



**ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT
PROGRAM**

2026

SOUTH UNIVERSITY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program!

This handbook has been developed to provide you with essential information regarding the current policies, procedures, guidelines, and available resources relevant to your participation in the South University Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program. We encourage you to read this handbook thoroughly, as it outlines expectations that will guide your enrollment and progression through the OTA program. Please note that the OTA Program may periodically update or introduce new policies and procedures. You will be notified of any changes through your official South University email as they are implemented.

We hope this handbook serves as a valuable resource throughout your time in the program. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Program Director or your assigned faculty advisor.

Programmatic Accreditation Status

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program at South University, Tampa is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave. Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-6611, and its web address is <http://www.acoteonline.org>.

Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, most states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure. More information on ACOTE may be obtained at <https://acoteonline.org/>.

Note: The web address for NBCOT is <https://www.nbcot.org/>. Program performance data on the NBCOT certification examination is available for public viewing by state and program level: <https://www.nbcot.org/Educators-Folder/SchoolPerformance>

Credentialing and Licensure

Passing a national licensing exam is a requirement for professional practice. Upon successful completion of the academic program and all fieldwork experiences, students apply to and take the online certification examination, developed and administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT).

Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure. If that is of concern, please see information on Early Determination Review, available at nbcot.org.

The OTA Program at South University is designed to prepare students for this important exam throughout the curriculum. An exam review will be conducted towards the end of the academic program to help prepare students for the certification exam. Note that graduation from the OTA Program does not guarantee national certification or state licensure as an occupational therapy assistant; students need to make themselves aware of national certification and state licensure requirements.

Upon passing the NBCOT exam, certification is valid for three years. The NBCOT is a not-for-profit credentialing agency that provides certification for the occupational therapy profession that reflects current standards of competent practice.

NBCOT also works with state regulatory authorities, providing information on credentials, professional conduct, and regulatory and certification renewal issues.

Occupational therapy is regulated in all 50 states; different states have various types of regulation that range from licensure to title protection or trademark law.

The student is responsible for correctly applying for licensure in the jurisdiction in which s/he plans to practice. This process is governed by a state agency; common names include the (state) Department of Health or the (state) Department of Professional Regulation.

OTA Program Mission Statement

The OTA Program at South University fosters a student-centered environment through innovative delivery methods that enhances student accessibility with a strategic focus on developing skilled and compassionate Occupational Therapy Assistants who are dedicated to delivering ethical and contemporary care in a variety of clinical settings.

OTA Program Vision Statement

The OTA Program at South University aspires to be a leader in hybrid healthcare education, cultivating compassionate, skilled, and ethical practitioners who advance the quality of life for individuals and communities.

OTA Program Philosophy

The OTA Program believes that each individual is unique and deserves to be treated with respect, dignity, and compassion. The program values the diversity of students' cultural, educational, and life experiences and recognizes these as essential contributions to the learning environment. The program further recognizes that individuals are influenced by complex interactions among physical, psychological, social, and cultural factors, which inform occupational performance and participation.

Learning is a dynamic, student-centered process that is enhanced through accessible and innovative delivery methods, including hybrid education, to support engagement, flexibility, and success. Learning is optimized through active engagement, application of knowledge, and reflection, allowing students to integrate theoretical concepts into clinical practice. The program promotes active participation, critical thinking, and collaboration to prepare students for contemporary occupational therapy practice.

The program is grounded in the belief that occupation provides meaning and purpose and supports health and well-being through a process of adaptation. This philosophy is consistent with the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) belief that engagement in meaningful occupation supports health, well-being, and participation in life roles. Graduates are prepared to deliver ethical, evidence-based, and client-centered care across a variety of settings, meeting the evolving needs of individuals, families, and communities. Through these guiding principles, the OTA Program supports the mission of South University by preparing graduates who contribute meaningfully to their professions and communities through ethical, evidence-based practice.

OTA Program Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Occupational therapy education focuses on preparing future practitioners to facilitate change in individuals and groups for optimal occupational performance. This educational process includes using evidence-based resources, learning activities that stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving, and faculty expertise for assisting in the development of student skills to seek entry-level practice. Student learning is demonstrated through the development of clinical reasoning, professional behaviors, and competency required for entry-level occupational therapy assistant practice.

Occupational therapy education uses a wide knowledge base from the arts and sciences. Faculty encourage students to connect new learning to previous knowledge. Through the educational process, faculty promote interprofessional

experiences throughout the curriculum. The program emphasizes outcomes-based education, using ongoing assessment of student performance and program outcomes to inform continuous curriculum improvement and ensure alignment with accreditation standards and workforce demands.

