



Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Handbook 2026

**A SUPPLEMENT TO THE
NORTHLAND COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Erica Young, MBA, OTR/L, CLT, Program Director
Geraldyn Peterson, BS, COTA/L Fieldwork Coordinator

Updated Fall 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Description of Program	3
Mission Statement	3
Vision Statement	3
Philosophy Statement	4
Curriculum Design	8
Certification and credentialing requirements	12
Student Learner Outcomes	12
Program Plan	13
Prerequisites	14
Fieldwork	16
Course Descriptions	17
Admission Procedures	21
Eligibility for Advancement	22
Graduation Requirements	23
Program Standards	23
Probation and Dismissal	24
Advising related to coursework	24
Class Policy	25
Attendance Policy	25
Grievance Policy	26
Program Policies	27
Emergency, Evacuation, and college closures	28
Technical Standards	28
Student Outcomes	31
Student Statement of Understanding	32

NORTHLAND COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is a two-year Associate Degree major designed to prepare students for employment as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. Classes are provided in an in-person delivery model on the East Grand Forks, MN campus.

Occupational Therapy (OT) is the use of purposeful and meaningful activity with individuals who are limited by physical, psychosocial, or developmental disabilities, injuries, or illness; poverty; cultural differences; or the aging process to maximize independence, prevent dysfunction, and maintain health. OT encompasses evaluation, treatment, and consultation. Specific OT services include: teaching daily living skills; developing perceptual-motor skills and sensory integrative functioning; developing play skills and prevocational and leisure capacities; designing, fabricating, or applying orthotic and prosthetic devices or adaptive equipment; using specifically designed activities and exercises to enhance functional performance; administering and interpreting tests such as manual muscle or range of motion tests; and adapting environments for the optimal performance. These services are provided individually, in groups, or through social systems.

Career opportunities include: Acute and long term care facilities, schools, community agencies and activity directors. At the present time there is a need for OT personnel in rural settings. This major also promotes the idea of professionalism and continuing education among OTA's so that they are made aware of their personal influence and responsibility in the health care field.

This major includes general education and technical education courses leading to an Associate of Applied Science degree. The curriculum includes basic human sciences, the human development process, specific life tasks and activities, understanding health and illness, and occupational therapy theory and practice. The major includes supervised fieldwork experiences. The Level II fieldwork experience must be completed within 18 months of completion of OTA courses.

ACCREDITATION

The associate-degree-level occupational therapy assistant program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number is (301) 652-6611 and its Web address is www.acoteonline.org. Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, all states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.

MISSION STATEMENT

Northland Community and Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (Northland OTA) supports the Mission of Northland Community and Technical College (Northland) through innovative leadership in OTA education, and provision of a quality learning environment that prepares learners with work and life skills to graduate as competent entry level Occupational Therapy Assistants.

VISION STATEMENT

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program will be highly valued for providing exceptional occupational therapy education to learners in partnership with local and regional healthcare facilities.

PHILOSOPY STATEMENT

The Northland Community and Technical College (NCTC) Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program's Philosophy of education is consistent with the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) philosophy of education statement, mission statement of Northland Community and Technical College (NCTC, 2019), the mission and philosophy statements of the NCTC OTA program, the Occupational Adaptation frame of reference developed by Janette Schkade and Sally Schultz (1992).

The philosophy of the program is designed to support the NCTC Mission, NCTC OTA mission, and AOTA's Philosophy of Occupational Therapy Education.

Northland Mission is "Northland is an innovative leader in higher education, preparing all learners with work and life skills that advance personal well-being and regional prosperity. Northland will be highly valued for providing exceptional education that transforms lives and strengthens the communities we serve.

Northland Community and Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (Northland OTA) supports the Mission of Northland Community and Technical College (Northland) through innovative leadership in OTA education, and provision of a quality learning environment that prepares learners with work and life skills to graduate as competent entry level Occupational Therapy Assistants. The philosophy of the program is designed to support the Northland Mission, Northland OTA mission, and AOTA's Philosophy of Occupational Therapy Education.

The learning philosophy of the OTA Program is consistent with the published philosophy of Occupational Therapy Education (2018): Students are viewed as occupational beings who are in dynamic transaction with the learning context and the teaching-learning process. The learning context includes the curriculum and pedagogy and conveys a perspective and belief system that include a view of humans as occupational beings, occupation as a health determinant, and participation in occupations as a fundamental human right. Education promotes professional and clinical reasoning; critical thinking; cultural understanding; and the integration of professional values, theories, evidence, ethics, and skills. This approach will prepare practitioners to collaborate with clients to achieve health, well-being, and participation in life through engagement in occupation (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2014b). Occupational therapy education is an ongoing process that shapes a practitioner's professional identity.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Northland Community and Technical College philosophy of education is guided by the AOTA 2018 Philosophy of education believing that the structured learning environment guided by the best practice of scholarship of teaching needs to be occupation centered and evidenced based. A variety of meaningful teaching methods are provided that are interactive including active learning approaches, self-reflection inter-professional and intra-professional activities, and experiential learning. The occupational therapy education process emphasizes continuing critical inquiry in order that occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants be well prepared to function and thrive in the dynamic environments of a diverse and multicultural society, using the power of occupation as the primary method of evaluation, intervention and health promotion."

The Occupational Adaptation model discusses the influence of intrinsic motivation and the use of everyday life activities (occupations) on adaptation and human development. It states occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupation, including its interpersonal and environmental components may be used to prevent and mediate dysfunction, and to elicit maximum adaptation.

Northland OTA Program Education Philosophy:

View of Humanity

Humans are occupational beings who have an innate drive to achieve mastery. The desire to achieve mastery together with the environments demand for mastery results in various occupational challenges that are encountered throughout the lifetime. Individuals, as they encounter these challenges, respond in a manner that leads to adaptation. Humans are active occupational beings whose development is influenced by their occupations. Therefore, occupation defines the individual's needs as well as the strategies required to promote adaptation. The adaptation process is influenced by the feedback individuals receive from the environment. When the feedback is integrated and the individual responds to occupational challenges in a way that meets environmental demands, they achieve relative mastery and learning has taken place.

View of the Learner

The occupation of learning is a complex adaptive response comprised of infinite interactions between student abilities and the context in which learning occurs. Students enrolled in the OTA program are viewed as occupational beings with a desire to master the requirements of becoming entry level occupational therapists. The OTA Faculty are charged with developing learning environments that engage students in goal attainment. Students come with a desire to learn. We believe that they should be provided occupational challenges based on the demands of the environment. We believe that students learn and retain information best when these challenges are taught in the context in which it will be implemented. The student should be allowed to practice the acquired skills and knowledge through producing responses to the challenges. We believe that students should receive feedback from the environment regarding their responses to the occupational challenges. They need to be given an opportunity to reflect on the feedback and integrate that feedback prior to producing their final responses.

We believe that students have a desire to learn and come with a variety of learning experiences and expertise. We have a full range of students from recent high school graduates to adults who are deciding to pursue a different career path in later adulthood. Thus, students enter the program with a variety of experiences, but they are novices when it comes to the occupational challenge and readiness skills. They use their life experiences to bridge this gap.

We believe that students of all ages are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. Learners should be taught how to think, not what to think. Learners should be able to make their own decisions and modify their approach based on the context of the situation through practical application of problem-solving skills. We believe that students learn best by critically thinking about the problem, analyzing the sequence of the problem and desired outcome, and learn through doing the task and subsequent feedback.

We believe students should initiate the learning process through asking questions, discussing past experiences with other students to inform new learning within the classroom setting, and utilize technology to assist them in seeking knowledge to unanswered questions. We believe that students are motivated to learn when the topic/and or concept can be readily applied to the "real world" context. Interests are piqued when students are able to relate it to an aspect of their lives and can freely interact and discuss this fact with others. We believe that students learn best from each other and when the instructor serves as a facilitator and guide, rather than an instructor that directs and controls the learning process.

