



**SOUTH TEXAS
COLLEGE**

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

MANUAL OF STUDENT STANDARDS 2025 - 2026

Dr. Ramiro R. Casso
Nursing and Allied Health Campus
1101 E. Vermont Avenue
McAllen, TX 78503
(956) 872-3161
Fax (956) 872-3163

DISCLAIMER:

The Manual of Student Standards established by the OTA Program does not conflict with the policies in effect for all students of South Texas College and/or the Standards in effect for all NAH Program students, but may be more specific than those written in the STC College Catalog and/or the NAH Student Handbook. Students are held accountable to these standards upon admission to the program.

Created: 8/8/2017 Updated May 27, 2025

Preface

Welcome to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Student Handbook. The OTA (Occupational Therapy Assistant) Student Handbook is developed for students admitted into the OTA Program to provide them with information about the program guidelines and procedures.

The OTA Student Handbook outlines essential information from South Texas College, the NAH (Nursing and Allied Health) Division, and the OTA Program which includes policies and procedures, expectations of students, student code of conduct, and professional conduct.

The OTA Program students are responsible for knowing the information and complying with the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in the OTA Student Handbook.

The NAH Division reserves the right to change policies and procedures without notice.

The OTA Student handbook is not intended to be and should not be regarded as a contract between the College, the NAH Division, and/or any student or other person.

Also, please note that the electronic version of the OTA Student Handbook will be the one that is updated. The electronic version should be consulted as the primary resource.

Statement of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

South Texas College is an equal education and equal employment opportunity/affirmative action employer. As an equal opportunity employer, the College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. Discrimination is prohibited and the College will comply with all applicable College policies and state and federal legislation. This policy extends to individuals seeking employment with and admission to the College.

South Texas College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award Baccalaureate and Associate degrees. South Texas College also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of South Texas College may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Occupational Therapy Education.

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)
7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-652-AOTA
www.acteonline.org

Acknowledgment Of Student Handbook

I, _____ A# _____
acknowledge that I have read, understood, and will abide by the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations as outlined in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (OTAP) Student Handbook during my tenure as an Occupational Therapy Assistant student at South Texas College. My signature indicates my understanding and acceptance of my responsibilities as an OTA student. I further understand that new STC policies, guidelines, and procedures may be implemented that must be adhered to during my tenure as an OTA student. I am responsible for staying informed of new STC policies, guidelines, and procedures through the OTA Program website, course syllabus, announcements in class, and through the student representative of my cohort.

_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of the Student	Date	Student Signature

Contents

Preface.....	2
Acknowledgment Of Student Handbook	3
Division And Program Contact Information	8
Accreditation Statement.....	9
Community Advisory Committee Members	10
Vision, Mission And Philosophy	11
Vision Statement.....	11
Mission Statement	11
OTA Program Mission Statement	11
Philosophy Statement.....	12
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Goals.....	13
Methodology.....	13
Learning Objectives.....	14
Development Of Program Standards.....	14
Enforcement Of Standards	14
Language Statement	15
Application Process	15
Admission Criteria.....	15
New Student Orientation.....	15
Transfer Students.....	15
STC OTA Program Timeline Completion Statement	15
Graduation Requirements	16
STC Student Services.....	16
Institutional Continuity Statement	17
Student Accommodations	17
OTA Program Standards	19
Class Participation	19
Late Coursework	19
Course Syllabus	19
Confidentiality Of Student Records	19
Student Support Program Advising	20

Student Retention	20
CLE Tutoring	21
Guidelines For Written Work	22
Faculty And Student Communication	22
Blackboard and/or Pronto	22
Channels Of Communication	22
Student Discipline	23
Employment While In The Program.....	23
Program Progression Criteria.....	23
Course Completion Requirements.....	24
Complaints And Grievances	24
Student Code Of Conduct	26
Professionalism Performance Expectations	26
Behavior Expectations During Off-Campus Events	27
Unprofessional Behaviors	27
Student Discipline Classroom/Clinical - Appeal Process.....	27
Academic Integrity	28
Attendance.....	29
Punctuality	31
Self-Assessment	31
Assignments	31
Laboratory Participation And Safety.....	32
Social Media	33
Safety Procedures	33
Communicable Diseases	33
Grading System	34
Grading Scale	34
Incompletes.....	35
Academic Or Technical Courses Appeal.....	35
Examination Standards	35
Examination Review.....	37
Lab Practical Examination	37
Lab Practical Student Participation.....	38

Lab Practical Review	38
Breach Of Safety/Automatic Failure	38
Readmission Procedure	40
Student Failure.....	40
OTA Program Readmission Portfolio Process.....	41
Program Re-Admission	42
Re-Admission Priority	42
Re-Admission Process	43
Program Withdrawal.....	43
Program Abandonment	44
OTA Program Activities.....	45
Student Occupational Therapy Assistant Club	45
Community Service	46
Pinning Ceremony.....	47
OTA Program Dress Code.....	48
Classroom Dress Code	48
Laboratory Dress Code.....	50
Program Media Standards	51
Cell Phones & Electronic Media (Classroom).....	51
Audio/Video Taping Class Lectures.....	52
Photographing And Videotaping OTA Program Students.....	52
Photographing And Videotaping Community Members	52
Program Risk Management.....	53
Cost Of Emergency Services In Off-Campus Educational Experiences	53
General Medical/Health Condition	53
Safety Incident Reporting Procedure.....	53
Appropriate Use Of Equipment And Supplies	54
Equipment Lending	54
Safety Procedures (SDS).....	55
Laundry Room	55
Student Clinical Standards	56
Clinical Dress Code	57
Assessment Of Clinical Performance	58

Clinic Assignments And Activities	61
Clinical Requirement Compliance	61
Mandatory On-Line Hospital Orientation	62
Clinic Attendance	62
Clinic Punctuality.....	63
Fieldwork Level I and Level II Attendance	63
Cell Phones And Electronic Media (Clinic)	64
Clinic Sites And Travel Expectations	64

Division And Program Contact Information

Division Dean: (Interim)	Margo Vargas-Ayala, DNP, RN.	956-872-3113
Program Chair:	Celina Casas, OTD, OTR	956-872-3041
Fieldwork Coordinator:	Lizette Guevara, OTD, OTR	956-872-3150
Full-time Faculty:	Layman D. Miller, COTA, MBA, MEd	956-872-3035
Lab Assistant:	Claudia R. Luna, COTA	956-872-3042
Secretary:	Jacqueline Melchor	956-872-3161
Guided Pathways Specialist	Mari Vargas	956-872-3216
OTA Office Fax Number		956-872-3163
Library - Nursing and Allied Health Campus		956-872-3121
Center for Learning Excellence NAH Campus		956-872-3044
Student Services - Nursing and Allied Health Campus		956-872-3100

Accreditation Statement

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program was granted re-accreditation for a period of ten (10) years on February 2024. The next on-site evaluation will be scheduled during the 2033/2034 academic year. The OTA Program is accredited by the:

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)

American Occupational Therapy Association

7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E

Bethesda, MD 20814

301-652-2682

www.acoteonline.org

Graduates of the program will be eligible to register 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). The state of Texas also requires licensure in order to practice. Regular licenses are issued by the state through the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners (TBOTE) after the successful completion of the NBCOT certification examination.

A felony conviction may affect a graduates' ability to register and complete the NBCOT Certification exam or to obtain state licensure to practice as a COTA. Applicants must successfully clear a criminal background check prior to being accepted into the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.

Notification Requirements

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at South Texas College must adhere to all requirements established by the credentialing agencies to maintain compliance with established Standards and Rules.

The purpose of the Curriculum and Accreditation Department is to support student learning by coordinating the regional accreditation processes for the College, facilitating the development and ongoing revision of instructional programs, and ensuring efficient processes for student evaluations of faculty and course scheduling.

In addition, the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Director must work with the College's Curriculum and Accreditation Officer to ensure that the following activities which affect the Program's accreditation status with ACOTE are completed:

- a. Inform ACOTE of the transfer of program sponsorship or change of the institution's name within 30 days of the transfer or change.
- b. Inform ACOTE within 30 days of the date of notification of any adverse accreditation action taken to change the sponsoring institution's accreditation status to probation or withdrawal of accreditation.

- c. Notify and receive ACOTE approval for any significant program changes prior to the admission of students into the new/changed program.
- d. Inform ACOTE within 30 days of the resignation of the program director or appointment of a new or interim program director.
- e. Pay accreditation fees within 90 days of the invoice date.
- f. Submit a Report of Self-Study and other required reports (e.g., Interim Report, Plan of Correction, and Progress Report) within the period of time designated by ACOTE. All reports must be complete and contain all requested information.
- g. Agree to a site visit date before the end of the period for which accreditation was previously awarded.
- h. Demonstrate honesty and integrity in all interactions with ACOTE.

Community Advisory Committee Members

The advisory board committee consists of members from the occupational therapy community, including clinicians, fieldwork educators and community leaders, who meet twice a year with the occupational therapy faculty. The purpose of the advisory board meetings is to review the program, suggest program changes, and provide feedback to enhance the mission of the occupational therapy assistant program. This collaborative effort strengthens our ties with our peers in the community.

Jenny Adame, COTA, Rio Grande City
Amanda Delgado, COTA McAllen
Iris Dovalina, COTA Mission
Luis Martinez, OTR Palmhurst
Jesse Rodriguez, OTR McAllen
Adina Santillan, COTA San Juan
Rosie Vallejo, OTR, McAllen

Vision, Mission And Philosophy

Vision Statement

Changing lives and transforming communities through higher education.

Mission Statement

South Texas College is a comprehensive public higher education institution that transforms lives through innovative education, holistic learner support, and community engagement. We empower our region and drive socioeconomic advancement through lifelong learning opportunities.

OTA Program Mission Statement

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program is designed to prepare a workforce of Occupational Therapy Assistants by providing a quality academic education at the technical career level. The program will promote partnering with local health care facilities for external learning experiences to provide close linkages with the community to meet the unique needs of a multi-cultural environment by:

- Maintaining a high standard of excellence in education.
- Creating an environment in which development of human potential is the highest priority.
- Offering open access and opportunity for lifelong learning
- Meeting the needs of business and industry for competency in a global marketplace
- Providing service to the community and opportunity for lifelong learning
- Recognizing the cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity of individuals and communities
- Ensure continuous accreditation of the program
- Qualifying program graduates to obtain national certification and state licensure

The mission of the South Texas College Associate of Applied Science degree Occupational Therapy Assistant Program reflects the mission of the College. The mission of the OTA Program is therefore, to prepare Associate of Applied Science graduates to be providers of care and members of the occupational therapy profession. Students are committed to serve a culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse community. They will provide direct intervention to selected clients with health care needs in a variety of settings. The OTA is a vital member of the OT profession who practices within the guidelines of the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and applicable state regulations. The program prepares professional OTA's through academic learning, clinical practicum experiences and various learning situations where problem-solving skills are developed.

The mandate of the profession is:

- To assist patients to develop life skills by providing services with the ultimate goal of increasing their performance and participation in desired daily occupations.
- The recipients of therapy are those who have encountered problems that interfere with their ability to function in any stage of their development.
- The scope of services includes physical, cognitive, and psychological and/or psychosocial disorders such as Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Strokes, and Spinal Cord Injuries.

Occupational Therapy Assistants typically are employed in the following settings under the supervision by an Occupational Therapist is required for practice in Texas:

- Clinical or community settings working in out-patient clinics.
- In-patient rehabilitation centers.
- Long-Term Care settings.
- Psychiatric and Mental Health Care Centers
- Public schools.
- Patients' homes.
- Hospital Settings.

Philosophy Statement

The philosophy of the OTA Program at South Texas College reflects the current published Philosophical Base of the Occupational Therapy American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2017) defined the following:

Occupations are activities that bring meaning to the daily lives of individuals, families, communities, and populations and enable them to participate in society. All individuals have an innate need and right to engage in meaningful occupations throughout their lives. Participation in these occupations influences their development, health, and well-being across the lifespan. Thus, participation in meaningful occupations is a determinant of health and leads to adaptation.

Occupations occur within diverse social, physical, cultural, personal, temporal, and virtual contexts. The quality of occupational performance and the experience of each occupation are unique in each situation because of the dynamic relationship among factors intrinsic to the individual, the environment and contexts in which the occupation occurs, and the characteristics of the occupation.

The focus and outcome of occupational therapy are clients' engagement in meaningful occupations that support their participation in life situations. Occupational therapy practitioners conceptualize occupations as both a means and an end in therapy. That is, there is therapeutic value in occupational engagement as a change agent, and engagement in occupations is also the ultimate goal of therapy.

Occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupations are fundamental to health promotion and wellness, remediation or restoration, health maintenance, disease and injury

prevention, and compensation and adaptation. The use of occupation to promote individual, family, community, and population health is the core of occupational therapy practice, education, research, and advocacy.

The faculty along with the community advisory committee agrees with the importance of providing a solid occupational therapy education to prepare the OTA students to meet the needs of “individuals, groups, communities, and populations” (AOTA, 2018, p. 1). It is imperative that students learn and retain knowledge, leaving the program ready to provide intervention and educate others as entry-level practitioners. The biological, sociological, and psychological areas of practice are presented in both OTA program curricula and fieldwork experience. The program identifies the importance of a holistic view with clients in order to identify and achieve the client’s optimal health and well-being while partaking in occupation (AOTA, 2018, p. 1).