The learning environment must reflect the social values of the field of occupational therapy. Cultural diversity must be respected and plays a key role in faculty approach to teaching and student learning. Faculty serve as role models, working with students as individuals and in teams much as OT practitioners work with clients individually and in groups.

Philosophy of OTA Faculty

The faculty of the OTA Program at South University believe their role is to facilitate a dynamic, student-centered learning experience that prepares students to become competent, entry-level generalist occupational therapy assistants. Instruction is delivered through a hybrid model incorporating virtual synchronous and on-ground synchronous learning experiences designed to promote accessibility, engagement, and achievement of learning outcomes.

Faculty are committed to fostering a safe, ethical, and inclusive learning environment that supports diverse student backgrounds and promotes respect, collaboration, and professional development. Through academic coursework and fieldwork experiences, students are provided with a strong foundation in clinical reasoning, evidence-based practice, and ethical decision-making.

OTA faculty are highly qualified through clinical expertise, scholarly activity, or both, and are dedicated to excellence in teaching, advising, and mentorship. Faculty implement policies and procedures equitably and consistently to support student success while maintaining high academic standards. Ongoing faculty engagement in professional development ensures the use of effective instructional strategies and continuous improvement in preparing students for fieldwork and contemporary occupational therapy practice.

Major Content Areas/Curricular Threads

The following content threads are intentionally integrated throughout the curriculum and align with the mission of the OTA Program: information literacy, critical thinking, adaptation, professionalism, and lifelong learning. These threads are developed through hybrid instructional methods, supporting accessibility, engagement, and preparation for contemporary occupational therapy practice.

Students understand that meaningful occupation is the basis of professional practice for themselves, their clients, and other stakeholders, supported by the ability to:

1. Access, evaluate, and apply information and research using a variety of traditional and digital resources to support evidence-based practice, advocacy, lifelong learning, and education of diverse stakeholders (information literacy)
2. Analyze information, apply clinical reasoning, and make informed decisions, with the ability to reflect, adapt, and modify approaches based on outcomes (critical thinking)
3. Adapt to diverse populations, environments, and changing healthcare contexts through modification of activities and occupations and the use of flexible approaches within dynamic practice settings (adaptation)
4. Demonstrate professionalism through effective communication, ethical practice, and collaboration, with respect for diversity, accountability, leadership, and engagement in professional and interprofessional activities (professionalism)
5. Engage in ongoing professional development through varied learning methods and environments, community engagement, and service learning to support growth and responsiveness to evolving practice demands (lifelong learning)

Program Goals

The program will:

1. Provide an accessible education environment that ignites student success through a dynamic and innovative blend of evidence-based instruction and real-world clinical immersion, preparing adaptive OTA practitioners who excel in today's evolving healthcare landscape.
2. Prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed for entry-level competency and success on the national certification exam.
3. Foster student and faculty participation in service, advocacy, and scholarship that advance occupational therapy and address community needs.
4. Advance the Occupational Therapy profession by cultivating graduates with exceptional confidence, evidence-based competence, and versatile professional skills required for successful employment and leadership across a variety of clinical settings.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

1. Apply clinical reasoning and evidence informed practice for delivery of occupational therapy services under the supervision of an occupational therapist across a variety of service delivery settings.
2. Communicate and collaborate effectively with clients, families, and interprofessional team members.
3. Demonstrate ethical judgment and professional integrity while upholding client rights and dignity in occupational therapy practice.
4. Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and professional development behaviors that support continued competence and adaptability within evolving practice environments.
5. Deliver client-centered, culturally responsive occupational therapy services utilizing effective therapeutic use of self to enhance participation, independence, and well-being across diverse populations.

Curricular Framework and Design

The Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program at South University, Tampa is delivered in a hybrid format that combines virtual didactic coursework with structured, on-ground laboratory experiences. This delivery model enhances accessibility for students while maintaining the rigor and quality required for professional competence. The hybrid approach supports diverse learning needs, fosters flexibility for adult learners balancing multiple responsibilities, and reflects current trends in healthcare education. By integrating virtual and in-person instruction, students benefit from both self-directed learning and hands-on skill development that prepares them for real-world occupational therapy practice. The hybrid model is not solely a method of delivery but serves as a guiding framework for curriculum design, intentionally structuring when and how students engage in knowledge acquisition, skill development, and clinical reasoning across virtual and in-person environments.

The hybrid curriculum design is supported by established blended learning frameworks (Graham, 2006; Garrison & Vaughan, 2008), which emphasize the intentional integration of online and face-to-face instruction to promote deep learning, engagement, and application of knowledge. Evidence suggests that blended learning environments enhance student outcomes and satisfaction when compared to traditional or fully online models (Means et al., 2013).