We believe that group tasks, group discussion, investigative and discovery learning coupled with an integrated curriculum and cooperative learning are the best approaches for life-long learning. The role of the faculty would be that of an organizer and facilitator, guiding the learning process and providing feedback to the

learner to assist the learner in modifying their approach for a successful learning outcome. Activities that incorporate the visual, kinesthetic, and affective learning styles of the student tend to be more powerful methods of teaching. Methods such as role-play, simulation, and experiential learning assist the learner in the ability to integrate concepts learned in the classroom to useful skills needed to solve problems in context. The connection of mind, body and spirit during this process occurs through analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the individual's learning.

Philosophy of Instruction

To fulfill the NCTC OTA Philosophy we provide a quality learning environment through a variety of teaching methods used to provide challenges which are appropriate to the student's level of skill and interest. Emphasis is placed on active learning, where students have an opportunity to practice skills in multiple learning contexts, preparing them for client-centered, occupation based practice. The students are provided an opportunity to practice those skills, be given feedback from various sources and allowed to integrate the feedback into their behaviors. Occupation based therapy interventions are introduced in the classroom and students further integrate it through participation in four Level I fieldwork experiences in a practice environment, and in emerging practice areas in lab portions of courses

Interactive relationships between students and faculty and collaborative learning methods allow for learning experiences which contribute to the student's knowledge, self- awareness, and professional development. The faculty help students adapt by building on their knowledge and experience in ways that develop, refine, reinforce student's understanding of humans as occupational beings, participation as a fundamental right, and occupation as a determinant of health across the lifespan. Faculty and students become active collaborators through the educational process. students adapt as they build on previous knowledge and beliefs to formulate new knowledge and skills.

A variety of educational and leadership opportunities are provided for the students to learn to effectively communicate and work intra and inter professionally with other professionals within NCTC and in the outside community. Inter professional and intra professional partnerships are developed through assignments throughout the curriculum which assist students in working with others, develop role delineation awareness and conflict resolution through real life situations.

Evidence based practice is woven through-out the curriculum, so the students develop the skills needed to support their professional reasoning through-out their practice as an OTA. Educational methods are used that promote self-directed learning and employ adult learning principles. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own personal and professional development, role transition and to take responsibility for their learning. Students learn the importance of being active in Professional Associations by belonging to AOTA. There are guiding principles throughout the curriculum to foster strong professional values and ethics among all NCTC OTA graduates. The self-reflection process begins in the first semester with self-assessment of knowledge and continues throughout the curriculum. Students are provided feedback in both academic and fieldwork settings and encouraged to reflect on their own personal and professional development, role transition and to take responsibility for their learning.

Ethical reasoning in clinical based practice, advocates for Occupational Therapy, and needs of individuals and leadership skills are developed through fieldwork, experiential learning, case-based learning assignments and the OTA club.

The educational philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Program thus enhances the mission of the college and the program to prepare learners with work and life skills that advance personal wellbeing and provide exceptional education that facilitate personal and professional growth. We use this philosophy to guide our planning for what, how and when we teach content within the curriculum helps to shape how we evaluate student learning.

References:

American Occupational Therapy Association (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (3rd ed.). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68 (Supplement 1), S1-S48.

American Occupational Therapy Association Commission on Education (2017). Philosophical base of occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71(Suppl.2), 7112410045.
<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2017.716S06>

Schkade, J.K. & Schultz, S. (1992) *Occupational adaptation: Toward a holistic approach to contemporary practice*, Part 1. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 46, 829-837

Schkade, J.K. & Schultz, S. (1992) *Occupational adaptation: Toward a holistic approach to contemporary practice*, Part 2. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 46, 917- 926 (2020)

CURRICULUM DESIGN

Northland Community and Technical College OTA Program

Overview

The Northland Community and Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant (NCTC OTA) program's curriculum design is based on the 2018 Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (AOTA, 2018), the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (AOTA, 2014), the mission statement of Northland Community and Technical College (NCTC, 2019), the mission and philosophy statements of the NCTC OTA program (2019), the Occupational Adaptation frame of reference developed by Janette Schkade and Sally Schultz (1992), and the Facilitating Growth and Development Framework from Lela Llorens (1970).

Theoretical Constructs Underlying Curriculum Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

The 2018 ACOTE Standards are reflected through-out the NCTC OTA program curriculum, course objectives, and ongoing assessment of program quality. The occupational therapy practice framework influences the terminology utilized in explanation of course-work. The curriculum design reflects the mission of Northland Community and Technical College (NCTC) of providing a quality learning environment. The NCTC OTA mission and philosophy of providing a quality learning environment that prepares learners with work and life skills to graduate as competent entry level Occupational Therapy Assistants are interwoven throughout the courses. They are introduced in OTAC 1001 Intro to Occupational Therapy and continue throughout each course in the occupational therapy assistant program.

Facilitating Growth and Development Framework

Llorens believes that as the individual matures, longitudinal growth is experienced in each of the following areas; neurophysiologic, physical psychological and psychodynamic growth, and in the development of social language, daily living and socio cultural skills in a continuous process as they age. This matches the design of the Northland Community and Technical College OTA course content as more emphasis is placed on the beginning of the lifespan in the earlier courses and proceeds sequentially along the lifespan continuum increasing emphasis on the elderly in the later courses.

Occupational Adaptation

Occupational adaptation, a theoretical frame of reference, provides a conceptual framework for understanding the growth and development that occurs as the OTA student transitions into the role of the entry-level practitioner. As explained by Kramer, Hinojosa, and Royeen in *Perspectives in Human Occupation Theories Underlying Practice*. (2014)

“The occupational therapy adaptation process consists of a series of actions and events that unfolds as an individual is faced with an occupational challenge that occurs as the result of person/environment interactions within an occupational role. This process exists to enable the individual to respond adaptively and masterfully, that is, to meet both self-produced role expectations (internal) and environmentally produced role expectations (external). Occupational Adaptation consists of three elements: person, occupational environment and interaction of person and occupational environment. Each element is built on a constant that is invariably present as the person engages in occupation. These constants are the desire for mastery (person), the demand for mastery (occupational environment), and the press for mastery (interaction of person and occupational environment).”

For the purpose of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Northland Community and Technical College, mastery is defined as safe, competent, ethical, and professional performance of an entry-level occupational therapy assistant who is a generalist based on occupational therapy practice standards.

Students enter the program with a desire for mastery of the therapy process. The OTA program and the healthcare environment demand mastery in the occupational role of occupational therapy assistants. Physical, social and cultural aspects shape the role expectations of the work environment. Likewise, students bring sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial capabilities or readiness skills to each occupational challenge. As the students' progress through the program, the environmental demands increase.

Content, Scope and Sequence

The goal of Northland Community and Technical College education is to prepare OTA students to meet the occupational challenges of the healthcare environment by facilitating readiness skills and providing occupational challenges within a variety of environmental contexts. Foundational information in courses: OTAC 1001 Intro to Occupational Therapy, BIOL 2260 and BIOL 2262 Anatomy and Physiology I and II, OTAC 1155 Movement for Occupation, OTAC 1115 Disease and Disability Processes, ENGL 1111 Composition I, HLTH 1106 Medical Terminology, PSYC 2201 Developmental Psychology and PSYC 2215 Abnormal Psychology set the stage for interaction within a contextual framework. As students are introduced to kinesiology (OTAC 1155 Movement for Occupation), they also apply newfound knowledge to case studies and active learning activities. Likewise, they explore contextual factors relating to participation in occupations in the OTAC 1115 Disability and Disease Processes course.

