\_

Accomplishments: \_\_\_\_\_

Awards/Scholarships: \_\_\_\_\_

Work, Volunteer, and/or Extra-Curricular Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

SOTA Club Involvement: \_\_\_\_\_

MAOT Member: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

AOTA Member: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** Please comment on any other aspect you would like considered for inclusion in this reference letter – use back of page or attach additional information to this form.

*Please check one:* I have included additional information: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

## **STUDENT AGREEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT HANDBOOK**

It is the responsibility of each student to read the OTA Program Student Handbook. Failure to read the information contained in the Student Handbook will not be considered an excuse for non-compliance or lack of understanding.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program may change policies or revise information due to institutional and/or program circumstances. When indicated, students will be notified by the Department Chair. The OTA Student Handbook is posted to the OTA web page and to the OTA Program's Group site in Blackboard.

Each student is required to read, understand, and agree to comply with all policies stated in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Student Handbook as well as all policies and procedures published in the college's Student Handbook. An acknowledgment form is provided on the next page and must be signed by the student to indicate their agreement. This signed form will be maintained in the student's program record. A student who does not submit his/her/their acknowledgement form to the Department Chair via CastleBranch and/or designated OTA site in Blackboard by the established due date will be restricted from class and fieldwork participation until submitted.

**NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**2024-2025 STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received, reviewed, and understand the content in this Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Student Handbook. I am aware of and accept my responsibility to both the college and the program in regard to rules and regulations governing student performance. As a student of North Shore Community College's OTA Program, I understand that I am to maintain the attitudes and behaviors reflected in these guidelines. My signature below indicates my commitment to abide by the policies and procedures within this handbook. My signature also indicates consent for selective copying of my work throughout the curriculum for program and accreditation review only.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Printed Name