Students develop clinical reasoning skills while following the OTA program curriculum based upon the Life Span Model. Typical and atypical milestones are examined and specific health conditions are studied that may impede occupational performance at various life span stages. A client-centered approach is vital to determining, attaining, and maintaining the optimal level of independence in occupational performance.

Student instruction is provided in a variety of methods to optimize student learning based on preferred learning styles. Courses are sequenced accordingly to allow students to apply principles and skills learned in the classroom to a clinical setting.

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Goals

The curriculum of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program was formulated according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education and is monitored by the Division of Academic Affairs. The curriculum design was recommended by the Community Advisory Committee, which is composed primarily of Occupational Therapy professionals. A portion of this program is offered in a virtual format.

The Fieldwork practicums scheduled at several intervals during the course of study will progressively allow the students to practice and apply all of their knowledge base in a clinical setting with a variety of patients.

Methodology

The OTA curriculum was developed after careful review of other well established OTA program’s curricula and the Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education. The ACOTE’s STANDARDS for educational programs were utilized to develop the courses by integrating the required competencies into each course in the curriculum plan.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to describe various roles of occupational therapy as it relates to clients, families, and service providers.
2. Students will be able to explain and differentiate the distinct roles and responsibilities of the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant in the supervisory process.
3. Students will be able to effectively apply occupational therapy principles and intervention strategies in a clinical setting.
4. Students will be able to formulate an effective Professional Development Plan to facilitate ongoing learning.
5. 90% of students will successfully pass the program Exit Exam by the end of the semester.

Development Of Program Standards

The Associate of Applied Science with a major in Occupational Therapy Assistant (AAS-OTA) program is a two-year (21 month) program designed to provide students with an entry-level academic foundation, technical knowledge, and hands-on clinic experience. The focused curriculum will allow the student to master content that will prepare them for relevant certification and licensure examinations. The program partners with local entities to facilitate clinical training, lifelong learning, and social responsibility of faculty and students. Graduates will be competent and ethical professionals in collaboration with the supervising OTR in providing occupational therapy services that display the values and attitudes that reflect the AOTA's professional standards of practice.

The following are general standards that pertain to all OTA students. These standards do not conflict with the policies/procedures in effect for all students at STC or NAH Division Standards, but may be more specific.

Standards are developed by the OTA faculty and are reviewed and/or revised annually with input as needed from the OTA Community Advisory Committee. Input from students is welcomed and valued. Suggestions to be considered should be made in writing and submitted to the Program Chair. OTA Program students are expected to consult the annual STC Catalog for adherence with current policies and procedures and the NAH Student Handbook for adherence with current Division standards.

To facilitate comprehension of the Manual of Student Standards, all cohort students are required to complete an annual review of the Manual and demonstrate an understanding by taking an online assessment and scoring a minimum of 75%. Multiple attempts are allowed until the required score is earned.

Enforcement Of Standards

OTA faculty, with assistance as needed from the Office of Judicial Affairs, will enforce these standards to promote an effective operation of the program and to assure fair practice and

equity for all students. Confidentiality dictates that students should not be aware of any faculty actions with other students when administering these standards.

Language Statement

In accordance with Texas state law, all academic courses are conducted in English.

Application Process

Students interested in this program must complete the pre-requisite courses prior to applying for admission. Any of the other general education courses may also be taken before applying for admission into the program. Grades made in these courses will be computed using a “point system” for the student selection process.

Admission Criteria

This program has a Competitive Entry selection process based on a competitive point system designed to prepare a qualified Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant in the work-field.

New Student Orientation

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program sets in place mandatory face-to-face orientation for students to attain all necessary information such as, but not limited to, program expectations, schedules, clinical clearance, financial aid information, purchase of electronic software and books, etc. It is imperative the student attend the new student online orientation. If a student is unable to attend, the student will be responsible for reviewing the content of the orientation and still meeting all expectations of the program and courses.

Transfer Students

Students transferring from another accredited college or university are eligible for admission and adhere to the same application requirements. Transfer students must also comply with Board Policy 3200 and 3320. For more information or assistance, contact the OAR at 956-872-8311 and/or visit a South Texas College Admissions Office. Note to transfer students:

When transferring credits from former colleges/universities to South Texas College, only the course credits transfer, not the GPA.

STC OTA Program Timeline Completion Statement

The Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program at South Texas College (STC) is designed to provide students with a comprehensive education in occupational therapy principles and practices. Our program offers a pathway to completion within a specified timeline to ensure students achieve their academic and professional goals effectively.

The standard duration for completing the STC OTA program is initially established at two years (21 months). However, students may opt for the progression program (for those returning after one failed course) or may need to extend their education completion due to medical, financial, unforeseen circumstances, or personal reasons. In such cases, the curriculum is extended to three years for completion.

Therefore, the timeline for completion of the STC OTA program is three years for students enrolled in the progression program. This extended timeframe allows for a more in-depth exploration of course content, clinical experiences, and professional development opportunities.

Students must complete all CAPSTONE coursework with a passing grade to be eligible for graduation from the OTA program

Students must complete all Level II fieldwork within 18 months (about 1 and a half years) following the completion of the didactic portion of the program.

At STC, we are committed to supporting our students throughout their academic journey and beyond. The three-year completion timeline reflects our dedication to providing a thorough and enriching educational experience that prepares graduates for success in the field of occupational therapy.

Graduation Requirements

To earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, a student must meet college graduation requirements and complete all coursework as prescribed in the degree plan with a minimum grade of "C."

Students must complete all CAPSTONE coursework with a passing grade to be eligible for graduation from the OTA program.

Students must complete all Level II fieldwork within 18 months (about 1 and a half years) following the completion of the didactic portion of the program.

Students must also meet [South Texas Graduation Requirements](#).

STC Student Services

South Texas College provides students with a variety of college/student services to assist in student success such as:

Academic Advising: <https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/advising/>

Career & Employer Services: <https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/careerservices/>

Centers for Learning Excellence: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/cle/>

Counseling and Student Accessibility Services:

<https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/counseling/>

Course Registration: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/register/>

Health and Wellness Centers: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/health-wellness/>

Library Services: <https://library.southtexascollege.edu/>

Learning Commons and Open Computer Labs: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/openlabs/>

Student Financial Services: <https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/>

Transfer Resources: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/academics/transfer/>

Veteran Affairs Services: <https://www.southtexascollege.edu/veterans/>

Institutional Continuity Statement

In the event of a major crisis, such as a pandemic, hurricane, or other unforeseen emergency, course meeting times/dates, requirements, and method of delivery may change according to county, state, and/ or federal guidelines to ensure the safety of the South Texas College Community. Up-to-date information related to crisis events can be found on the South Texas College [Campus Safety](#) website.

Student Accommodations

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil protection for persons' disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

South Texas College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1990, and does not discriminate on the basis of a disability in the areas of admission accessibility, treatment and employment. Individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law, who are otherwise qualified to meet the institution's academic requirements, will be provided with services and resources accordingly. Students must submit the appropriate documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose. For students with disabilities, reasonable accommodations are made to allow the individual student to be successful at South Texas College.

Accommodations are provided for those students who submit the documentation of the disability by a qualified professional whose license or credentials are appropriate to diagnose the disability. Documentation must be submitted to the NAH Division Counseling and Disability Services office. South Texas College supports efforts in making the campus more accessible and encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in all activities.

Students who are seeking assistance, feel the need to discuss their situation or have questions or concerns about a learning disability or any disability, are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services Department at 956-872-2513.

Students are not required to request accommodations for a disability and will not be instructed to seek accommodations by faculty members. It is a voluntary process. However, students who do not request and receive accommodations through the Counseling and Disability Services office will not receive accommodations in the classroom.

The STC OTA Program will provide accommodations to facilitate student achievement of stated objectives, as determined by the College Disability Support Services Department. However, those accommodations can in no way jeopardize the student's ability to perform occupational therapy skills and interventions safely and competently, in both the classroom and clinic settings.

OTA Program Standards

Class Participation

Class participation is essential to student success. Daily class participation is expected at South Texas College in all assignments; for example, discussions, modules, videos, quizzes, and virtual simulations. To demonstrate academic attendance by the student, a school must demonstrate that a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically related activity, such as by contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.

Dropping a course is the responsibility of the student and not taking the appropriate steps may result in a grade of "F" for the course.

In addition to published guidelines related to attendance, faculty may drop a student before the withdrawal deadline when the faculty member determines that the student will be unable to successfully complete the course. For more information, review the Nursing & Allied Health Division Student Handbook and the STC Student Handbook Code of Student Conduct.

Late Coursework

It is the student's responsibility to submit assignments to the instructor by the designated date and time, via the means designated by the course instructor. Each faculty member has the discretion to assign points ranging from a ten point deduction to receiving a grade of zero (0) for work that is submitted late. Extenuating circumstances will be handled by the faculty.

Course Syllabus

The Course Syllabus is the student's guide for the course. Faculty will be responsible to inform the location of the syllabus or provide a copy of such on the first day of class. The purpose of the syllabus is to effectively clarify the student's understanding of the course content, requirements, and expectations. The syllabus will include but is not limited to, the name of the instructor, contact information, office location, procedures, rules, and regulations, required texts, learning goals and objectives, course calendar, student responsibilities, grading criteria, disclaimers, etc. A signed Course Syllabus Acknowledgement Form must be submitted to the course faculty by the second day of class. Course Syllabus Acknowledgement Forms will be filed in the Student's Academic File.

Confidentiality Of Student Records

It is the procedure of South Texas College and the OTA Program to maintain confidentiality of the student's educational records and to be in compliance with the provisions of all federal and states laws governing the release of student educational records. An unofficial program file for each student's academic and professional skill progress is maintained in a locked file cabinet in

the OTA program chair's (#320). It may be released only to an OTA faculty member, the Division Dean, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, or their designee upon request. A student may have access to their own file. If the student is age 18 years or older, they must authorize in writing permission to share information with parents or other individuals. All formal communication regarding student progress, problems, disciplinary actions, etc. must be reviewed and co-signed by all applicable parties to document accuracy of the information contained therein.

Student Support Program Advising

The OTA Program aspires to give all students tools and resources to help them achieve success in their courses, which will translate into Program completion. The faculty of the OTA Program is sensitive to the needs of the students as they seek assistance to make career choices and utilize their ability to move through the program at an individual rate of progression. The faculty participates in continuous academic advising and counseling throughout the students' participation in the OTA Program. Faculty will monitor professional skill development and will work with the students to help them understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Each student will be required to complete at least one mandatory advising session with the OTA Guided Pathways Specialist each semester as the student progresses through the program sequence. Students must schedule their initial advisement appointment to take place sometime during the first four weeks of each semester. In addition to the required session, students are encouraged to initiate additional advisor appointments as needed for academic, professional, or career counseling.

The course instructor completes program advising related to specific courses. The course instructor, in collaboration with the program chair, is responsible for advising students regarding individualized remediation plans.

All OTA Program students are required to meet with the instructors during the Mid-Term evaluation period to discuss performance and progress in each course and to develop a corrective plan of action if needed.

The faculty will refer the "at-risk" student to the OTA Program Guided Pathways Specialist and an Action Plan may be completed and the student may be directed to other college services that the student may need. Referrals may include but are not limited to, academic performance, class absences, class participation, failure to submit assignments on time, and behaviors in the course not conducive to learning.

Student Retention

SEMESTER MEETINGS: To facilitate student retention, all OTA students are required to meet with the Program Chair or designee at least once per semester. This meeting is to discuss student's academic performance, adherence to program standards and previously identified remediation/action plans, as well as attendance and professional behaviors. If necessary, an action plan will be developed which may include lab assistant tutoring, learning strategy

recommendations, and/or a referral to the CLE Tutor, NAH Counselor or Guided Pathways Specialist.

LAB ASSISTANTS: The program utilizes a part time licensed COTA who serves as OTA Program Lab Assistants. The lab assistants' primary responsibility is to monitor open lab sessions and assist with attainment of lab performance skills. Individualized tutoring may be scheduled with the lab assistant, upon availability.

LABS: Select OTA courses that include a significant number of performance skills will be divided into small separate labs. All students enrolled in a course will attend the same lecture; the class will then be divided into small lab sections. Limiting the number of students per lab session allows for sufficient space and availability of equipment for skills acquisition. Smaller labs also encourage more personalized student attention and offer faculty the ability to assess understanding and monitor progress on a more individualized basis.

When not participating in a structured lab, students are encouraged to utilize their "free" time for completion of assignments, peer checkoffs, etc. while on campus.

STUDENT MENTORS: All Level I OTA Program students will be assigned a Level II student mentor. The role of a mentor is to support and encourage new students to manage their own learning to maximize their potential, develop skills, improve performance, and ultimately graduate from the OTA Program. Mentors may share information about their individual experiences as an OTA student, strategies for learning and resource recommendations, as well as provide motivation, emotional support, and role modeling. Mentors may not share details related to examination questions and/or lab practical scenarios. Although designed to promote student success, mentors do not maintain any responsibility for mentee grades and/or their ultimate performance.

Students are required to meet with their mentors a minimum of 30 minutes per month. Results of each meeting are to be recorded using the TBOTE Mentorship Agreement form. The completed form is to be submitted to the program chair during finals week of the first semester.

CLE Tutoring

Students are required to complete a minimum number of mandatory weekly tutoring hours through the Centers for Learning Excellence while enrolled in the OTA Program as follows:

1. First semester students – 4 hours
2. Second semester students – 4 hours
3. Third semester students – 0 hours
4. Fourth semester students – 2 hours.
5. Fifth semester students are not required to complete tutoring hours due to enrollment in their clinical fieldwork experience.