Core skills and knowledge in occupational therapy are provided through the course OTAC 1130 OTA Foundations. This course sets the groundwork for the practical application courses as basic skills required for practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant are introduced. This course offers a variety of learning opportunities to support the different learning styles of the students. It provides intra and/or inter collaborative assignments to develop skills in human interactions and collaboration, setting the stage for team membership. Practicing within the AOTA practice standards and ethics are introduced during the foundational course so they can be integrated throughout the rest of the curriculum. They develop the basic skills needed for documentation and professional communication in OTAC 1146 OTA documentation and then utilize these skills in future courses. During these courses students develop an appreciation for the interactive relationship between activity demands, environmental context and adaptation.

Core courses are provided in a developmental sequence. All pediatric courses are offered in one semester with the same courses addressing adult issues offered in the next semester. Woven throughout these courses are evaluation, intervention planning and intervention implementation skills needed to practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. Physical health and psychosocial aspects go hand in-hand, however the program offers psychosocial classes and physical health classes separately to prepare the students to be successful in all settings. Students are educated on the importance of always looking at both physical and psychosocial aspects of an individual.

A cluster of courses taught over two semesters are specific to scholarship, community, psychosocial and physical restorative practice areas across the lifespan (OTAC 2025 Pediatric Psychosocial, OTAC 2125 Adult psychosocial, OTAC 2025 Pediatric Physical Health, OTAC 2125 Adult Physical Health, OTAC 2015 Pediatric Community Practice, OTAC 2125 Adult Community Practice, OTAC 2146 Scholarship Foundation and OTAC 2146 Scholarship Project). These courses provide students with further opportunity to appreciate the impact of readiness skills, environmental contexts on participation in occupation, and client-centered, occupation-based and evidence-based interventions through case studies and interactive learning opportunities. Inter and intra-professional collaborations are integrated throughout these courses to develop students professional and leadership skills and to increase their knowledge in other disciplines to support interdisciplinary team work. Client-centered, occupation-based therapy interventions are introduced in the classroom and students further integrate knowledge and skills and apply AOTA standards of practice and

ethics through participation in four Level I fieldwork experiences in a practice environment (OTAC 2025 Pediatric Physical Health, OTAC 2125 Adult Physical Health, OTAC 2035 Pediatric Psychosocial, OTAC 2135 Adult Psychosocial), and in emerging practice areas in lab portions of courses (OTAC 2015 Pediatric Community Practice and OTAC 2115 Adult Community Practice).

To prepare for the professional expectations of the OTA role, students enhance their skills in professional ethics, AOTA standards of practice, values, and responsibilities (OTAC 2155 Professional Topics). Students apply newfound skills and knowledge and refine their skills as lifelong learners as they select and prepare a professional presentation (OTAC 2146 Scholarship Project). The Level II fieldwork experiences provide the student an opportunity to actively experience the role of an occupational therapy assistant in the practice settings, further their competence in client centered, occupation based and evidence base practice and demonstrate professional ethics, AOTA standards of practice, values and responsibilities.

Self-reflection, a hallmark of Occupational Adaptation, is encouraged throughout the curriculum. In several courses, students analyze their own participation in occupation and the impact of readiness skills and environment on their adaptation process. Students also assess their knowledge and skills relative to learner outcomes written for each course. In addition, students participate in a self-assessment process each semester, where they analyze their strengths and weakness and receive feedback relative to the expectations of specific healthcare environments. Using summative data from this process, they write a professional development plan that outlines goals and activities for personal and professional development. They continue to update their professional development plan as they progress throughout the program and end up with a final plan for their future once they complete their final Level II fieldwork placement.

Evidence based practice is woven throughout the curriculum so the students develop the skills needed to support their professional reasoning throughout their practice as an OTA. Educational methods are used that promote self-directed learning and employ adult learning principles. Students learn the importance of being active in Professional Associations by belonging to AOTA and the OTA Club. Ethical reasoning in clinical based practice, advocates for Occupational Therapy, and needs of individuals and leadership skills are developed through fieldwork, case-based learning assignments and the OTA club.

Curriculum Threads

Personal and professional development - Guiding principles throughout the curriculum foster strong professional values and ethics among students. Self-reflection occurs throughout the program with assessment of knowledge and professional behaviors. Students are provided with feedback in both academic and fieldwork settings and encouraged to reflect on their own personal and professional development, role transition, and to take responsibility for their learning. This aligns with the NCTC OTA Program Student Learner Outcome: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior while displaying respect for diversity of culture, age and gender.

Lifelong learning – Educational methods are used that promote self-directed learning and employ adult learning principles. Students have the opportunity to engage in continuing education courses in Level I Fieldwork and in the OTA Program. This aligns with the NCTC OTA Program Student Learner Outcome: Student will demonstrate needed skills to be lifelong learners in the profession of Occupational Therapy.

Inter and Intra-professional Collaboration - A variety of educational and leadership opportunities are provided for students to learn to effectively communicate and work with other professionals within NCTC and in the outside community. Inter- professional and intra-professional partnerships are developed through assignments throughout the curriculum which assist students in working with others, developing role delineation awareness, and utilizing conflict resolution through real life situations. This aligns with the NCTC OTA Program Student Learner Outcome: Communicate effectively with consumers, families and other service providers.

Client Centered and Occupation Based Practice - Client centered and occupation-based therapy interventions are introduced in the classroom as students further integrate knowledge and skills and apply AOTA standards of practice and ethics through participation in four Level I fieldwork experiences in a practice environment, and in emerging practice areas in lab portions of courses. This aligns with the NCTC OTA Program Student Learner Outcomes: Perform entry-level competencies, based on occupational therapy practice standards. Implement occupation based interventions in collaboration with consumers, families and other service providers. Perform entry-level practice competencies safely and proficiently in traditional and emerging areas of practice.

Summary

The Northland Community & Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program emphasizes occupational skill development across the lifespan with multiple opportunities for students to experience/appreciate the impact of contextual factors on both adaptive processes and role transitions. Students are expected to acquire the tools to not only assist clients with adaptive processes across the lifespan, but also to develop the knowledge and skills needed to address occupational challenges inherent to the role of the occupational therapy assistant.

Students are provided with a variety of learning experiences to address multiple learning styles in order to create a quality learning environment. A variety of inter and intra-professional educational opportunities, and education in the AOTA professional standards and ethics are provided in order to promote lifelong learning. They are expected to be able to provide client centered, occupation and evidence-based practice as an entry level OTA while having a solid base in ethics and a commitment to lifelong learning.

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2018). 2018 Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards and Interpretive Guide. Retrieved from: <https://acoteonline.org/accreditation-explained/standards/>
- American Occupational Therapy Association (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (3rd ed.). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68 (Supplement 1), S1-S48
- Kramer, P., Hinojosa, J., & Royeen, C. (2017). *Perspectives in Human Occupation*. Theories underlying practice. (2nd ed). Philadelphia, PA: FA Davis.
- Llorens, L. A. (1970). Facilitating growth and development: The promise of occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 24, 93–101.
- Northland Community and Technical College. (2019). Mission Statement. Retrieved from: <https://www.northlandcollege.edu/about/>
- Northland Community and Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. (2019). Mission Statement.
- Northland Community and Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. (2020). Philosophy Statement.
- Schkade, J. K. & Schultz, S. (1992) Occupational adaptation: Toward a holistic approach to contemporary practice, Part 1. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 46, 829-837
- Schkade, J. K. & Schultz, S. (1992) Occupational adaptation: Toward a holistic approach to contemporary practice, Part 2. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 46, 917- 926 (2020)

CERTIFICATION AND CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the Occupational Therapy Assistant, Administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of the exam, the graduate will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, most states require licensure to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT certification examination. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.

STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program, a graduate will be able to:

1. Perform entry-level competencies, based on occupational therapy practice standards.
2. Implement occupation based interventions in collaboration with consumers, families and other service providers.
3. Perform entry-level practice competencies safely and proficiently in traditional and emerging areas of practice.
4. Communicate effectively with consumers, families and other service providers.
5. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior while displaying respect for diversity of culture, age and gender
6. Demonstrate needed skills to be lifelong learners in the profession of Occupational Therapy.

PROGRAM PLAN

AAS in Occupational Therapy Assistant (72 credits)

Fall Semester		
PSYC 2201 Developmental Psych	3 credits	
BIOL 2260 Anatomy and Physiology I	4 credits	
ENGL 1111 Composition I	3 credits	
HLTH 1106 Medical Terminology	2 credits	
OTAC 1001 Intro to OT	2 credits	
		14 credits

Spring Semester		
OTAC 1115 Disability/Disease Proc	2 credits	
OTAC 1130 OTA Foundations	4 credits	
OTAC 1146 OTA Documentation	1 credit	
OTAC 1155 Mvmt for Occupation	3 credits	
BIOL 2262 Anatomy and Physiology II	4 credits	
		14 credits

Fall Semester		
OTAC 2015 Ped Community Practice	2 credits	
OTAC 2025 Ped Physical Health	5 credits	
OTAC 2035 Ped Psychosocial	5 credits	
OTAC 2046 Scholarship Foundation	2 credits	
PSYC 2215 Abnormal Psych	3 credits	
		17 credits

Spring Semester		
OTAC 2115 Adult Community Practice	2 credits	
OTAC 2125 Adult Physical Health	5 credits	
OTAC 2135 Adult Psychosocial	5 credits	
OTAC 2146 Scholarship Project	1 credit	
OTAC 2155 Professional Topics	2 credits	
		15 credits

Summer and/or Fall semester		
*OTAC 2225 Physical Health FW	6 credits	
*OTAC 2235 Psychosocial FW	6 credits	
		12 credits

Total credits		72
---------------	--	----

OTA courses are offered one time per year in the sequence listed. OTA courses are not offered during summer sessions with the exception of Level II fieldwork.

*The Level II Fieldwork courses, OTAC 2225 and OTAC 2235, may be taken in the 2nd summer semester and/or the 3rd fall semester.

PREREQUISITES

Occupational Therapy Assistant Course Prerequisites

1. BIOL 2260 Anatomy and Physiology I is a prerequisite for
 - OTAC 1115 Disability/Disease Proc
 - OTAC 1130 OTA Foundations
 - OTAC 1155 Movement for Occupation

BIOL 2262 Anatomy and Physiology II is a co-requisite for

- OTAC 1155 Movement for Occupation
- OTAC 1115 Disability/Disease Proc

BIOL 2262 Anatomy and Physiology II is a prerequisite for

- OTAC 2025 Ped Physical Health

Rationale: Students must have a background in human anatomy and physiology before attempting to relate it to human actions in relation to occupational therapy intervention

2. HLTH 1106 Medical Terminology is a prerequisite for
 - OTAC 1115 Disability/Disease
 - OTAC 1130 OTA Foundations
 - OTAC 1146 OTA Documentation
 - OTAC 1155 Movement for Occupations

Rationale: Students need to understand medical terminology to understand the descriptions of occupational therapy terminology and intervention and apply it to documentation.

3. ENG 1111 – Composition I is a prerequisite for
 - OTAC 1146 OTA Documentation

Rationale: Students must have a basic understanding of written communication before applying it in combination with medical terminology to written medical documentation.

4. PSYC 2201 Developmental Psychology is a pre-requisite for
 - OTAC 1115 Disability/Disease Proc
 - OTAC 1130 OTA Foundations
 - OTAC 1155 Movement for Occupations

Rationale: A background in basic principles of psychology and human development is necessary to relate it to psychosocial function and dysfunction and Occupational Therapy intervention.

PSYC 2215 Abnormal Psychology is a co-requisite for

- OTAC 2035 Ped Psychosocial

PSYCH 2215 is a prerequisite for

- OTAC 2135 Adult Psychosocial

Rationale: A background in abnormal psychology is necessary to relate to psychosocial function and dysfunction and Occupational Therapy intervention.

5. OTAC 1001 Introduction to OT is a prerequisite for all OTAC courses.

Rationale: Provides knowledge of the OT field to assist students in deciding to enter the profession.

6. Completion, with a grade of C or better, all required courses in the first semester of the OTA Program are pre-requisites for
- OTAC 2015 Community Practice
 - OTAC 2025 Ped Physical Health
 - OTAC 2035 Ped Psychosocial
 - PTAC 2046 Scholarship Foundation

Completion with a grade of C or better, all required courses in the second semester of the OTA program are prerequisites for

- OTAC 2115 Adult Community Practice
- OTAC 2125 Adult Physical Health
- OTAC 2135 Adult Psychosocial
- OTAC 2146 Scholarship Foundation
- OTAC 2155 Professional Topics

Completion, with a grade of C or better, all required courses in the OTA program are pre-requisites for

- OTAC 2225 Physical Health Fieldwork
- OTAC 2235 FW Physical Health Fieldwork

Rationale: Each semester of courses builds on the semester before it. Knowledge of the prior semester information is essential for understanding of subsequent courses. Additionally, knowledge of OT concepts and competency in OT skills are necessary for students to enroll in Fieldwork courses. The student, in collaboration with the clinical supervisor, will be responsible for providing interventions with assigned individuals at fieldwork sites.

FIELDWORK

Fieldwork is part of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program curriculum and required to complete the Program. There are two levels of fieldwork:

Level I Fieldwork consists of four placements, two in a mental health setting and two in a physical health setting. The Level I fieldwork consists of five consecutive eight-hour days. Fieldworks may be completed entirely within community facilities, or it may be a hybrid of online simulation and completion within community facilities.

Level I fieldwork is completed during the first and second semester of the second year. The general objective of Level I Fieldwork is to provide an opportunity for students to observe the clinical conditions and treatment interventions discussed in class and to apply their academic knowledge in a clinical setting. These experiences are provided by qualified competent personnel, who may or may not be occupational therapy personnel.

Due to the rural location of NORTHLAND, the opportunities for Level I Fieldwork in the immediate area are limited. Efforts are made to locate Level I placements within driving distance of the campus. Driving distance is defined as 1 hour each way. However, the number of placements required makes it difficult for every student to be able to stay at home and go to their placement. Students may be placed on Level I fieldwork sites in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Montana. All students are responsible for their own housing, meals and transportation during Level I placement.

Level II Fieldwork consists of two eight-week placements or one sixteen-week placement. One placement will be in a traditional physical health setting with a physical health focus. The other may be in a traditional mental health setting, a pediatric setting, or a community setting, all with a psychosocial focus. Fieldwork may occur during the summer or the fall semester after completion of academic course work. Enrollment in the OTA program does not assure a Level II fieldwork site placement within the first three months of completing academic course work. Fieldwork must be completed within 18 months after completion of academic course work. Students may be placed on Level II fieldwork sites in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Montana. Other sites around the US may also be explored at the request of the student. All students are responsible for their own housing, meals and transportation during a Level II placement.

Level I and Level II Fieldwork Placements are selected in the spring semester of the first year. Students will have the opportunity to view the fieldwork books prior to the placement selection. Many students have obligations such as young children or a job that will hinder their ability to travel outside the driving area for a fieldwork experience. Due to the number of students in this situation and the limited number of placement sites, placements are selected through a lottery system. Students draw a number to determine the order for selecting a site. A new number is drawn for each placement selection. There is no guarantee a student will be placed at their preferred site.

Fieldwork experience is viewed as a vital, integral part of the educational process. The facilities which have agreed to accept students for fieldwork need to be recognized for the unique privilege that they are providing. Without their cooperation and interest, it would be impossible for the student to complete the program. It should also be pointed out that fieldwork supervisors are not given any extra compensation for supervising students. It is the willingness to share time and talents in support of the profession that is the sole reason for accepting students. Graciousness toward the staff and administration will serve to establish relationships that are mutually beneficial.

Level II Fieldwork **must** be completed within eighteen months of completing OTA academic courses. Please refer to the Fieldwork Manual for specific fieldwork policies and procedures

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

HLTH1106 *Medical Terminology* 2 2/0/0

This course covers prefixes, suffixes, and roots used to compose medical terms. The student learns to spell, pronounce, define, analyze, and formulate terminology related to body structure, disease, diagnosis, and treatment. Medical abbreviations are also included. Prerequisites: None

BIOL2260 *Anatomy & Phys I* 4 3/1/0

(Fulfills MNTC Area: 3) Students study the structure, function, and disease processes of cellular physiology, homeostasis, integumentary, respiration, lymphatics, immunity, heart, blood, joints, skeletal and muscular systems in the human body. Prerequisite: None.

BIOL2262 *Anatomy & Phys II* 4 3/1/0

(Fulfills MNTC Area: 3) This is an advanced course that acquaints students with the structure, function, and disease processes of nerve tissue, central nervous, endocrine, digestion, nutrition, urinary, reproduction, development and genetic systems in the human body.

ENGL1111 *Composition I* 3 3/0/0

(Fulfills MNTC Areas: 1, 2) The course is an introduction to college-level writing, focusing on descriptive, narrative, and expository essays. One essay will be a research paper using an appropriate documentation format. Prerequisites: ENGL0090, or appropriate writing assessment test score.

PSYC2201 *Developmental Psychology* 3 3/0/0

(Fulfills MNTC Area: 5) This class studies the physical, behavioral, and emotional development of the individual through the life span, with a focus on the theories and stages of development. This course is open to all students. Prerequisites: PSYC1101 or PSYC1105 are strongly recommended prior to enrolling in this course.

PSYC2215 *Abnormal Psychology* 3 3/0/0

(Fulfills MNTC Area: 5) This course provides an examination of major personality maladjustment and disorganization with primary emphasis on causes, diagnostic criteria, and treatment approaches. Prerequisites: PSYC1101, or PSYC1105, or instructor's permission.

OTAC1001 *Intro to OT* 2 2/0/0

This course provides an introduction to the profession of occupational therapy. The history, philosophical base and educational requirements, licensure and certification requirements of the profession are discussed. An introduction to basic concepts such as occupation in context to promote health and prevention, role of Occupational Therapist (OT) and Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) , professional associations, and professional relationships are covered. The course covers the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, the Occupational Therapy therapeutic process, activity analysis, adaptation and grading. Ethics and Standards of Practice will be introduced.

OTAC1115 *Disability/Disease Proc* 2 2/0/0

This course will examine normal development from infancy to adulthood. Emphasis will be on clinical conditions commonly referred to Occupational Therapy that interrupt development and engagement in occupation throughout the lifespan. Basic theories related to remediation of body structure and function through engagement in occupation will be discussed. Emphasis is placed on independent and active learning with emphasis on developing skills for lifelong learning. Students will be provided with opportunities to work collaboratively intra-professionally. Students will be evaluated and will evaluate themselves on their professional behavior throughout the semester to assist them in developing and enhancing their professionalism as a health professional.

OTAC2035 *Ped Psychosocial* 5 2/2/1

This course focuses on normal development and impairment of global and specific mental function for individuals from birth through early adulthood. Occupational therapy evaluation, treatment, and implementation, normal development and interruption of function with this age group will be explored. This population will be evaluated and occupation based evidence based practice will be identified and implemented. Roles of occupational therapy assistants (OTA) and the role of the Occupational Therapist (OT) in the Occupational Therapy process are covered. Emphasis is placed on independent and active learning with focus on developing skills for lifelong learning. This course provides an opportunity to work collaboratively inter-professionally and intra-professionally and to develop and enhance professionalism as a health professional. Students will be required to complete one level 1 fieldwork experience in a psychosocial setting

OTAC2046 *Scholarship Foundation* 2 2/0/0

This course will focus on the importance of scholarship in the occupational therapy profession and in evidence-based practice. This course will allow students to develop the skills necessary to locate appropriate professional resources, evaluate and interpret professional resources. This course requires students to apply this knowledge to the practice of occupational therapy in order to assist in developing their clinical reasoning skills. Opportunities for independent and active learning are provided throughout the course with emphasis on skills for lifelong learning. Involvement in the OTA Club is also a requirement of this course.

OTAC2115 *Adult Community Practice* 2 1/1/0

This course focuses on early adulthood through senescence populations engaging in occupations in context. The role of occupational therapy within community systems is addressed. Emerging roles of occupational therapy assistants (OTA) in the community are explore and the roles of the OTA versus the role of the Occupational Therapist (OT). Students complete labs in community practice and are required to articulate the role of occupational therapy to individuals in the community settings. Emphasis is placed on independent and active learning with focus on developing skills for lifelong learning. This course provides an opportunity to work collaboratively inter-professionally and intra-professionally and to develop and enhance professionalism as a health professional.

OTAC2125 *Adult Physical Health* 5 2/2/1

This course focuses on occupational therapy evaluation, treatment, and implementation from young adulthood through senescence. Normal development and interruption of physical function with this age group will be explored. This population will be evaluated, occupation based evidence based practice will be identified and implemented. Roles of occupational therapy assistants (OTA) and the role of the Occupational Therapist (OT) in the Occupational Therapy process are explored. Emphasis is placed on independent and active learning with focus on developing skills for lifelong learning. This course provides an opportunity to work collaboratively, inter-professionally and intra-professionally and to develop and enhance professionalism as a health professional. Students will be required to complete one level 1 fieldwork experience in a physical health setting with corresponding age group.

OTAC2135 *Adult Psychosocial* 5 2/2/1

This course focuses on normal development and impairment of global and specific mental function for individuals from early adulthood through senescence. Occupational therapy evaluation, treatment, implementation, normal development and interruption of function with this age group will be explored. This population will be evaluated and occupation based evidence based practice will be identified and implemented. Roles of occupational therapy assistants (OTA) and the role of the Occupational Therapist (OT) in the Occupational Therapy process are covered. Emphasis is placed on independent and active learning with focus on developing skills for lifelong learning. This course provides an opportunity to work

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Enrollment in occupational therapy assistant courses is limited due to the availability of fieldwork sites. Fieldwork credits are necessary to graduate. **Acceptance by the student services division of the Northland Community and Technical College - East Grand Forks- does not constitute acceptance into the major.** Students will need to complete a separate application for the OTA program. If the student is not selected to enroll in 1100 level OTA courses during the application process, he/she can reapply during the next application process. Applications are required to be submitted by October 1 for enrollment in the following spring semester.

The maximum enrollment in the OTA program is 24 students. There is no guarantee that the program will accept 24 students every application cycle. Upon review of qualified applications, the program will determine that year's acceptance. If cohort isn't full, we will continue to accept applications until full.

Admission will be based on the number of points scored by the individual student. Points will be scored based on courses completed, work/volunteer/observation experience, GPA, previous academic degrees, CPR certification, and TEAS score. The applicants who score the highest will be enrolled in OTA courses in the spring semester and the remaining eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list. A new application needs to be completed if an applicant wishes to be considered for the following year.