Guidelines For Written Work

All OTA students should take pride in their work and all their assignments.

Written Work: The official sourcebook to be used at every level of the undergraduate curriculum will be the most current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Students are expected to follow the updated guidelines set down in this manual.

Not citing a source constitutes plagiarism. Papers are to be typed. Papers that may be handwritten as approved by the faculty must be legible. The faculty reserves the right to return papers with an abundance of noticeable corrections, including spelling and grammar. For a tutorial, visit <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/tutorials-webinars>.

All research papers or assignments must be submitted to Safe Assign, a plagiarism detection software that is available on Blackboard. Papers must be submitted to Safe Assign before the due date so necessary corrections can be made in due time. An acceptable originality report is less than 15% (<15%).

Faculty And Student Communication

JagMail will be used by faculty/staff as a form of communication before the beginning of the semester to inform students of course schedules, boot camps, meeting dates, times and venues, or any other school related information.

Blackboard and/or Pronto

Once the semester begins, all course and school-related information will be communicated through STC's Blackboard and/or Pronto system. It is the responsibility of the student to check their Blackboard and Pronto regularly to keep abreast with all current information. Students are to email the instructor through Blackboard and/or message through Pronto. The instructor will have 24-48 hours to respond to the student's message

Channels Of Communication

The Channel of communication is the line of authority and responsibility in an organization, which oversees the implementation of policies, guidelines, and procedures. Following the channel of communication in the health care workforce means moving up the administrative ladder when the occupational therapy practitioner believes that the patient's needs are not being met. It is of utmost importance in the role of the occupational therapy practitioner as a patient advocate. In most health care institutions, failure to adhere to the channel of communication may result in progressive disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Students, faculty, and staff must adhere to the established channel of communication in the OTA Program for any concerns, issues, and grievances to ensure prompt and satisfactory resolution.

When the established channel of communication is bypassed, the complainant will be re-directed back to the proper authority. Maliciously bypassing the OTA Program channel of communication may lead to a student's disciplinary action and dismissal from the Program.

Student Discipline

South Texas College supports the right of faculty to maintain discipline in the course. When a student is alleged to have committed an act of academic dishonesty, or been disruptive in the course, clinical, or another academic setting, the course instructor or clinical supervisor may move to sanction the student, which may include temporarily or permanently removing that student from the course/clinical according to procedures outlined in the STC Student Code of Conduct. For more information, visit the STC Student Handbook and NAH Student Handbook.

Employment While In The Program

The OTA Program has issued the following statements regarding student employment:

- Students understand that the OTA Program is rigorous and employment while in the program is at the student's discretion.
- The performance of students when working for compensation is the legal responsibility of the employing agency and students.

NOTE: Students must disclose any existing relationship with area facilities and/or clinicians, scholarships, sponsorships, family connections, contract agreements to hire upon graduation, etc. in order to ensure no conflict of interest occurs with student placements during Practicum courses.

Program Progression Criteria

In order to qualify for promotion to the next semester OTA Program students must satisfy the following:

- All "Program Advancement Criteria" as listed in the NAH Student Handbook
- Successfully pass all didactic program courses with a minimum average of 75% for course average, written exam average, and lab practical exam average when applicable.
- Complete required skills check-offs portion of respective course with a score of 75% or higher.
- Complete all required course assignments with a score of 75% or higher.
- Meet Practicum Progression Criteria (Please refer to Practicum Progression Criteria).
- Meet required professionalism/professional behaviors standards of 75% or higher.
- Continue to adhere to all established college and program policies, procedures and standards.

Course Completion Requirements

Students must meet the following criteria for all didactic courses, in order to ensure competency prior to Practicum placement and progression into subsequent semesters:

- A final average of 75% or higher for the “Examination (Written) Component” of each OTHA course, regardless of the overall final course average.
- A final average of 75% or higher for the “Laboratory Component” of each OTHA course with a laboratory component, regardless of the overall final course average.
- 100% of lab skills presented in each course must be checked off. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure that they are checked off on every skill regardless of written examination average, lab exam average or final overall course grade.
- 100% of course assignments must be completed, regardless of written examination average, lab exam average or final overall course grade.

Complaints And Grievances

Grievance Policy and Procedure

STC and NAH Programs strive to provide fair and objective procedures for hearing student complaints and endorse compliance with the spirit of nondiscriminatory regulations. The following procedure must be observed:

1. In an effort to resolve misunderstandings, complaints, or grievances, students must first make every attempt to resolve the issue with the individual against whom the complaint originated.
2. If the grievance is not settled, it should then be discussed with the next superior.
3. As academic/program concerns arise between an STC student and a faculty member, the student should first discuss the matter with the faculty member during the faculty member’s office hours.

If the matter is not resolved, the student may then discuss the matter with the department chair.

Channels of Communication

Steps	Student to Student	Student to Faculty	Student with Staff
Step 1	Talk to the Student	Talk to the Faculty	Talk to the Staff
Step 2	Talk to the Course Faculty	Talk to the Program Chair	Talk to the Program Chair
Step 3	Talk to the Program Chair	Talk to the Division Dean	Talk to the Division Dean
Step 4	Talk to the Division Dean		

If unresolved, the student is to contact the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office at 956-872-2180.

Student may also refer to the [NAH Student Handbook](#).

Student may also refer to South Texas College Board Policy FLD – [Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student Complaints](#) for more information.

Student Code Of Conduct

The students in the South Texas College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are expected to adhere to all South Texas College Program Standards, [STC Nursing/Allied Health Handbook Standards](#) and the [South Texas College Student Code of Conduct](#). Any violations will result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the BSN Program, ineligibility in any NAH programs, and/or additional sanctions from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Standards, guidelines and codes apply to both academic and Fieldwork experiences. Students must adhere to their assigned clinical sites guidelines, policies, and procedures.

Professionalism Performance Expectations

Professionalism includes attributes, characteristics or behaviors that are not explicitly part of the profession's core of knowledge and technical skills but are nevertheless required for success in the profession.

Each occupational therapy assistant represents the entire profession to the client/patient and the public being served. The OTA's expressed or demonstrated attitude towards others, as well as towards other health professions and services, is apt to be reflected in the subsequent attitude of the patient towards other therapists and to health care in general. Attitudes may be reflected in outward behavior such as facial expressions, actions, body language and conversation. It is very important to your future that you exhibit behavior that reflects your attitude of openness to learning and motivation to help others. The "Professional Behaviors Self-Assessment Form" (see miscellaneous forms section of handbook) below lists the professional behaviors expected of the OTA student, with examples of the type of observable behavior that is desirable. To assure readiness for entry to the occupational therapy profession, this criterion will be utilized for student reflection and self-assessment. Faculty will use the descriptions of the professional behaviors to communicate with students about expectations and to assess the students' ongoing progress towards attainment.

By midterm all students are required to complete a self-assessment of their professional behaviors in each of their courses using the "Professional Behaviors Self-Assessment Form" and forward an electronic copy to the respective faculty member. Completed forms will be reviewed by faculty. Students will then meet with the Program Chair or designee, to discuss faculty assessment results and receive appropriate feedback. Students having trouble in developing professional behaviors will be expected to coordinate with faculty to identify ways to further their development. This process will be repeated by finals week.

Students will be graded on their ability to:

- complete a thorough and accurate self-assessment
- develop a well thought out, measurable, and attainable plan of action

- demonstrate ongoing effort to address all identified areas of weakness to progress towards entry level

Behavior Expectations During Off-Campus Events

During the OTA Program, students may be required to participate in off-campus learning activities for labs and community events, including the Annual Texas Occupational Therapy Association Conference. All off-campus locations are to be considered extensions of the STC classroom. As such, students are expected to adhere to classroom and laboratory program standards in order to ensure a safe and effective learning environment. Expectations include appropriate attire and demeanor, punctuality, active participation, and adherence to safety standards with respect to care of self, others, and care of environment. Additionally, students are expected to abide by all rules and regulations of the off-campus site. If patients are involved, students will respect the privacy and confidentiality of all health information as per federal law requirements (HIPAA). Failure to adhere to OTA Program standards and behavioral expectations may result in disciplinary action, resulting sanctions, and possible program dismissal.

Unprofessional Behaviors

Unprofessional behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

Clinical and course room demeanor

- Disrespectfulness
- Unacceptable uniform
- Disruptive Behavior
- Demeaning or Humiliating Conduct
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Lying
- Stealing
- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Misuse of clinical/classroom equipment
- Intimidation, Threatening Behaviors, and/or coercion
- Severe, Persistent, and Objectively Offensive Expressions
- Frivolous appeals or complaints
- Facilitating Any Type of Misconduct
- Disruption or Interference with an Investigation, Conference, Meeting, or Appeal
- False and/or unfounded accusation

Student Discipline Classroom/Clinical - Appeal Process

The student may appeal the decision of the course instructor by following the Disciplinary Action and Grievance Due Process. Violations of the STC Student Code of Conduct, NAH Program Standards, and/or Safe Clinical Practice Standards will result in disciplinary action. The sanctions

will be dependent on the nature and severity of the incident and potential or real threat to client safety and well-being or risk for the Program, College, and the Clinical Affiliate Agency.

For more details, please see the South Texas College Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Integrity

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Students in the OTA Program are responsible for adhering to standards of academic integrity.

As per the STC Student Code of Conduct, academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity in the OTA Program and students must act in accordance with this principle. Failing to adhere to academic integrity constitutes academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is a violation of the behavior expected of an OTA student in an academic setting, as well as a student conduct violation.

Scholastic dishonesty on graded assignments and examinations will result in a grade of “ZERO (F)” for the graded assignment or examination. The faculty member may report the incident following the Disciplinary Action Due Process described on page 28 of the NAH Division Student Handbook. **A student dismissed from a NAH program for dishonesty is not eligible for re-admission to the same NAH program and is not eligible for admission to another NAH program.**

Students who engage in academic dishonesty may also face sanctions from the Office of Student Conduct. Students are responsible for adhering to course requirements as specified by the faculty in the course syllabus. Students assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the coursework they submit. Information from instructors regarding the rules and guidelines for examinations, lab practical's, papers, projects, presentations, and other assignments are included in the course syllabus. The following items are adopted from the STC Student Code of Conduct.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism constitutes using someone else’s words, ideas, or images and submitting that work for credit as if it were one’s own without appropriate acknowledgement to the author.

1. Submission of any written assignment or oral presentation implies that the work is the result of that student’s own thought.
2. Use of someone else’s words, ideas and images must be documented by proper use of quotations marks, references, and footnotes. This includes Internet sources.
3. Students must be able to authenticate their work if requested by their course instructor.

MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS: Multiple submissions are submissions of the same or substantially the same work for credit in two or more courses, including but not limited to courses being retaken

for credit. Multiple submissions include the use of any prior academic effort previously submitted for academic credit at STC or a different institution. Multiple submissions will not include those situations where prior written approval by the instructor in the current course is given to the student to use a prior academic work or endeavor.

FABRICATION: Fabrication is the intentional and unauthorized falsification of information or citation in an academic exercise.

1. Inventing data or results and recording or reporting them as factual.
2. Inventing or altering citations, footnotes, etc.
3. Providing a fabricated document to a course instructor in order to obtain an excused absence or to satisfy a course requirement.

The penalties for scholastic dishonesty in graded assignments include the possibility of failure in the course. Scholastic dishonesty in examinations will result in a grade of “F” on the examination and an “F” in the course. Students found guilty of scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action including dismissal from the program and possible dismissal from the College.

Cheating in any form is not compatible with the desired professional behavior and violates the professional Code of Ethics.

Fieldwork students are bound by the ethical standards outlined by the AOTA Principles of Occupational Therapy Ethics, Standards of Practice, the published procedures of the Fieldwork agency related to ethical practice, and by related governmental codes and standard.

Attendance

Consistent classroom attendance is expected of all students. All absences are to be communicated directly by the student prior to class by contacting the faculty member of record or the program secretary. Any absences anticipated by the student are to be discussed with the faculty member ahead of time. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain lecture notes, handouts, and assignments for the day(s) absent from class.

Attendance is defined as physically being in class and awake at all times. A student who falls asleep in class will be asked to leave and will be counted as absent for that class period. This policy also applies to video sessions, online, or in class.

Furthermore, attendance includes being prepared for all classroom, skills, and clinical courses. Students are supplied with a syllabus on the first day of class, which outlines course attendance requirements and necessary supplies. If a student fails to be prepared for class (i.e., missing books, calculators, lab manuals, etc.) or clinical/practicum (required written assignments, reference materials, supplies, and appropriate uniform; expired CPR, immunizations, expired TB test or without insurance coverage, etc.) the student will be asked to leave and will be counted as absent for that particular class/clinical session. The student will also receive a grade of zero for any assignment or assessment conducted during that particular class/clinical session. The

student is responsible for all missed materials resulting from the absence. If the student has an illness or health condition that may put other students, faculty, staff, and/or patients at risk, a doctor's clearance is required to return to class. Institutional holidays recognized either by South Texas College or the assigned AFFILIATE are not required affiliation days. However, the required clinical hours must be met as described in the course objectives.

Regular class attendance is necessary to demonstrate adequate work habits, better assure acquisition of course content and skills, and enrich classroom activities that often rely on the participation and contribution of every student. Absenteeism will influence students' grades in the OTHA courses, just as it will have repercussions for client care and co-worker morale in the workplace.