Students are admitted without regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law

Admittance criteria:

1. In order to apply, the student must have completed or be currently enrolled in the following courses: BIOL 2260 Anatomy and Physiology I, OTAC 1001 Introduction to OT, HLTH 1106 Medical Terminology and Psych 2201 Developmental Psychology. These courses must be completed prior to admittance to the OTA program, with a minimum letter grade of C.
2. The student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5
3. The student must have completed or be enrolled in the upcoming spring semester for BIOL 2262 Anatomy and Physiology II
4. The student must have completed and submitted an OTA application.
5. The student must have completed all developmental courses required by the program.
6. Immunization and health screening data must be complete and ready to submit to Castle Branch as per NORTHLAND policy 2182
7. The student must have completed the TEAS exam

The OTA program can accommodate twenty four students per year. If there are more than 24 applicants eligible for acceptance, admission will be based in order of OTA major declaration. The first 24 will be enrolled in OTA courses in the spring semester and those who remain will be placed on the list for the following year.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADVANCEMENT

1. Advancement from 1100 level courses to 2000 level courses in the fall semester of the OTA program requires the following:

- a) Completion of BIOL 2254 with a minimum letter grade of C.
- b) Have a current BLS certification.
- c) A copy of immunization records in accordance with NORTHLAND policy 2182.
- d) MN Criminal Background check completed through OTA program.
- e) National background check completed through NORTHLAND OTA program
- f) A letter grade of C or better in OTAC 1115, OTAC 1130, OTAC 1146, and OTAC 1155
- g) Completion of, or enrollment for fall semester in PSYC 2215.
- h) A TB test within one month of start of fall semester.

Failure to meet the above criteria may result in immediate withdrawal from OTA courses.

2. Advancement from 2000 level courses to 2100 level courses in the spring semester of the OTA program requires the following:

- a) Completion of PSYC 2215, with a minimum letter grade of C.
- b) Completion of OTAC 2015, OTAC 2025, OTAC 2035 and OTAC 2046 with a letter grade of C.
- c) Successful passing of Level I fieldwork component of OTAC 2025 and OTAC 2035.
- d) Have a current BLS certification.
- e) Up to date immunization records in accordance with NORTHLAND policy 2182.
- f) Current MN Criminal Background check completed through OTA program.

Failure to meet the above criteria may result in immediate withdrawal from OTA courses

3. Advancement from 2100 level courses to 2200 level courses (Level II Fieldwork) requires:

- a) Completion of ALL OTA program required academic course work with a minimum letter grade of C. Successful completion of all Level I fieldwork. A student will not be allowed to progress to Level II fieldwork with Incompletes or unsatisfactory grades in any required academic coursework.
- b) Have a current BLS certification.
- c) Up to date immunization records in accordance with NORTHLAND policy 2182.
- d) Current MN Criminal Background check completed through OTA program.
- e) Current National background check completed through NORTHLAND OTA program
- f) The period of time from completion of OTAC 2025 and 2035 to the start of OTAC 2225 and 2235 can be no greater than two years. If greater than two years, the academic courses, OTAC 2025, 2035, 2125 and 2135 must be repeated.
- g) No more than 15 months' time lapse between completion of academic coursework and the start of Level II Fieldwork

Failure to meet the above criteria may result in immediate withdrawal from OTA courses

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Upon successful completion of the program requirements, the student will be awarded an Associate of Applied Science degree.

1. A letter grade of C or above in all OTA program required academic courses.
2. Satisfactory rating on all fieldwork competency evaluations.
3. Satisfactory rating in final personal and professional evaluations.
4. A "Pass" in OTAC 2225, and OTAC 2235. (Level II fieldwork)

Enrollment in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, Northland Community and Technical College-East Grand Forks does not assure a level II fieldwork site placement within the first six months of completing academic course work. Level II Fieldwork **must** be completed within eighteen months of completing OTA academic course work.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

The student must achieve a grade of 2.0 "C" or above in each and every course required in the program in order to progress. If a student fails to achieve this in a course other than OTA and chooses to repeat the course, this must be accomplished before the student can progress further in the OTA curriculum.

OTA course academic grading:

100% - 93% = A

92% - 85% = B

84% - 75% = C required for passing

74% - 66% = D

BELOW 66% = F

Specific student expectations are defined for each course and noted on the course syllabus. Extra credit or bonus assignments in OTA courses may be used to raise a student's grade in a course at the discretion of the instructor. Under no circumstances will extra credit be allowed to raise a failing grade to one that is passing. Extra credit will be given to those with grades of 75% or higher.

PROBATION AND DISMISSAL

The faculty reserves the right to place on program probation or to recommend the termination of registration of any student whose performance in the classroom or the clinical situation is unsatisfactory. The following violations of ethical and professional conduct by the student will constitute **reason for dismissal** from the OTA program:

1. Release of confidential information regarding patients/personnel from the clinical settings or students from the classroom setting.
2. Discourteous treatment of patients, the public, employees at clinical settings or at the college or fellow students.
3. Insubordination which would include disrespect for faculty, facility personnel, other students in the program and patients.
4. Repeated tardiness and/or absenteeism
5. Falsification of any class records or assignments
6. Any dishonest practices demonstrated by the student which includes cheating on assignments and examinations.
7. Not following safety standards
8. Intoxication in class, field trips or clinical setting
9. Unsatisfactory ratings in personal/professional evaluations.
10. Unsatisfactory ratings in laboratory or fieldwork evaluations.
11. Failing an OTA course
12. Failure to follow OTA policies

The student has the right to petition OTA faculty to remain in the program. Guidelines utilized by the OTA faculty to assist in making their decisions regarding these types of petitions might include:

- Students successful completion of concurrent coursework
- Test taking proficiency vs. class work and written assignments
- Professional behavior and active participation in the program
- Extenuating circumstances (Such as death of a family member, illness. etc)

If unanimous affirmation is not received, the student will be dismissed from the professional program and his/her registration cancelled. The final departmental decision may be appealed by the student according to the appeal policies of the Northland Community and Technical College as outlined in the NORTHLAND Student Complaints and Grievances Policy (3240 and 3240P)

ADVISING RELATED TO COURSEWORK

Students who are considered pre-OTA (those students taking pre-requisites) will be advised by the college designated OTA program advisor. Advising related to coursework for those students admitted into the OTA program will be provided by the OTA faculty with assistance from the college designated advisor. Students must meet with OTA faculty for advising at least once a semester prior to enrolling in the next semester courses. Each faculty will have office hours posted on their door. In addition, use this relationship to discuss academic and career-related concerns, prepare schedules, seek additional resources and request direction. This relationship is essential to the growth and development of each individual student. All students must meet with the college designated OTA advisor each semester to review their Degree audit report (DARs) and to receive their access code for registration.

CLASS POLICY

1. Classes will begin promptly at designated times. Any student arriving after appropriate starting times will be marked tardy for official records.
2. Students will be expected to be attentive and cooperative in the classroom
3. No student will be allowed to leave class early unless class is dismissed by the instructor or by prior arrangements
4. Students will be expected to handle equipment and supplies responsibly in the lab and in the clinical setting.
5. No equipment or supplies will leave the lab without permission from program faculty.
6. Personal conferences will be scheduled as is required or at the student's request.
7. Academic class will follow the college calendar with holidays noted.
8. Level II fieldwork will follow the facility calendar. Holidays may differ from the college calendar.
9. Cell phones and pagers are not allowed in the classroom, lab, or on fieldwork.
10. The faculty will be available during posted office hours. Other appointment times may be set up through e-mail, in person or the telephone.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In case of unavoidable absence for a test or a presentation, the student must notify the instructor in person, by e-mail or by telephone prior to the exam or presentation to make arrangements for a make-up date. There are no exceptions to this rule. Individuals not contacting their instructor prior to the exam or presentation will receive a zero grade. There will be no opportunity for make-up drop quizzes or bonus points.

Attendance is critical in this program for successful completion of course and program. If you have more than 3 absences in a semester, it will be recommended that you withdraw from the program. Timeliness is also important in this program and profession. Each day you will be expected to sign in prior to the start of class time. If you are late more than 3 days, you will need to meet with the Director of the OTA program and submit a plan of correction to the OTA Program director.

Of course there are things that are out of our control that can lead to absences. Again, it is critical you contact the instructor prior to class, and special circumstances may be taken into account. Only absences that have been preapproved will be considered.

It is the student's responsibility to seek out the information from the instructor during an absence for any reason. Much of the lab material cannot be made up due to the interactive nature of the labs. Students may need to come to the lab and independently work on missed material before or after class hours.

Assignments turned in after the due date will have 5% of the possible total score deducted for each day the assignment is late. After one week from the due date the assignment will receive a zero grade. All assignments will need to be submitted regardless if it receives a grade.

In case of unavoidable absence from Fieldwork, both the Fieldwork Supervisor and Fieldwork Coordinator must be notified. For more information regarding absence or illness during fieldwork, please see the "Fieldwork Absence and illness policy" in the Fieldwork Manual

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Complaints or grievances occasionally develop. Please do not let a complaint continue for any length of time. Delay in solving the problem only causes more problems. Complaints should be discussed initially with the faculty member involved. If you are not comfortable approaching the person most directly involved, bring the matter to the attention of the OTA Program Director. If you are not comfortable approaching the OTA Program Director or you are not satisfied with the results after discussing it with the Program Director, bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Health, Nursing and Public Services. Northland Community and Technical College Student Handbook provides a link to 3240 Student Complaints and Grievances Policy which is a vehicle for addressing grievances.

It is the policy of the Northland Community and Technical College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program to work with students in finding a fair and just solution to problems that may arise, including grievances, questions, misunderstandings, or discrimination. Students are urged to first take their problems to the instructor of the course in which the problem occurred. If the student and instructor are unable to come to an agreement, the student can then take their issues to the OTA Program Director.

If the student and OTA Program Director are unable to come to an agreement, the student can write up their complaint/grievance on a Student Appeal form which can be found in Student Services. This complaint/grievance will be reviewed by one of two standing committees which will report their findings back to the student. Students may then appeal the decision or recommendation if desired.

A student may also appeal a final course grade. Grade appeals must be first directed to the instructor who assigned the disputed grade. If the informal process does not resolve the matter, the student may file a formal grade appeal in writing by using the Student Appeal form. This form must be submitted within 30 days of the term posting date to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office will forward the appeal to the appropriate Academic Dean for consideration. The dean will discuss the issue with the student and the faculty member to gather information and attempt to resolve the issue as appropriate. The dean, at his or her discretion, may also convene an ad hoc committee of faculty to advise him or her in the consideration of the appeal. The dean will make a decision regarding the appeal and notify all relevant parties in writing of the decision within 10 academic days of the receipt of the grade appeal. The student may appeal the dean's decision within 10 days, if there is additional relevant information that supports the appeal. The College cannot change the grade assigned by an instructor unless presented with clear and convincing evidence that the grading procedure was biased, did not reflect sound educational practices, or was inconsistent with the common course outline and course syllabus.

Student complaints regarding the program should be first addressed to the OTA Program Director. Unresolved complaints or complaints about the OTA Program Director should be directed to the Dean Health, Nursing and Public Services. All complaints will be documented, including the projected outcome, and kept on file at the program facility. Complaints regarding Accreditation of this program should be addressed to the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929 (301) 652-6611 ext. 2911.

PROGRAM POLICIES

1. Students who may have any condition which might affect their performance in class are encouraged to notify the student support service coordinator at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations may be arranged.
2. Students should have a personal commitment to studying outside the classroom. This may involve an average of 20 hours per week or more.
3. History of a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or obtain state licensure (inquire regarding appeals process).
4. Minnesota Statutes, Section 245A.04 requires all health care institutions that provide supportive or health supervision services in Minnesota to obtain a criminal background check on all employees, volunteers and contractors who may provide direct contact services with patients. Students are required to have criminal background verification prior to going out on Level I and Level II Fieldwork. The results of these studies are to be on file prior to beginning fieldwork. Students will complete the appropriate form and NORTHLAND will apply for the study from the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Failure to qualify by the department of Human Services background check may make it impossible for the student to do fieldwork in Minnesota or any other state requiring criminal background checks.
5. All students enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are required to furnish a laptop computer according to NORTHLAND specifications for all semesters enrolled at NORTHLAND.
6. Each student will do a personal and professional self-assessment every semester in the OTA program. The student will develop personal and professional goals based on the self-assessment and feedback from faculty.
7. The OTA Program does not have a specific dress code for on-campus courses. Due to the nature of lab activities, students are encouraged to dress comfortably but professionally. Occasionally we will have activities that involve speakers or other professions. During those occasions, business casual dress is required. For information regarding dress code during fieldwork or off site lab experiences, please see the Fieldwork Manual.
8. Level II Fieldwork must be completed within 18 months after completion of OTA academic courses.
9. A student may not repeat a non-Level II FW OTA course after one failure and will need to reapply to the program and get permission from faculty to enroll in an OTA course after a withdrawal.
10. Students may be required to complete a national background check each year of enrollment.
11. Students are required to enter all immunization records on the Northland Community and Technical College health records database prior to enrolling in the OTA program and attending Level I fieldwork. Fieldwork facilities may require additional information.
12. Students who are not allowed to attend clinicals due to missing data from the Health Records Data Bank will be dismissed from the program and not allowed to reapply.

EMERGENCY, EVACUATION, COLLEGE CLOSURES

If Northland Community and Technical College is closed due to severe weather or other reasons, the occupational therapy assistant program will be closed. This information is communicated to students, staff, faculty, and the public through a variety of methods including the NORTHLAND website, email system, mass media radio and television stations and Star Alert, a free Northland emergency notification system that allows students and employees to receive notice – by cell phone and/or e-mail – of campus-related emergencies that threaten life safety or severely impact campus operations.

Faculty will work with students to ensure appropriate make up classes are scheduled or comparable learning activities are developed. Students are expected to use good judgment in evaluating personal safety in traveling to classes or fieldwork placements. Students are expected to notify faculty/staff at the campus of any absences.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Northland Community and Technical College provides the following list of expected skills to inform prospective students of the performance abilities required to complete lab and fieldwork in the OTA program. Students admitted to the OTA program are expected to be able to perform/complete curriculum requirements which include these cognitive, physical/motor, sensory, and behavioral core competencies, with or without accommodation. Fieldwork settings vary, but students could encounter the need for any or all of these skills in a given placement.

Students who are unsure if they can meet these criteria because of disability, or know they will need help in meeting them, must contact NORTHLAND's Student Academic Success center to discuss the use of reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids (contact info below). The college will provide reasonable accommodations but is not required to substantially alter the requirements or nature of the program

Sensory Standards

Students must be able to perceive, assimilate, and integrate information from a variety of sources including oral presentations, printed materials, visual media, and hands-on demonstrations. Students must demonstrate adequate functional use of visual, tactile, auditory, and other sensory and perceptual modalities to enable such observations and information acquisition necessary for academic and clinical performance. Students must be able to perceive and appropriately interpret nonverbal communications.

Learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:

- Observe and attend to behaviors and needs, including non-verbal communication, of clients;
- Detect changes in skin color or condition (pale, ashen, grey, sweat, swelling, inflammation, atrophy, etc.);
- Observe and collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in client care;
- Detect alarms generated by mechanical systems such as those that monitor vital signs, fire alarms, etc.

Communication Standards

Students must demonstrate stability and acceptable communication skills and be capable of developing mature and effective interpersonal relationships with other students and health care workers. Students are required to communicate in the English language both verbally and in writing, at a level consistent with competent professional practice.

Learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:

- Effective communication is critical for students to build relationships with faculty, advisors, fellow students, co-workers, clients and their significant others in the student's various roles of learner, colleague, consultant and leader.
- Students must effectively and sensitively communicate with patients and colleagues, including individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds, this includes, but is not limited to, the ability to establish rapport with patients and effectively communicate judgments and treatment information.
- Students are expected to use grammar and vocabulary proficiently.

Physical/Motor Standards

Students must possess the motor functions needed to participate effectively in procedures common to occupational therapy practice. Students must be able to exhibit sufficient postural and neuromuscular control and coordination to safely and accurately provide assessment and treatment for clients. Students must be able to demonstrate safe use of accepted techniques accurately which includes safety when involved in the use of hand and mechanical tools as well as other treatment materials. Students must be able to gather, comprehend, utilize, and disseminate information effectively, efficiently, and according to professional standards.

Students need to be able to participate in physical activity involving lifting approximately 50 lbs., bending forward, crouching and/or kneeling, twisting, and kneeling, moving and supporting people and objects safely.

Learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:

- Fully/partially support weight of client during transfers to and from various surfaces (bed, chair, wheelchair, mat, toilet, tub, car, etc.) and when assisting client in functional tasks/activities.
- Support, turn and position clients.
- Control a fall by slowly lowering client to the floor.
- Engage in mat activities with clients.
- Manipulate, maneuver, and adjust equipment and devices (e.g. wheelchairs, hospital beds, swings, ball, splint pans, tub seats, portable commodes).

Cognition Standards

Students must demonstrate critical thinking skills so that they can problem solve efficiently and creatively, master abstract ideas, and synthesize information presented in the classroom, laboratory, and fieldwork settings. Students must be able to integrate and accurately utilize a defined level of required information as presented through educational experiences in both basic arts and sciences.

Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, process, integrate, synthesize, retain, and apply facts, concepts, and data related to the art and science of health care. This may require comprehension of three-dimensional relationships and an understanding of the spatial relationships of structures. Students must have the cognitive capacity to appropriately utilize technology in the classroom and in clinical or community settings. Sound judgment, ethical reasoning, and clinical reasoning are essential.

Learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:

- Process information thoroughly and quickly to prioritize and implement occupational therapy intervention.
- Report client data verbally and in writing to members of the treatment team.

Behavioral and Social Standards

Students must demonstrate emotional stability and be capable of developing mature, respectful, and effective interpersonal relationships with other students, faculty, and healthcare workers. Students must be able to tolerate physically and emotionally taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and function professionally in the face of the uncertainties inherent in educational, clinical, and community settings. Students must be able to engage in personal reflection and self-awareness as a mechanism of effective personal growth, development, and lifelong learning.

Learning activities found in the OTA curriculum:

- Exhibit emotional stability and composure to function safely under stress and adapt to changing environments;
- Exhibit social skills necessary to interact effectively with clients, families, supervisors, co-workers and community members of the same or different cultures with respect, compassion, tact, collaboration, teamwork, responsibility, and discretion;
- Display attitudes and actions consistent with the core values and ethical standards of the occupational therapy profession;
- Maintain personal hygiene and appearance (including skin and piercing practices) consistent with close personal contact in client care;
- Establish therapeutic relationships and communicate in a supportive manner.

Professional and Ethical Standards

- Students must demonstrate a commitment to excellence, honesty, integrity, respect for others, compassion, social responsibility, and altruism.
- Students must demonstrate stability and acceptable communication skills and be capable of developing mature and effective interpersonal relationships with other students, faculty, and health care workers.
- Students must exhibit the ability to meet the challenges of any medical situation that requires a readiness for immediate and appropriate responses without interference of personal or medical problems. This requires training for medical emergencies (e.g., CPR, infection control).
- It is each student's responsibility to attend and be able to travel to and from classes and fieldwork assignments on time and possess the organizational skills and stamina for performing required tasks and assignments within allotted time frames. This involves frequent oral, written, and practical examinations or demonstrations.
- Students must adhere to the policies of the Northland Community and Technical College, the occupational therapy assistant program, and clinical sites. This includes matters ranging from professional dress and behavior to attending to the program's academic schedule, which may differ from the college's academic calendar and be subject to change at any time.
- Students must demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to the code of ethics of the OT profession as well as behaviors that reflect a sense of right and wrong in the helping environment.
- Students must develop and exhibit a sense of medical ethics and recognize and apply pertinent legal and ethical standards including adherence to confidentiality requirements.

- Students are expected to recognize and act on the need to take initiative to direct their own learning. They are required to work cooperatively, collaboratively, and respectfully with other students on assigned projects and participate willingly in supervisory processes involving evaluation of abilities and reasoning skills.
- Students must exhibit the ability and commitment to work with individuals in potentially intense settings to meet the needs of diverse cultures, age groups, socioeconomic groups, and challenges without bias. These individuals may be severely injured, may be limited by cognitive, emotional, and functional deficits, and may have behavior that, at times, creates an aversive reaction. The ability to interact with these individuals without being judgmental or prejudiced is critical in establishing one's professionalism and therapeutic relationships.
- The professional qualities and expectations outlined herein are critical for successful completion of the program.

If any applicants or students have a question about whether he/she can meet the technical standards due to functional limitations from a disability, he/she should contact Student Academic Success Center.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Graduates of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Northland Community and Technical College have completed the certification exam administered by the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT).

National certification examination outcomes for Northland OTA Program Class of 2023 (the most recent class that we have full data for):

- The OTA program had 7 graduates.
- Six of those graduates took NBCOT Certification exam in 2023 and 2024.
- All 6 passed the NBCOT exam. One student has not taken the exam.
- The pass rate for the 2023 class is 100%

National certification examination outcomes for calendar year 2024 (comprised of 2023 and 2024 graduates):

- Eight new graduates took the national certification exam during this period.
- Eight of those new graduates passed the national certification exam during this period.
- 100% of NCTC OTA new graduates who took the national certification exam during this time passed the exam during that period.

Results of National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) Examination

Calendar Year	Number of New Graduates who took the exam	Number of New Graduates who passed the exam	Percentage of New Graduates who passed the exam
2022	9	5	56%
2023	6	6	100%
2024	7	7	100%

Annual Graduation Rates for the Northland OTA Program

Graduation Year (academic year)	Students Entering/Graduating	Graduates Rate*
2022	12/6	88%
2023	13/7	75%
2024	12/12	100%
TOTAL	37/25	89%

*Calculated by the number of students graduating on time (G1) plus the number of students graduating within 150% of on time (G2) divided by the number of students admitted in the original cohort (G3) minus the number of students who withdrew due to military, health, family issues, death, and other reasons not related to academic and clinical performance (G4). Calculation per calendar year is = (G1 + G2) / (G3 - G4).

STUDENT STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

After having received and reviewed the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Handbook, I understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures and standards as stated in the handbook. I understand that failure to follow these policies may result in the dismissal from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.

I have read and understood the technical standards expected of students in the OTA program that are necessary for completion of lab and fieldwork portions of the OTA program. To the best of my knowledge, I have the ability to meet these expectations of performance, with or without accommodation. I understand that if I need disability-related accommodations, it is my responsibility to request them through the disability support services office.

Student Name

Date

OTA Faculty Name

Date