As this is a professional training program, all students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, be on time, and to stay through the entire class period. Generally, faculty will allow one ten-minute break per hour. If a student must leave at other than break time, they are to do so quietly and unobtrusively, and return promptly.

Students are expected to attend all classes, community outings, school programs, and Fieldwork practicums as assigned, unless otherwise specified. The student is responsible for their own transportation and related expenses for all out-of-classroom activities.

Absences are reserved for personal illness, emergencies, or for religious holy days only. Excessive absences as determined by the instructor regardless of reason may place the student at risk for not meeting the course objectives, being dropped, and/or failing the course.

Classroom attendance is expected of all students. During the long fall and spring semester, students will be allowed 3 unexcused absences. A 4th unexcused absence may result in the student being dropped from the class. During minimester courses or summer sessions, students will be allowed 2 unexcused absences. A 3rd unexcused absence may result in the student being dropped from the class. The student will be ineligible to continue in the program until the course has been repeated successfully. Readmission into the program will be required. (See NAH Division readmission policy.)

Any "unexcused" absence (one in which the student did not contact the instructor prior to the class) automatically results in a deduction from the student's professional behaviors final grade. A Student Performance Improvement Plan of Action will be initiated after the first unexcused absence.

A student who is not progressing satisfactorily toward completion of the course objectives due to non-attendance may be withdrawn from the course by the instructor with the Program Chair's permission.

NOTE: As per NAH Division policy, and as a courtesy to others and for the safety of all involved, children are not allowed in OTA classrooms or labs.

Absenteeism may inhibit the student adequately demonstrating course competencies and thereby passing the course. Faculty will discuss and document specific concerns and consequences with the student. Reliability in attendance must be demonstrated before being recommended to begin a Fieldwork course.

Punctuality

Punctuality is of utmost importance both in the classroom and in the clinic. Class and clinic will begin at the designated time and the student is expected to be present for the full length of each session/day. Extenuating circumstances, which put the student in a position of being late, absent, or having to leave early, must be reported to the instructor of that particular course and Program Chair.

Three (3) late arrivals, arriving past class start time (initial class or following a break), will count as one (1) absence. Likewise, three (3) episodes of leaving class early (prior to instructor dismissal) will be considered one (1) absence.

Refer to the Clinical Attendance for additional attendance and punctuality information.

Violation of this policy will result in a reduction in the professional behaviors grade.

Self-Assessment

A student's ability to effectively self-assess his/her performance is crucial to skill mastery, and indicates a commitment to learning. Students will be periodically required to self-assess lab practical performance. In the self-assessment process, students are expected to utilize appropriate materials such as textbooks, lab manuals, course handouts, etc. for an effective and realistic identification of strengths and weaknesses/errors. Grades/points may be awarded for self-assessment activities at the instructor's discretion.

Assignments

All assignments are to be completed and turned in at the designated due date and time as determined by the instructor. Grading criteria for assignments submitted beyond the due date and time is at the discretion of the course instructor.

All Fieldwork Level II Practicum coursework must be completed within eighteen months of completion of the classroom non-capstone courses. A student will not be eligible for graduation until all academic and Fieldwork requirements are met. Failure to do so will prohibit the student from successfully completing the educational program requirements as per the professional accreditation agency. The student will not be eligible to graduate or apply to sit for the national certification examination.

Laboratory Participation And Safety

In order to achieve competence with various occupational therapy data collection and intervention skills, all OTA students will be required to participate in simulated lab settings as clients/patients and student OTAs under the supervision of program faculty. Throughout the program, students will receive comprehensive information on safety related to program equipment, material and activities relative to each individual course. Indications, contraindications, precautions, physiological effects, potential risks and the application of various occupational therapy data collection and intervention skills common to the practice of occupational therapy will also be reviewed. Students will take turns role-playing the student OTA and the client/patient. All students will participate in select activities in occupational therapy data collection skills and interventions, which involve, but not limited to, physical activity, the use of massage, heat, cold, electricity, traction, and all forms of therapeutic exercise. Informed consent to participate must be appropriately documented upon entry to the OTA program.

All measures shall be taken to protect the health and welfare of all students and faculty participating in laboratory sessions. Students are responsible for disclosing any medical condition(s) that they are aware of or for which they have sought a physician's care, prior to initiation of therapeutic intervention. Likewise, students are expected to disclose if they are currently receiving physical therapy or occupational therapy treatments for a musculoskeletal condition. Known medical conditions of individual students will remain confidential unless the information is voluntarily disclosed to the class by the student.

All OTA students have the right to reasonable accommodations to allow for full participation in laboratory activities. Students also have the right to be treated in a dignified manner while maintaining student's modesty, confidentiality, and privacy within the laboratory setting at all times. All OTA students have the right to defer participation in select laboratory activities if the student presents with a medical condition that would predispose them to negative effects (i.e., pregnancy, post-surgery, acute illness).

Proof of documentation of the medical condition by a Texas licensed physician and approval by the instructor is required. Students also have the right to terminate treatment applications received during laboratory sessions should they experience negative effects.

During all laboratory sessions, students are expected to adhere to the laboratory dress code and to follow program safety standards with respect to care of self, care of environment, and care of clients as outlined in the Nursing and Allied Health Division Safe Clinical Practice Standard. Faculty supervision or approval is required for electrical modality use in all labs.

On an annual basis, inspection and calibration of program electrical equipment will occur to ensure safety. The faculty will monitor the status and safety of all equipment used in the program. If a student becomes aware that a piece of equipment is faulty or damaged, he/she is expected to notify the instructor and/or lab assistant for the equipment to be red-tagged with a "do not use" message attached.

Social Media

The OTA Program supports the use of social media and upholds a student's right to personal communication via social media sites. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to adhere to the high standards of the health care profession about maintaining confidentiality.

Under the direction and supervision of the OTA Program Chair or designee, and in collaboration with SOTA Club Social Media Relations Officers, the Program utilizes social media methods such as Instagram to inform the community of program sponsored student events, provide education on OTA Program activities and the role of the OTA, and promote public relations between the Program and community. All photographs and/or videos must be approved by the OTA Program Chair or designee. No student may post OTA Program related photographs and/or videos on their personal social media pages.

Students will provide authorization for the release of photographs and/or video for purposes other than examination. Students have the right to rescind the release of photographs and/or video for purposes other than examination in writing at any time.

Safety Procedures

Students injured while functioning in student roles in the clinical area, laboratory or classroom must report the incident to the course/clinical faculty immediately and within 24 hours use SafetyStratus to complete the **Report Incident** form located on the Clinical Affairs webpage https://nah.southtexascollege.edu/clinical_affairs.html. This report is automatically submitted to the Environmental, Health, Safety & Risk Department which will notify the appropriate STC departments of the incident. The Incident Reporting Procedures are available on the Clinical Affairs webpage and in the Appendix (page 48). The student is also responsible for completing any reporting process required by the agency, if applicable.

Refer to [NAH Student Handbook](#) for procedure and form.

Students enrolled in Nursing and Allied Health Division Programs are required to carry some form of medical expense coverage, i.e. Medicaid, third party, or student medical insurance. Such availability of medical insurance should ensure access to emergency services for all Nursing and Allied Health Division students.

Communicable Diseases

A safe environment must be maintained for all students and clients. Students with a communicable disease must report the condition to their faculty (classroom or clinical) immediately and follow STC Safety Protocols. The Nursing/Allied Health Programs will:

1. Make information on the prevention of communicable diseases available to students.
2. Provide all reasonable precautions to protect confidentiality.
 - a. However, communicable diseases will be reported as applicable to appropriate

3. authorities, i.e., tuberculosis.
4. Students must be able to meet acceptable performance standards and course objectives.
5. Students with a communicable disease may attend classes or perform duties at the clinical site if their presence does not pose a threat or danger to that individual, others in the College, or the clients they will be in contact with during the clinical experience.
6. Students are expected to follow the affiliating agency's guidelines governing caring for clients with communicable diseases

Grading System

Grading Scale

At the end of the course, students will earn a grade based on the following grade scale for all OTA courses.

Letter Grade	Percentage Earned
A	100% – 90%
B	89 %– 80%
C	79% – 75%
D	74% – 65%
F	64% or below

Students must achieve a grade of 75% (C) or better in the course. The numerical equivalent will round off (only for the Final Grade) at 0.5 or above, for example, 84.5 would round to 85; 84.4 would be 84; 69.5 would round to 70, and 91.5 would become 92.

The students will be required to engage in all classroom activities and will be evaluated based on the graded assignments as outlined in the list of assignments for each course and as stipulated in the course syllabus.

To ensure competency prior to Practicum placement, students must demonstrate a final grade average of 75% or higher for the Examination category of each OTHA course, regardless of the overall final course average. Students must also demonstrate a final average of 75% or higher for the Laboratory Examination Category of each OTHA course with a laboratory component, regardless of the overall final course average. Students who fail to meet the minimum 75% average in either category/component will receive a maximum grade of "D" in the course and will be ineligible to proceed in the program sequence. Readmission into the program will be required to successfully complete the course. See NAH readmission policy.

Final Course Grades will be available for review via STC JagNet following the close of each semester. It is the student's responsibility to verify his/her grades. Any concerns with respect to accuracy should be addressed immediately.

Incompletes

Non-Capstone courses: Because OTHA courses build on previous courses, INCOMPLETES are rarely given and can affect a student's course of study.

Refer to the Academic Affairs Guidelines on Incompletes for more information.

All academic and/or OTHA course INCOMPLETES must be removed before initiating a Fieldwork Level II placement.

Fieldwork Courses: If passing and with the approval from the fieldwork educator and Fieldwork Coordinator, a student may request a maximum of two weeks additional time for OTHA 2366 if it is agreed that more time is needed to refine their skills. The OTHA 2367 course will be then delayed for a later start date and the student may earn an "Incomplete" grade for that course.

Capstone Practicum courses must be completed within eighteen months of the completion of the academic and technical non-capstone courses listed in the OTA degree plan.

Academic Or Technical Courses Appeal

Any South Texas College student has the right to appeal academic decisions or actions that he/she considers unjust or improper. The primary responsibility for assigning grades in a course belongs to the individual course instructor, and unless the student can present compelling evidence of discrimination, differential treatment, or procedural irregularities, the judgment of the instructor responsible for the course will stand.

A student who believes that an improper or incorrect grade was assigned should first take informal steps to resolve the situation. The request for a grade change must occur before the end of the semester following the semester in which the grade was assigned. The student should first discuss the matter with the instructor. If not resolved, the student should discuss the matter with the Program Chair who will attempt to resolve the grade dispute.

Student must refer to SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE Board Policy FLD – [Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student Complaints](#) and follow the Grade Appeal Procedures outlined in the Academic Affairs Division webpage: [Procedure and Forms](#).

Examination Standards

Students must take examinations at their scheduled time and date. It is the student's responsibility to notify the course instructor prior to the examination if they will be unable take the examination at the scheduled time due to extenuating circumstances. Arrangements for missed examinations must be made with the instructor before the student returns to the classroom. The format of the examination may differ from the original exam, i.e., an essay examination instead of multiple-choice examination. A student will not be allowed to take the

missed examination if they did not notify the course instructor prior to the scheduled start time for the examination. The student will automatically receive a grade of "0" for any unexcused missed examination.

No examination scores will be dropped.

If a student scores below 75% on an examination, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with the instructor to identify areas of weakness and formulate a plan of action. This plan may require that students consult with the NAH Guided Pathways Specialist, participate in mandatory tutoring sessions with program faculty, the OTA lab assistant, and/or CLE staff. Tutoring sessions will be scheduled to the availability of the previously mentioned individuals.

Students failing 3 or more exams in a course will be required to attend a faculty lead team intervention with the Guided Pathways Specialist, Course Instructor, and Program Chair to determine barriers for success and to create strategies for improvement.

Students must demonstrate competency of at least a final average grade of 75% average in the examination category. If a student receives a final average grade of 75% in the Exam category, a grade of "D" will be recorded as the final course grade or the lesser grade if the final overall grade average at the end of the semester is below a "D" average. As a result, the student will not be allowed to progress in the OTA Program sequence.

Examination Procedures for A Secure Testing Environment

Exam procedures are as follows:

- Cell phones are to be turned off or placed on silence/vibration mode during testing.
- Students must sit in a staggered format in the classroom, if space permits
- Students will not be allowed to leave the room until they have completed and submitted their exam.
- Desks are to remain clear of all personal belongings.
- Students are to exit the exam room once they have completed and submitted their examination
- Students are NOT to remove testing materials from the classroom.
- Students are prohibited from communicating, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting any part of a test, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, for any purpose.
- Students may not talk to each other during an exam.
- Students may not refer to other student's testing materials.
- Noise reducing soft ear plugs may be used during testing.
- Blank sheets of paper will be provided by the instructor for use during the examination

Failure to adhere to the above will be considered academic dishonesty and may result in a failing grade as well as grounds for dismissal from the OTA Program.

Examination Review

Program faculty will make every effort to grade examinations in a timely manner. If a student believes there is an error in the grading of an item or question on an examination, the student can request review of that item by scheduling a time to meet with the faculty member. The student will identify the item in question and provide a rationale as to why it should be reconsidered for credit, as well as provide the resource/evidence supporting the rationale. Acceptable resources are textbooks, recommended reference books, instructor generated handouts, etc. Individual student notes taken during the lecture, Internet sources and/or phone apps are not considered an acceptable resource. All final decisions are at the discretion of the course instructor.

NOTE: Due to time constraints, final written exams are exempt from this review process.

Lab Practical Examination

Lab practical examinations are a way for the instructor to measure students understanding of the course content and developing clinical skills. Students are required to participate in all lab activities and practice with their peers to develop these hands-on clinical skills. In preparation for the lab practical examination, all students are required to complete a minimum of three peer practice examinations. These sessions are intended for students to help each other enhance skills and correct deficiencies, in a relaxed atmosphere.

There will be multiple lab practical/skills check-offs scheduled throughout the semester, and each lab practical/skills check-off is designed to evaluate proficiency in specific skills and knowledge relevant to occupational therapy practice.

Students must complete and obtain a score of 75% or higher on the lab practical examination.

If a student receives a grade below 75% on any lab practical/skills check-off, they may request only one retake; however, they must first meet with the course instructor to collaboratively develop an individual remediation plan, with an agreed upon completion date, with the course instructor/assigned representative to develop the necessary skills to master the practical/skill check-off retake. If the remediation plan is not completed by the agreed upon date, the student will not be allowed to complete the re-examination and a grade of "0" will be recorded. If the re-examination is not completed upon the agreed upon date, the student will not be allowed to complete the re-examination and a grade of "0" will be recorded.

A max score of 75% will be recorded on a retake. If the student fails to complete the second attempt successfully, the grade will remain as is for the second attempt. Regardless of whether the initial attempt grade was higher for the lab practical/skills check-off.

The student will only be allowed **two retests** per semester on lab practical/skills check-offs. Therefore, they must be well prepared before each lab practical/skills check-off and practice the skill extensively before testing.

If a student receives an overall average grade below 75% in the Lab Practical Examination course category, a grade of "D" grade will be recorded as the final course grade, or the lesser grade if the final overall grade average at the end of the semester is below a "D" average (64 and below). As a result, the student will not be allowed to progress in the OTA program sequence.

All Lab Practical examinations must be completed successfully to progress within the program sequence. It is the student's responsibility to ensure successful completion of every lab practical examination regardless of exam grades. Should a student fail to check off on all required skills within a course, a maximum grade of "D" will be issued for the course, and the student is ineligible to continue in the program. Refer to NAH Program Readmission Standard.

Due to the extensive assessment process involved in the grading of Lab Practical examinations, program faculty will make every effort to have results available within one week of testing. Grades will be issued, and feedback provided on an individual basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure timely acquisition of grades and feedback.

Lab Practical Student Participation

Students routinely participate in lab practical examinations by assuming the role of a standardized patient, and/or video-taping another student's lab practical exam. These students are not to assist their peers by giving either written, verbal or gestural suggestions on the performance of any lab practical examination. Students are not to discuss any aspect of their own lab practical or any lab practical examinations they may have witnessed or participated in until all students have been tested. This includes case scenarios, interventions or strategies used for treatment, as well as any feedback provided by the instructor. Failure to adhere to the above will be considered academic dishonesty and may result in a disciplinary action, including failing grade and/or grounds for dismissal from the OTA Program.

Lab Practical Review

A student's ability to effectively self-assess his/her performance is crucial to skill mastery, and indicates a commitment to learning. Students will be periodically required to self-assess lab practical performance. Lab Practical Examinations are video recorded (at the discretion of the instructor) and made available to the student after all lab practical examinations are completed. Students are required to review their video, complete and submit a performance self-assessment (provided by the instructor). In the self-assessment process, students are expected to utilize appropriate materials such as textbooks, lab manuals, course handouts, etc. for an effective and realistic identification of strengths and weaknesses/errors.

Breach Of Safety/Automatic Failure

The OTA Program at South Texas College is committed to progress into clinic those students who have demonstrated safe, competent performance on lab practical examinations. During lab practical performance, should a student perform a simulated treatment in an unsafe manner in which the simulated patient's or the Student OTAs safety is of concern, the maximum grade a

student can earn will be 74% (D), resulting in automatic failure of the laboratory examination due to a breach of safety.

In an effort to maintain a high standard of safety, and to be fair to students, the following are considered reasons for automatic failure. While comprehensive, this list is not all inclusive. Additional scenarios will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Failure to:

- Lock the wheelchair or other device
- Secure the patient in a transfer device (i.e. sliding board, Hoyer lift, etc.)
- Maintain precautions for the diagnosis (i.e. THR precautions, cardiac, etc.)
- Recognize indications, contraindications, and precautions to OT treatment
- Check machinery/ equipment for broken parts, etc. prior to use
- Maintain prescribed ROM (i.e. moves beyond the end of safe/ pain-free range)

Failure to provide treatment as indicated in simulated POC (developed by the OT):

- Treatment to the incorrect body part (i.e. right vs left, etc.)
- Adding any treatment or interventions not included in the simulated POC

Refer to OTA Student Standard **Re-Examination** for full explanation of lab practical retest procedure.

Information regarding the Criminal History Evaluation can be found at:

https://ptot.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Criminal-History-Evaluation-Letter_2022.09.pdf

Additional information regarding rules governing licensure may be found in the complete June 2024 Occupational Therapy rules located on the Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy web site at <https://www.ptot.texas.gov/page/home>. Students requesting clarification of this statement may also call directly to the Texas State Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners at (512) 305-6900. All information/ discussions will remain confidential.

Students requesting clarification may speak with the OTA Program Chair or the Dean of the Nursing and Allied Health Division. All information/discussions will remain confidential.

Additional information regarding STC NAH standards is included in the Division of Nursing & Allied Health Student Handbook.

Readmission Procedure

Student Failure

A student must formally request through email or letter, enrollment in the Progressions Process to seek re-admission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program for the upcoming cohort, if the student fails only one of the program courses during a respective semester.

Failure of two Occupational Therapy Assistant Program courses in one semester will result in ineligibility for readmission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

A student may repeat an OTHA course previously failed only one time.

Students failing OTHA 2160 for safety or unprofessional behavior will need to petition the NAH Division Progression's Committee in order to be allowed to retake the course.

In regard to Fieldwork II courses, OTHA 2366 and OTHA 2367, the student will obtain a failing grade if they do not achieve a minimum passing score on the AOTA Evaluation form or if they cannot demonstrate entry-level practice skills at the end of the eight-week Practicum course.

If a student fails a Practicum course because of safety infractions involving patient care, they will not be allowed to register for the course a second time and will not be eligible for graduation.

If the student receives a failing grade in OTHA 2366 due to unable to successfully complete required fieldwork competencies/standards, they will not be allowed to progress to the next course, OTHA 2367, but may be allowed to repeat the OTHA 2366 course.

If the student receives a failing grade in OTHA 2366 due to "unsafe practice", illegal, or unethical behavior at the Practicum setting, they will not be allowed to progress to the next course, OTHA 2367, and, according to the NAH Division Disciplinary Process, may face dismissal from the OTA program.

If the student receives a failing grade in OTHA 2367 due to unable to successfully complete required fieldwork competencies/standards, they will not be allowed to graduate from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, but may be allowed to repeat the OTHA 2367 course.

If the student receives a failing grade in OTHA 2367 due to "unsafe practice", illegal, or unethical behavior at the Practicum setting, they will not be allowed to graduate from the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, and, according to the NAH Division Disciplinary Process, may face dismissal from the OTA program.

There are established grievance procedures outlined in the College Student Handbook and the NAH Division Student Handbook if a student does not agree with the grade earned.

OTA Program Readmission Portfolio Process

See NAH Division policy (page 33 NAH Handbook)

As indicated in the “Readmission Process” outlined in the *STC NAH Division Student Handbook*, in order to be considered for readmission to the OTA Program, students are expected to enter into a Contractual Agreement for the purpose of problem-solving and resolution of areas of concern. The student will be required to furnish proof of successful completion to the Program Chair, designee, and/or progressions committee, i.e. documentation, grades, skills/lab check-offs, course audits, etc. To assist students in this process, the following guidelines for development of a remediation portfolio are offered:

NOTE: Students who do not complete and provide evidence of prescribed learning contracts are not eligible for readmission consideration.

*The following instructions on how to create your remediation portfolio are for reference purposes only. You may alter your required portfolio to meet your **individual** needs.*

What is a Portfolio?

A portfolio is a binder or book that shows off your work and abilities. It will serve as a tool that you develop that offers a picture of your experience, your education, your accomplishments, and your skills, as they relate to identified obstacles, areas of concern, and/or areas of weakness. It offers tangible proof of your abilities and your potential for success in the OTA Program.

Developing Your Portfolio:

1. Review the Contractual Agreement developed in coordination with your Program Chair and/or designee, which includes identified obstacles to program success, areas of concern, and/or areas of weakness.
2. Develop a timeline for completion of recommended activities/courses.
3. Compile evidence of participation in remediation activities and any supporting documents.
4. Enter data into your portfolio.

The portfolio should include:

1. Table of Contents (for easy reference)
2. Summary of obstacles, weaknesses, etc. and related goals: A description of what your identified areas of weakness are (such as work ethic, time management, skill performance areas, etc.) and specific activities/experiences you completed to address them.
3. Specific activities as indicated by the course instructor or program chair.

Program Re-Admission

The Program Chair, Fieldwork Coordinator and the Division Dean utilizing the following guidelines, will evaluate consideration for a student's re-admission into the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program:

1. Meet with the instructor or Program Chair to review the situation and plan strategies.
2. Formally request to enroll in the Progressions process
3. Write a self-assessment of the situation
4. Develop measurable goals for remediation of the difficulties and develop implementation strategies to master the goals
5. Review the document such as a portfolio with the program advisor
6. Petition for re-admission into the program with the Division's Progression Committee
7. Receive approval from the Division of Nursing and Allied Health Progressions Committee to continue.
 - a. A student may request only ONE re-admission into the OTA Program
 - b. Readmission is dependent on availability of space in lab or clinical placements after the current class progression needs are met. (not automatic)
 - c. Failure of two OTHA courses in one semester will result in ineligibility for readmission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
 - d. A student may be denied readmission to the OTA Program if failure or withdrawal was related to unsafe practice, dishonesty, and/or unethical practice.
 - e. Consideration for readmission is based on the following:
 - Recommendation from a previous faculty member
 - Academic grade average and/or clinical evaluation
 - Reasons for withdrawal/failure
 - Resolution of external situation causing the problem, if appropriate
 - Adherence to and completion of any contractual agreements
 - Progression in program sequence will be dependent on the availability of clinical Fieldwork sites.

Re-Admission Priority

After ascertaining that the student has met the general criteria listed above, the following priority guidelines will determine placement on a waiting list for available openings in the following program class.

First priority: Students who were selected for admission into the program but were unable to begin the previous Fall sequence.

Second priority: **Once** enrolled in the program, students who withdrew for personal/health reasons and were in good academic standing (GPA above 3.0) at the time of withdrawal. For example: family crisis, personal health, pregnancy, and finances.

Third priority: Students who withdraw or who failed an OTA or required academic course due to poor academic/clinical performance.

The waiting list will be compiled according to priority rating. The Nursing and Allied Health Division Progressions Committee will rank a student falling into more than one priority after evaluation. Students who have not adhered to and completed previous contractual agreements are ineligible for readmission.

Re-Admission Process

If the student plans to re-apply for admission, they will be required to develop a remediation plan evaluating the problem area and outlining specific activities/courses to improve their performance if allowed to return. This plan should help the student to overcome the obstacles preventing success if readmitted to the OTA Program.

When applying for readmission to the OTA Program, the student must schedule an interview with the Program Chair and submit a written request to be considered for readmission within the established timelines.

Students must re-enter the OTA Program with the new program cohort to ensure continuity of learning. The student will be given credit for previous courses successfully completed, and allowed to re-enter in the corresponding semester from which they withdrew/failed. The student will be required to re-take all courses from the semester he/she failed out of.

The student will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation for their course withdrawal or failure. Following appropriate evaluation by the Committee and Program Chair, the student is expected to enter into a contractual agreement for the purpose of problem solving and resolution of areas of concern. The student will be required to furnish proof of successful completion to the OTA Program Chair, i.e. documentation, grades, skills/lab check-offs, course audits.

Readmitted students must schedule a meeting with the Program faculty within two weeks of re-entry. A regularly scheduled meeting time will be established for the remainder of the semester to ensure the student's compliance with course assignments. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in administrative dismissal.

Program Withdrawal

Students choosing to withdraw from the OTA program must notify contact the Program Chair by email or formal letter so that career/program alternatives can be discussed and/or a referral to a counselor may be made, if appropriate. The NAH Division Dean will also be notified of the student's withdrawal.

Any student in the OTA Program who drops or withdraws from an OTHA course will be withdrawn from the OTA program. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the withdrawal

process. Merely discontinuing class attendance does not constitute a drop or withdrawal from an OTHA course.

Withdrawing students from Selective Admission programs, regardless of the reason for exiting, must schedule an exit interview with their Program Chair or Program Advisor. A written signed record and/or clinical evaluation tool must be completed. A Drop/Withdrawal form will also be completed with the student at that meeting and a copy attached to the exit documents.

The Program Chair will maintain a file for their program' withdrawal forms for statistical purposes.

Note: Failure to formally meet with the Program Chair will make the student ineligible for readmission or admission to selective admission programs in the future.

When students withdraw from a program, they must also go to the College Admission Center to officially withdraw from the course with a grade of "W" and any other program courses in that semester. Failure to follow the withdrawal procedure will result in a failing grade of an "F".

A student who is not progressing satisfactorily toward completion of the course objectives due to non-attendance may be withdrawn from the course by the instructor with the Program Chair's permission. Students who withdraw due to extenuating circumstances (i.e., medical emergency, pregnancy, etc....) may request to be re-instated into the OTA program the following year. The student must meet with the NAH Counselor and OTA program faculty to discuss the reason for the withdrawal and to develop a formal plan for return. Students granted this request for "temporary" withdrawal from the program may do so for a period of no more than one academic year. A student must submit a request in writing with supporting documentation/rationale as to why they are withdrawing. They must submit a plan of action on how they will successfully complete the remaining program sequence. To assure adequacy of knowledge and skills, re-entering students will be required to re-take all courses from the semester withdrawn from.

Program Abandonment

Students who choose to leave the OTA program without providing an official written or verbal notice to either the OTA Program chair, OTA faculty or staff of their intent to withdraw, will be considered as an "abandonment" of the OTA program. The student will receive a grade of a "O" on all coursework not completed and receive a final course grade based on all the required coursework for the semester. As a result of the abandonment, the student will not be allowed proceed in the program sequence, to initiate the Progressions process for re-entry, nor will be allowed to re-apply or be re-accepted into the OTA program.

OTA Program Activities

Student Occupational Therapy Assistant Club

Student organizations and clubs provide students with the opportunity to supplement classroom work with activities that meet personal needs for companionship, civic involvement and creative effort, and promote leadership development and effective group participation.

All OTA students are encouraged to obtain membership in the Student OT Association, SOTA. Active SOTA club involvement helps students develop the profession-related awareness, commitment and organizational skills needed to support consumer groups, community service organizations, and professional associations. Students may participate in fund-raising activities and service projects to support their attendance costs to attend out of area meetings and other club activities.

Students are further encouraged to become members of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and the Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA) There are many benefits associated with student membership in professional associations.

The Student Occupational Therapy Assistant (SOTA) Club is a service organization comprised of students in the OTA program. The goal of the organization is to promote networking and personal growth opportunities, encourage involvement, and develop students as active participants in their professional organization as well as contributing members of society. Members will promote the profession of occupational therapy through membership in the TOTA, and participation in local, state, and/or national OT related meetings, conferences or activities. They will foster social responsibility via service to the local community and participation in community events.

Members of every incoming class are encouraged to join and participate in the existing Club regardless of whether or not they hold an officer position. An OTA Program Faculty member will serve as the faculty sponsor for the SOTA Club. In consultation with faculty sponsors, elected officers lead the organization in service activities, fund raising, social events to benefit collaborative efforts among students, and other activities deemed appropriate by the organization.

Student Club Officers are selected to act as spokespersons for the students' respective classes. Club Officers are also responsible for maintaining communication between the students and the OTA Faculty or College staff. Selection for a one-year term will be by majority vote of the class. If an officer is unable to complete the one-year term, an election will be held for a replacement to serve the remaining portion of the term.

*Student Club Officers are nominated and elected by their fellow class members for the following positions:

- President – Preside over meetings, lead programming, plan strategy and set goals, select committees and make special appointments. Act as a liaison between PTA Program Faculty or staff members, class, and if indicated, the community.
- Vice President – Support the president, support officers, oversee committees.
- Secretary – Take club meeting minutes, maintain records, keep club materials organized, answer club correspondence, and send thank-you notes.
- Treasurer – Control the collection and disbursement of club’s money, coordinate with program secretary, STC cashier and/or the business office.
- Historian –Take pictures throughout the year to record class activities, meetings and events. Create media releases for club activities and service projects. Manage and update the OTA display case.
- Community Liaison – Act as a liaison between OTA Program club and community to identify and plan service activities and/or projects.
- Social Media Relations Officer (SMRO) - Level I and II SMRO’s will collaborate to utilize and maintain social media (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) to promote OTA program events and activities under the direction of an assigned faculty/staff member.

Elections will be held annually in the first month of the fall semester (year 1 and year 2). The SOTA Club functions according to the College’s policies and procedures for College clubs, therefore all club activities and transactions must be approved by the Faculty Sponsor and the student activities office as needed. Club members participate in various community involvement activities as well as fundraising activities.

Fund raising activities are determined and organized by the Club and require college approval (Student Activities Dept.). Funds generated by the Club are typically used for membership in the Texas Occupational Therapy Association, travel expenses for Level II students to attend the annual TOTA Mountain Central Conference, pinning ceremony expenses, TherapyEd National Certification examination preparation workshop, and to help with licensure application fees (if funds are available.) The Faculty Sponsor or Program Chair must approve travel and Pinning Ceremony budgets. Funds may also be used for other student-related activities or expenses as the Club deems fit and determines via majority vote. The College must approve said expenditures. Any monies in excess of the current year expenses will be donated to the subsequent class's Club account (for use by the upcoming senior class). Membership and active participation in the SOTA Club is expected of all students.

* PLEASE NOTE: As failure of a Practicum course necessitates a course repeat, probationary status, and delayed graduation, students who fail a Practicum course are not eligible to serve as an officer with their original cohort class. Elections in such cases will be held as needed.

Community Service

Consistent with the expectations of AOTA and the Occupational Therapy Profession, the OTA program emphasizes development of social responsibility in students so that upon graduation students demonstrate an awareness of social responsibility, citizenship, and advocacy, including participation in community and service organizations and activities. The NAH Division, OTA

Program, and/or SOTA Club identify, organize, or sponsor several service and community projects and volunteer opportunities for students to participate in throughout the program. OTA students are expected to complete 5 service-oriented volunteer hours during each semester of the OTA program. These hours may be obtained through activities and projects facilitated by the NAH Division, OTA Program, and/or SOTA Club; individual students may also identify and propose new service opportunities for SOTA Club members, related to their community, church, or other service/volunteer work. While students are encouraged to volunteer more than 5 hours, a minimum of 5 hours must be documented and submitted to the OTA Program Chair using the Community Service Log (Form E) as part of the requirements of the student's Professional Behaviors grade. Service Logs are to be scanned and submitted along with Professional Behaviors Self-Assessment Forms at the close of each semester. Students should obtain approval for activities not sponsored by the OTA Program and/or SOTA Club to ensure they are appropriate and permissible to include for the required hours for social responsibility.

Pinning Ceremony

OTA program graduates are recognized with an annual pinning ceremony following the final semester in the program. The ceremony is a time when students are recognized for their academic and clinical achievements and receive their OTA Program pin. The OTA Program sponsors the OTA Pinning Ceremony. The graduating class determines the theme, decorations, refreshments, etc.

This pinning ceremony is a privilege limited to students of the OTA Program who have successfully completed all the necessary requirements. These include the college degree plan ("B" or better in Intro to OT; all other courses with a "C" or better) as well as program specific graduation requirements (passing the Exit Exam). Any student who has received an "I" in a Practicum experience, which requires repetition or remediation for completion, or who is unable to pass the Exit Exam within 3 attempts is not eligible to receive their pin, certificate of completion, or awards/recognition**. Any student falling under these circumstances will be issued their pin upon successful completion of requirements.

** Students lacking degree plan requirements may still be eligible to participate fully in the STC Commencement Exercises.

OTA Program Dress Code

Classroom Dress Code

Purpose: Students who enter a health profession must look and act professional. The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program utilizes a Classroom Dress Code to adapt the student to life as a healthcare professional. Both women and men are required to follow the dress code when on campus and during ALL program related activities as follows:

Classroom Uniform

- Red Scrubs with program patch worn on the left shoulder
- OT Program lab t-shirt is to be worn underneath the scrub top

Scrubs should fit properly, i.e., not tight, low cut or revealing. Midriff should not be exposed whether in a sitting, standing or stooping position.

Footwear:

- Non-slip, closed toe athletic shoes are required.
- Shoes/sneakers must be in good condition.
- Shoes and laces should be well maintained and kept tied.
- Socks or stockings must be worn with shoes.
- Cowboy boots, hiking style boots, Toe sneakers/shoes, high heels, flip-flops, sandals; slip-on styles such as "VANS", "BOBS", "TOMS" or "CROCS"; and high-top/basketball style athletic shoes are not allowed.

Accessories:

- No more than one ring per hand.
- No more than one earring per ear. Earrings must be standard earlobe piercing. Plugs are not allowed.
- No dangling earrings, necklaces, watches, or bracelets.
- A well-fitting watch with a second hand must be worn.
- No other body jewelry/piercing permitted.
- ALL visible tattoos are to remain covered.
- Caps, visors, and sunglasses are not allowed.

Miscellaneous:

- All grooming should take place at home.
- STC photo ID is to be worn above the waist while on campus.
- Hair must be clean, well groomed, and neatly pulled back (jaw type clips are not allowed in the classroom). Hair should be pulled back away from the face and out of the eyes

with use of barrettes/clips and/or headbands as needed, and off the shoulders in a neatly styled ponytail, braid, or bun. If a hairstyle with bangs is worn, bangs must either be secured or must be short enough in length so as not to obscure or fall into the eyes. Unnatural hair colors or extreme styles are not permitted.

- Hair barrettes/clips and headbands used to secure hair should be conservative and of a color compatible to dress or hair color. Ribbons, scarves, caps, hats, beanies, “do rags”, and/or bandannas are not acceptable. Exceptions may be made for religious headgear.
- Males are expected to be clean-shaven on a daily basis. If males have a beard, mustache and/or goatee, they must be neatly trimmed close to the face.
- Good oral hygiene and clean bodies, free of odor is essential.
- Cosmetics should be applied discreetly.
- Perfume, cologne, or odor due to smoking is not acceptable.
- Fingernails must be clean, neatly rounded and are not to exceed the tip of the finger in length.
- If desired fingernails may be freshly polished with clear or neutral colored polish only.
- Absolutely no acrylic or artificial nails permitted.
- Outerwear such as sweaters and jackets worn in the classroom are to be of a solid, neutral color, free of logos/prints, and reflect a professional demeanor. If a pullover sweater is worn, it must be with a collared shirt underneath. Hooded pullover sweatshirts/“hoodies” are not allowed in the classroom.

NOTE: A specified uniform color STC OTA Program polo shirt and black or khaki pants (unless instructed otherwise) are to be worn during all program related off-campus activities and during guest lectures.

STC OTA Program polo shirts are not to be worn as personal attire in public. Discretion should be used when wearing a uniform shirt during lunch and/or after class.

PLEASE NOTE: As representatives of the STC OTA Program, as well as the profession of occupational therapy, students are expected to maintain a professional appearance and adhere to the dress code during all program related activities, and AT ALL TIMES WHEN ON CAMPUS; including before/after class; while in the library, CLE, and computer lab; and during class/lab breaks, open lab sessions, meetings, etc. As such, uniforms are to be worn in its complete state, tattoos covered, piercings removed; no caps, visors, sunglasses, etc. unless otherwise stated by the course instructor.

Failure to adhere to the established Dress Code is considered noncompliant and unprofessional behavior and will impact a student’s professional behavior grade. Students out of dress code may be dismissed from class until compliance is established. This will result in a documented absence for that day.

Labs

Students may be requested to wear swimsuit tops or warm-ups for lab practical sessions.

Shorts (athletic or bike style) and halter-tops may be required for some the lab activities. Non-skid low heel shoes must be worn for safety purposes.

Community/Class Presentations:

Program polo shirt

Solid color slacks (tan or black)

School Shirt must be worn tucked in waistbands

Student ID/Name badge

Fieldwork sites

In addition to wearing a name badge, the students should contact the Fieldwork supervisors to clarify the dress code expectation at each clinical site assigned to the student. If required, OTA Program students may wear a lab coat with the South Texas College insignia patch sewn on the left sleeve.

General

Fingernails must be clean and neatly trimmed to not scratch others during lab activities. Artificial nails are not allowed due to infection control issues.

Hair must be clean, well groomed, and pulled back away from the face to be in compliance with Infection Control Standards. Males must keep beards and/or mustaches clean and neatly trimmed or must be clean-shaven.

Good oral hygiene and clean bodies, free of odor, is essential.

Cosmetics should be applied discreetly; excessive use of perfume or cologne is not acceptable.

One earring per ear allowed. Lip, nose, eyebrow, and multiple ear piercings are not allowed while in OTA uniform. Gages no larger than 00g (3/8") allowed. Large hoop earrings not allowed.

All visible tattoos will be covered at all times while in OTA uniform.

Laboratory Dress Code

Students are required to follow a Laboratory Dress Code during all laboratory sessions to allow for full participation and safety. Laboratory uniform includes:

Laboratory Tops

- A solid color, loose fitting. T-shirt should fit properly, i.e., not tight, or revealing and/or not excessively long so as to extend beyond the length of shorts. Midriff should not be exposed whether in a sitting, standing or stooping position. Shirts should not have color

variations, stripes and/or patterns, tearing, frays, or other agency/facility/job site logos. (Approved therapy related T-shirts from PT & OT campus shirt sales are acceptable).

- Women are required to have a backless halter-top available as needed for specific labs.
- Sports bras are not allowed in labs that require exposure of the upper extremities, back, neck, or trunk.

Laboratory Bottoms

- Black or grey solid color shorts with elastic waistband
- Shorts should be mid-thigh in length; they must be loose enough to allow for palpation and effective exposure/treatment of the hip region.
- When lower extremity exposure is not required, solid black or grey biker shorts which extend no further than mid-thigh may be worn underneath required athletic shorts.
- When lower extremity exposure is not required, students may wear solid black or grey, full-length athletic and/or yoga style pants (with open/boot-bottom) in lieu of required athletic shorts. Exercise/ compression tights, skorts, leggings and capris are not acceptable.
- The use of spandex biker shorts, boxer briefs and/or boxer shorts underneath required athletic shorts is not allowed during labs requiring exposure of the lower extremities.
- Unless otherwise indicated, students are required to wear closed toe, non-skid, low-heeled shoes, and socks.
- Appropriate foundation garments should be worn so as to maintain professional demeanor and should not be visible either through or outside of clothing.

All students MUST be always prepared for laboratory sessions. Any student not prepared with their personal proper lab attire will be required to don a patient gown and/or program owned lab attire for participation in planned lab activities. Students are expected to be ready in appropriate lab attire for lab classes (refer to course schedules) and/or have lab attire readily available on their person or in their locker.

Failure to arrive prepared will result in the student being tardy. Refer to “Punctuality”.

Program Media Standards

Cell Phones & Electronic Media (Classroom)

Students are expected to respect the learning environment of the classroom. You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in this class as long as it contributes to your learning. However, students are expected to actively listen to one another in order to participate in classroom activities. If unable to contribute to the discussion or are otherwise distracted by your computer, cell phone, or table, the student will be asked to refrain from using it in class. There will be some class sessions where technology will be required. In those instances, students should make arrangements to bring a laptop or tablet to class. Texting, emailing, use of any means of social

media, and/or talking on cell phones is not permitted during class and laboratory sessions. Cell phones must be placed in the “OFF/Silent” mode during classroom/lab activities, unless prior arrangements are made with the individual instructor. “Vibrate” mode, in which the vibrating sound can interrupt the classroom, is not acceptable. Students are required to store cell phones in backpacks or purses during any class/lab activity. Individual requests for exceptions to this classroom standard will be handled on a case-by-case basis, but not automatically granted.

Individual course instructors reserve the right to monitor computer activity during class/lab time.

Audio/Video Taping Class Lectures

Students who desire to audio and/or video tape and/or photograph class or program activities must first solicit approval from their instructor, lab assistant, club advisor, or event coordinator.

If a student is granted permission to audio/video tape any portion of a class or program activity, that student understands that the tape is to be used exclusively for private study and is not to be shared or sold to others. He or she does not have permission to reproduce or post the information on any social media platform, You Tube, or other public or private forums that would infringe on the privacy rights of others represented in the audio/video recording.

Students are expected to destroy or delete tapes/audio files at the end of the semester.

Student taping and/or photographing is strictly prohibited during quizzes, exams, lab practical's examinations, and discussion/review following an examination or quiz.

Photographing And Videotaping OTA Program Students

LAB PRACTICAL VIDEOS: Videotaping of select laboratory practical examinations is required for instructional purposes, to facilitate self-assessment, and for grading and feedback of student performance. The student will have access to their video recorded lab practical examination performance for review and self-assessment at the lab practical examination is completed. Students are informed of lab practical video-taping in individual course syllabi.

MEDIA FOR OTHER PURPOSES: During the OTA program, there will also be occasion for photographs/videos to be taken of students which may be used or reproduced in print or electronic format by STC and/or the OTA Program with or without identifying names. Such media may be utilized for lawful purposes such as College or OTA program instruction/education, advertising, publications, illustrations and Web content.

Photographing And Videotaping Community Members

The photographing, video and audio recording of college students from other programs, family members, friends, and other community members for the purpose of instructional purposes, or social media display is prohibited without the written consent of the individual.

Program Risk Management

Cost Of Emergency Services In Off-Campus Educational Experiences

While in the program, students may be required to participate in off campus learning activities, service activities, conference, trainings, and external Practicum experiences. South Texas College does not assume responsibility for costs associated with emergency care required by students while participating in off-campus activities. Students in the OTA Program are responsible for all such costs.

Students enrolled in the OTA Program must meet Clinical Requirements, including proof of Health and Accident Insurance, which must remain current throughout the Program.

STC makes available to all enrolled students health and accident insurance coverage. Information may be obtained through the Cashier's office.

General Medical/Health Condition

Timely disclosure of health information ensures that program faculty is prepared to assist students during a medical emergency as well as provide for student safety during classroom, laboratory and clinic activities. As such, students should disclose health and medical information to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Chair or the NAH Division Counselor.

Students are required to notify the Program Chair of significant changes in their medical condition during an academic semester. The student will be required to obtain written medical clearance from a licensed Medical Doctor/Physician's Assistant/Nurse Practitioner for all illnesses or health conditions that cause a change in health including but not limited to: pregnancy, infectious diseases, surgery and physical injury and/or illness. Medical clearance must be provided on a prescription pad or form with the practitioner's professional license number. The release must specify the conditions under which the student is able to return to the classroom/clinical/lab experience. Conditions for returning to the classroom/clinical/lab experience must not prevent the student from meeting established technical standards and program learning outcomes. Return to the classroom/ clinical/lab experience will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, as per NAH Division Safe Clinical Practice Standard, students may not enter the classroom or laboratory setting when he/she has a condition or illness that is or may be harmful, infectious or contagious to others. (i.e., Corona Virus, Pneumonia, fever, shingles, lice, etc.)

Note: Upon disclosure of pregnancy, students will be referred to the STC Title IX Coordinator.

Safety Incident Reporting Procedure

Students injured while functioning in student roles in the clinical area, laboratory or classroom must report the incident to the course/clinical faculty immediately and complete and submit the

NAH Safety Incident Report Form (Appendix, page 52) within 48 hours (about 2 days) of the incident to the Nursing and Allied Health Division Clinical Affairs Specialist. The Clinical Affairs Specialist will forward the report to the Program Chair, the Division Dean, and the designated agency person, if applicable. Incident reports will be kept in a separate secure file by the Nursing and Allied Health Division for seven years. The student is also responsible for completing any reporting process required by the agency, if applicable.

Students enrolled in Nursing and Allied Health Division Programs are required to carry some form of medical expense coverage, i.e. Medicaid, third party, or student medical insurance. Such availability of medical insurance should ensure access to emergency services for all Nursing and Allied Health Division students.

Appropriate Use Of Equipment And Supplies

OTA students must comply with the program's rules regarding the appropriate use of equipment and supplies and for all educational activities that have implications for the health and safety of clients, students, and faculty to include infection control and evacuation procedures.

At South Texas College's Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program, safety is paramount. Disinfection protocols after using lab equipment. The following steps outline our safety protocol completed by Lab Assistant/OTA students after Lab Course when use of equipment:

1. Prompt Disinfection: Immediately after use, all surfaces and tools utilized during lab sections must be disinfected.
2. Use of Approved Disinfectants: Only EPA-approved disinfectants effective against a broad spectrum of pathogens are permitted for use.
3. Thorough Cleaning: Ensure thorough cleaning of all surfaces and equipment, following manufacturer's instructions for proper disinfectant application.
4. Allow Adequate Contact Time: Allow disinfectants to remain on surfaces for the recommended contact time to effectively eliminate pathogens.
5. Return Equipment: Place all items back in the closet of OTA classroom 308.

Equipment Lending

Loss of equipment and supplies is an indirect expense to students and is an inconvenience to all. Students are encouraged to make efficient use of materials, equipment, and supplies during class periods. Occasionally, borrowing of materials or equipment is required; these may be checked out with the course instructor's permission. A log for checking out items will be maintained. Students must return materials by the next class day, unless alternative arrangements have been made. Items must be returned to the same instructor who approved the lending of the material/s. Students will be held financially responsible, and will be charged the replacement fee, for any lost, damaged, or stolen items they have checked out from the program.

Safety Procedures (SDS)

The OTA Program maintains Safety Data Sheets (SDS) on all chemical agents and solutions used in the course of study. Faculty will review the content found in the SDS notebooks with students, during orientation and prior to the utilization of specific agent/solutions. These notebooks are located in the Hydro room (Rm. #305) and ADL kitchen (Rm. #302) on the 3rd floor.

The SDS information includes:

- Common and chemical name of any ingredient found in a concentration greater than 1% that poses a health hazard
- Health hazards and routes of bodily entry of hazardous materials
- Safe use and handling instructions
- Procedures for cleaning up a spill or leak
- Proper emergency first aid
- Date of preparation, name, address, and telephone number of whoever is responsible for preparing and distributing the MSDS

SDS notebooks will be reviewed annually for accuracy.

Laundry Room

The OTA Program maintains a Hydro/Laundry Room (Rm. #305) equipped with a washer and dryer for laundering program linens. The laundry room is restricted to OTA and PTA student/faculty use. A laundry schedule will be established and posted by the Lab Assistant at the beginning of each semester. The Lab Assistant will also instruct OTA students in appropriate folding and storage (cabinets in room 308) of program related linens. All OTA program students will be assigned weekly laundry rotations, typically in pairs, during which time they will be responsible for washing, drying, folding, and restocking of white OTA linens, as well as for maintaining a clean laundry room environment. Students are responsible for following posted schedules and insuring availability of clean linens for laboratory sessions as needed.

Student Clinical Standards

The following are general standards, in addition to ACOTE standards, that pertain to all OTA students. These standards do not conflict with the policies/procedures in effect for all students at STC or NAH Division Standards, but may be more specific.

Clinical Dress Code

All STC OTA students represent the College and the profession of occupational therapy. Students are required to always represent themselves in a professional manner in the clinic setting. In an effort to maintain consistency for all students, the following Clinic Dress Code Standard is adopted:

General Appearance Clothing

- Shirts/blouses, tucked in pant waistband. The shirt should fit properly, i.e. not tight, low cut or revealing. Midriff should not be exposed whether in a sitting, standing or stooping position. Shirts/blouses should not have color variations, tearing, and frays.
- Pants must be neat, properly fitting, and sit at or just below the waist (no excessively loose, low-riding, hipster, torn, or frayed hems). Jeans are not allowed. Pants must be of a solid neutral color such as black, blue, brown or khaki. Pants need to be loose enough to allow for lifting and squatting activities without compromising movement and/or exposing the student. A belt is to be worn with pants that have belt loops. Pants should be of appropriate length and/or be properly hemmed to ensure the length does not extend past the shoe heel. Carpenter, Capri, or yoga style pants are not allowed.
- If the clinic site requires a tie, male OTA students must comply.
- If the clinic site requires a lab coat or scrubs, all OTA students must comply. Lab coats or scrubs are to be neat, clean and pressed at all times.
- Appropriate foundation garments should be worn to maintain professional demeanor and should not be visible either through or outside of clothing.
- Clothing is to be neat, clean and pressed/ironed.

Footwear

- Non-slip, low heeled and closed shoes are required.
- Neutral colored casual shoes may be worn.
- Athletic shoes/sneakers may be worn if in good condition.
- Socks or stockings must be worn with shoes.

Accessories

- No more than one ring per hand.
- No more than one earring per ear. Earrings must be standard earlobe piercing. Plugs are not allowed.
- No dangling earrings, necklaces, watches, or bracelets.
- A well-fitting watch with a second hand must be worn. Digital watches are permitted at the discretion of the facility.
- No other body jewelry/piercing permitted.
- ALL visible tattoos are to remain covered.

Miscellaneous

- Students are required to wear their nametags to clinic every day.
- Hair must be clean and well groomed, neatly pulled back (jaw type clips are not allowed in the clinic). Hair should be pulled back away from the face, out of the eyes, and off the shoulders. If a hairstyle with bangs is worn, bangs must either be secured or must be short enough in length so as not to obscure or fall into the eyes. Unnatural colors or extreme styles are not permitted.
- Males must be clean-shaven. If males have a beard, mustache and/or goatee, they must be neatly trimmed close to the face.
- Good oral hygiene and clean bodies, free of odor is essential.
- Cosmetics should be applied discreetly.
- Heavy perfume, cologne, or odor due to smoking is not acceptable.
- Fingernails must be clean, neatly rounded and not to exceed the tip of the finger in length.
- If desired fingernails may be freshly polished with clear or neutral colored polish only.
- Absolutely no acrylic or artificial nails permitted.

The following are considered NOT acceptable in the clinic:

- Cowboy boots, hiking style boots, Toe sneakers/shoes, sandals, flip-flops, high heels, "Converse" style sneakers, "VANS" style slip-ons, or "CROC" style shoes
- Skirts or dresses
- T-shirts or tank tops (shoulder straps of a sleeveless shirt must measure 3 inches or wider)
- Caps or visors
- Sunglasses
- Jeans of any color (Regardless of "Blue Jean Friday" allowed in the clinic)
- Shorts for both men and ladies (Regardless of "Sports Dress" in the clinic)
- Absolutely no gum chewing

Assessment Of Clinical Performance

Student Standard

The OTA Program utilizes the South Texas College OTA Program Fieldwork I Student Evaluation form during the Fieldwork I experience and the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant during the Fieldwork II Practicum Experience as the clinical assessment tools.

The South Texas College OTA Program Fieldwork I Student Evaluation form evaluates 14 clinical skills which incorporates the objectives of the Fieldwork I experience.

The AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation is divided into 6 sections; *Fundamentals of Practice* (skills #1-3), *Basic Tenets of Occupational Therapy* (skills #4-6), *Evaluation/Screening* (skills #7-11) *Interventions* (skills #12-17), *Communication* (skills #18-19) and *Professional Behaviors* (skills

#20-25). Every skill has specific objectives which should be met in order to achieve entry level/mastery of that skill.

OTA students must earn a score of 70 points or higher at the end of the Level II-A and Level II-B Practicum experience to successfully complete the practicum experience. The ratings for the Ethics and Safety items must be scores at 3 (“meets standards”) or above on the final evaluation for the student to pass the fieldwork experience.

All OTA students must meet minimum clinical performance standards to be considered at “entry-level” performance upon graduation. (see AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant for specific requirements).

Fieldwork Completion Statement

Students must complete all Level II fieldwork within 18 months (about 1 and a half years) following the completion of the didactic/classroom portion of the program.

Communication With Students During Practicum Experiences

During Practicums, the AFWC (and/or designee) will make a mid-term visit to meet with both the clinical instructor (CI) and student. The purpose of the visit is to track the student’s clinical performance in meeting individual practicum learning objectives and ensure that student intervention and data collection techniques are provided as directed in the plan of care developed by the supervising OT. The AFWC will also verify continued appropriate supervision and role-modeling and the overall quality of the experience. If the CI is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, the AFWC will verify that the student is demonstrating effective, ongoing communication with the supervising occupational therapist; if the CI is an Occupational Therapist the AFWC will verify appropriate communication with staff COTAs if applicable. Strengths and weaknesses will be identified and documented. The AFWC will assist the student to develop an action plan as needed to promote student success.

Students are to complete and submit a weekly performance summary which includes clinical instructor input, to track ongoing progress. In the final week of every Practicum, the AFWC will conduct either a clinic visit or telephone conference to verify students’ continued progress toward meeting objectives and/or effective follow through with stated action plans.

The AFWC will ensure that the students’ right to privacy and confidentiality regarding clinical performance is protected at all times. Consultations with the clinical instructor (first) and student (second) will be completed separately in a private area away from patient care or office activities. Joint meetings may be held following consultations as needed to address concerns, promote coordination, and establish action plans signed by CI, AFWC and student.

Practicum Progression Criteria

Throughout the clinical education component of the OTA Program, students are afforded ONE opportunity to repeat a Practicum course.

Students must successfully complete **Fieldwork I**, prior to advancing to Practicum II-A and II-B. If a student is unable to successfully pass Practicum I, the student will not be allowed to progress through the program. The student will schedule a meeting with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, and/or their assigned designee, the course instructor, and the Program Chair to determine a further course of action to be taken according to NAH Division Standards, OTA Program Standards, and ACOTE Standards. Possible courses of action may include re-admission through the NAH Progressions committee to repeat the course, and all other concurrent semester courses, the following year. Scheduling of repeat clinical experiences will be at the discretion of the AFWC and dependent upon clinic site/Clinical Instructor availability during the Fall semester. In preparation to attend FW, the student will need to participate in a remediation program with AFWC prior to beginning at new clinical site to promote successful FW experience. A student will not be eligible for graduation until all academic and clinical education requirements are met with passing score.

Students must successfully complete **Fieldwork II-A** prior to advancing to Practicum II-B. If a student is unable to successfully pass Practicum II-A, they may be allowed to repeat the experience on probationary status. Repetition of Practicum II-A will occur in the final Spring Semester of the program, concurrent with students who progress to Practicum II-B. Following successful completion of the Practicum II-A, the student will be required to complete Practicum II-B beginning in the upcoming Fall session until the required hours are completed. Scheduling of repeat clinical experiences will be at the discretion of the AFWC and dependent upon clinic site/Clinical Instructor availability during the Fall semester. In preparation to attend FW, the student will need to participate in a remediation program with AFWC prior to starting at new clinical site to promote successful FW experience. A student will not be eligible for graduation until all academic and clinical education requirements are met with a passing score.

Students must successfully complete Fieldwork II-B prior to graduation. If a student is unable to successfully pass Practicum II-B, they may be allowed to repeat the experience on a probationary status beginning in the Fall session until the required hours are completed. Scheduling of repeat clinical experiences will be at the discretion of the AFWC and dependent upon clinic site/Clinical Instructor availability. A student will not be eligible for graduation until all academic and clinical education requirements are met.

If a student cannot pass a Practicum experience (I, II-A, or II-B) in two attempts, no further opportunity for repetition will be provided and the student will be ineligible to continue in the program. Readmission into the program will be required. See NAH readmission policy. If a student fails a Practicum experience, repeats the experience successfully and then fails a subsequent experience, the student will no longer have the opportunity for an additional repeat, at which point the student will be ineligible to continue in the program. Readmission into the program will be required. See NAH readmission policy.

NOTE: Regardless of a numerical grade above 75%, a student may be dismissed from clinic by a Clinical Instructor, facility owner/administration, AFWC, or designee due to:

- breach of safety

- dishonest, illegal, or unethical behavior/practice
- failure to demonstrate consistent progression/improvement to meet mastery in clinical performance/ skills
- failure to display appropriate professionalism in the clinic setting.

Dismissal due to any of the above reasons will result in failure of the Practicum and immediate dismissal from the Program. Petitions for readmission to the program in this case will be considered by the NAH Progressions Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Decisions will be dependent on 1) the nature of the incident, 2) the potential or real threat to client safety and wellbeing and 3) the risk for the clinical affiliate/agency. Refer to Section

IV-C of the NAH Student Handbook for the Safe Clinical Practice Standard. A student will not be permitted to repeat a Practicum if dismissal or failure was related to breach of safety, dishonesty, illegal, and/or unethical behavior.

Clinic Assignments And Activities

The student will participate in one part-time (8 hours each Friday of second fall semester) and two full-time external clinical experiences (average 40 hrs./week during the final spring semester.) During the first external experience, a designated facility employee will serve as the clinical instructor. During the final two external experiences a facility employed licensed OTR or COTA will serve as the Clinical Instructor (CI). The facility's Clinical Instructor will be the person responsible for the daily supervision and input into the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant. Students will be responsible for identifying Practicum objectives and skills available at assigned clinic sites, as well as self-assessment. The STC Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) and/or designee will be readily available for assistance. The AFWC will make clinic visits once scheduled with the student and the CI. Assignments will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Log in a 40-hour full-time work week according to individual facility schedule
2. In-service Presentation at the clinic site (topic to be approved by CI)
3. Weekly assessment sheets (in place of a student journal)
4. Possible weekly phone/text message or email contact with AFWC (assigned days/times)
5. Possible On-line discussions/postings
6. Weekly Practicum Attendance Logs and Time Sheet
7. OTA Midterm Evaluation
8. OTA Final Evaluation
9. OTA evaluation forms

Clinical Requirement Compliance

Students enrolled in the OTA Program must meet Clinical Requirements, including proof of Health and Accident Insurance, which must remain current throughout the Program.

In the first semester of the OTA Program, students are required to initiate the process toward meeting compliance with all clinical participation requirements as stated in the NAH Student Handbook. Students must log on to the NAH Clinical Affairs webpage to create a password protected Complio account, which will be used throughout the OTA Program for tracking required compliance.

Students are responsible for obtaining all proof of compliance and uploading it to the Complio system by stated deadlines. The Complio system will email students directly with notifications of deadlines or non-compliance. The AFWC will verify ongoing compliance prior to Fieldwork placements. If deadlines are not met or should a student fall out of compliance, they may not participate in Practicum experiences.

Mandatory On-Line Hospital Orientation

Prior to Fieldwork II, all OTA students must complete a self-enrolled on-line Hospital Orientation course on Blackboard. Students are required to pass Post Test Modules with an 80% or better. Students must print a Certificate of Completion, sign a Confidentiality Statement, and provide evidence of Post Test grades for submission to the NAH Clinical Affairs Specialist prior to the stated deadline. The OTA Program AFWC will notify students of the procedure for completion of the on-line Hospital Orientation and deadline for submission of required forms.

For additional Clinical Requirements, please refer to the Division of Nursing & Allied Health Student Handbook.

Clinic Attendance

Clinic attendance is required of all students. Frequent absences interrupt consistency in performance of clinical skills which may prevent the attainment of mastery in clinical skills, which is the purpose of the Practicums in the OTA program.

Every student is required to complete a 40-hour workweek according to individual facility guidelines. Work hours must be documented utilizing the Attendance Log. All absences in the clinic are to be communicated directly by the student to both: 1) the Clinical Instructor and 2) the AFWC or designee within 24 hours prior to missing a day within reasonable work hours. If future medical/legal appointments have been made prior to starting rotation, notify your CI and AFWC on the first day of the rotation. During a Practicum course, students must not miss more than 16 clinical hours*. Any missed hours beyond 16 hours will require official documentation (medical excuse from doctor or dental office, law enforcement {court date, accident, etc....}). if no official document is provided this may result in the student being dropped from the course. All missed clinic hours must be made up in order to successfully complete the Practicum course and meet AOTA regulations. Make-up hours are to be completed at the same facility prior to the end of the Practicum. Arrangements for any missed clinic hours are to be made directly with, and at the convenience of, the Clinical Instructor. Make-up hours must also be logged in the *Attendance Form*. A *Clinical Absence Form* must be completed and turned in to the AFWC along with the *Attendance Log* regardless of telephone notification.

Students who are dropped for absenteeism will be ineligible to continue in the program until the course has been repeated successfully. Readmission into the program will be required. See NAH readmission policy.

NOTE: If South Texas College officially closes (for example due to bad weather), students will be required to follow the schedule of their clinical instructor which will require you to go during holidays or weekends.

*Exceptions due to extenuating circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Clinic Punctuality

Punctuality is of the utmost importance in the clinic. Students should anticipate variations between clinic business hours and are expected to make arrangements for timely attendance and active participation in patient care. Students will be apprised of individual clinic start and end times and are expected to be present for the full length of each clinic day. Occasional tardiness may be unavoidable, and students are required to account for such tardiness with the Clinical Instructor AND the AFWC just as they would on the job (telephone or email notice). All tardiness in the clinic are to be communicated directly by the student to both: 1) the Clinical Instructor and 2) the AFWC or designee immediately via phone call/text message/email.

Calling to report tardiness does not make habitual tardiness acceptable. Multiple tardy calls will result in an unsatisfactory rating for Professional Behaviors section of AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation.

A pattern of “accountable tardiness” (repeatedly calling in to notify CI of a late arrival on 2 or more occasions) or frequent absences (more than 1 hour on 2 or more occasions throughout the 8 weeks) will result in disciplinary action. Minimal action taken will be a written report and reprimand as well as an unsatisfactory rating for Professional Behaviors section of AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation. Maximum action may be immediate failure of the Practicum and subsequent removal from the clinic site if requested by the facility.

Fieldwork Level I and Level II Attendance

The student may arrange to make up fieldwork contact hours by direct arrangement with the Fieldwork Educator. The student must make up any hours missed by the end of the semester. If the student does not complete the number of external contact hours required for the course, he will receive a failing grade and not be allowed to register for the second year of the program.

The student must also notify the Fieldwork Coordinator of clinical absences and advise her of the number of hours (eight hours or more) that must be made up.

Failure of the student to notify clinical supervisor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, or their designee, of absence from assigned clinical site at the appointed times (no call/no show) may

result in immediate dismissal from the clinical fieldwork site (upon discretion of clinical supervisor) and the OTA Program.

Punctuality is a concern for both Fieldwork educators and employers. Lateness in getting to class or returning from breaks is often disruptive to the group and frequently has been a source of complaints from students. Occasional lateness may be unavoidable, and students will be asked to account for such lateness with the instructor, just as they would on the job. Arriving to class late or leaving early without instructor approval will be counted towards absences; i.e. 3 tardy = 1 unexcused absence. Habitual lateness would indicate that an important work habit has not been demonstrated; this would require remediation prior to placement in any Clinical or Practicum Fieldwork course.

Cell Phones And Electronic Media (Clinic)

Students are expected to respect the clinic environment. Cell phone calls or texting is not permitted. As such, all cell phones should be turned “OFF” while in the clinic. “Vibrate” mode, in which the vibrating sound can interrupt the clinic setting, is not acceptable.

Students must remember that in certain clinical environments, such technologies as cell phones interrupt the function of medical specialty equipment and are prohibited. Individual requests for exceptions to this clinic standard will be handled on a case-by-case basis, but not automatically granted. Emergency messages may be relayed through the departmental secretary during regular college hours. Students should familiarize themselves with each clinic’s specific guidelines regarding outside communications and use of electronic media.

Clinic Sites And Travel Expectations

Students involved in the clinical education program are required to provide their own transportation to and from assigned clinic sites during all practicum experiences. Current clinic sites range from Rio Grande City to Brownsville, Texas and includes, but is not limited to, the following settings:

- Acute care/ hospital facility
- Ambulatory care/ outpatient /home health
- ECF/ Nursing Home/ SNF
- Rehab/ Sub-acute Rehab

As part of the curriculum for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program, students are required to complete clinical placements to fulfill the requirements for OTHA 2366 (Practicum II) and OTHA 2367 (Practicum III). Please be advised that these placements may necessitate travel to assigned clinical sites.

Travel Requirements

- **Assignment to Clinical Sites:** Clinical placements for OTHA 2366 and OTHA 2367 will be determined by the program and may include sites that are not within close proximity to the student's residence.
- **Responsibility for Travel:** Students are responsible for arranging and covering the cost of their travel to and from the clinical sites.
- **Commitment to Attendance:** Students must ensure that they can commit to attending their clinical placements as scheduled. Reliable transportation is essential to meet the attendance requirements and successfully complete the practicum courses.
- **Advance Notice:** The program will provide as much advance notice as possible regarding the location of clinical placements to allow students adequate time to make necessary travel arrangements.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in fulfilling these requirements, which are integral to your professional development and success in the OTA program.

NOTE: A health practicum is an unpaid learning experience. Students must disclose any existing relationship with area facilities and/ or clinicians (scholarships, sponsorships, family connections, contract agreements to hire upon graduation, etc.) to ensure no conflict of interest occurs with student placements during Practicum courses.