A vertically integrated and thematic approach supports a curriculum framed by the developmental stages of human growth and development across the lifespan. The curriculum is grounded in adult learning theory and supported by Bloom's Taxonomy and Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. The adult learning model (Knowles, 1984; Cross, 1981) emphasizes experiential and self-directed learning, acknowledging that adults bring a wealth of

experiences that enhance the learning process. The hybrid delivery model complements this philosophy by providing opportunities for learners to engage actively with course content in both virtual and face-to-face environments.

Many students at South University are nontraditional learners, often changing careers or balancing family and work responsibilities. The hybrid design allows these students to complete online didactic coursework at their convenience while participating in scheduled, on-ground laboratory sessions that reinforce skill application, clinical reasoning, and collaboration. Virtual components are intentionally designed for knowledge acquisition, foundational concept development, and evidence-based analysis, while on-ground laboratory experiences are structured for psychomotor skill development, clinical application, and real-time feedback. Students are expected to demonstrate accountability in both learning environments by preparing in advance for lab sessions through completion of online modules and actively applying knowledge during in-person instruction. Faculty expect students to be active participants in both learning environments, connecting new concepts to prior experiences through reflection, guided discussion, and practical application.

Learning strategies such as case studies, role-playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are used in both the online and on-ground components of the program. Virtual instruction emphasizes knowledge acquisition,

evidence-based reasoning, and professional communication through virtual case analysis, discussion boards, and interactive learning tools. On-ground lab sessions provide structured opportunities for hands-

on skill development, peer collaboration, and immediate faculty feedback. Each course is intentionally designed with integrated learning loops in which concepts introduced in the virtual environment are immediately reinforced, practiced, and refined during on-ground lab experiences. Together, these modalities promote engagement, critical thinking, and self-directed learning while reflecting the collaborative, technology-driven nature of modern occupational therapy practice.

Material throughout the curriculum is presented in ways that accommodate diverse learning preferences, including visual-spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, linguistic, and logical, in accordance with Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2011). Learning is an interactive process in which students work with peers, faculty, and fieldwork educators to identify strengths, address areas for growth, and develop professional competencies.

The three domains of Bloom's Taxonomy—cognitive, psychomotor, and affective—guide learning outcomes and assessment throughout the hybrid curriculum. The cognitive domain emphasizes knowledge acquisition and understanding, supported primarily through online modules; the psychomotor domain emphasizes skill performance developed through on-ground labs; and the affective domain emphasizes professional values and behaviors integrated throughout both learning environments. Organizing student learning outcomes through these domains supports a developmental approach to the curriculum that builds progressively from foundational knowledge to application in fieldwork and professional practice.

The integration of virtual and on-ground learning ensures a seamless connection between theory and practice. Concepts introduced in virtual coursework are reinforced and applied during laboratory experiences, allowing students to synthesize knowledge, refine psychomotor skills, and develop reflective clinical reasoning. This structure promotes deep learning, flexibility, and readiness for fieldwork experiences.

The hybrid delivery model not only enhances accessibility and engagement but also cultivates technological competence and adaptability—key skills for today's occupational therapy assistants. It promotes independent learning, time management, and professional communication while preparing graduates for contemporary healthcare environments that increasingly rely on virtual collaboration and telehealth. The hybrid model incorporates the use of a learning management system and multimedia platforms to support synchronous and asynchronous engagement, promote interaction, and ensure consistent delivery of course content across all learning environments.

Curricular Sequence

Student learning builds progressively each quarter, culminating in the application of skills during Level II Fieldwork and transition to entry-level practice. Coursework advances in complexity, requiring increasing levels of analysis, synthesis, clinical reasoning, and professional judgment. Throughout the curricular sequence, hybrid delivery remains consistent, with each course integrating virtual didactic instruction and on-ground laboratory experiences to reinforce the progression from knowledge acquisition to application.

Foundational studies in the biological and social sciences, communication, and composition establish the base for OTA coursework, introducing students to the philosophy, history, and core tenets of occupational therapy, as well as the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework. Early professional courses expand on these foundations, emphasizing medical conditions, activity analysis, documentation, and ethical practice, with special focus on the OTA's role across diverse settings, including mental health.

As students progress, they apply and integrate knowledge from previous courses into professional scenarios, deepening their understanding of occupational roles and performance across the lifespan. Practice courses—such as Occupational Analysis I and II, Occupational Therapy in Mental Health, Professional Documentation, Occupational Therapy for Children and Adolescents, Movement for Human Occupation, and Occupational Therapy for Adults and the Elderly—present theory and frames of reference using the occupational therapy process. Each includes a lab component for hands-on learning and application of content.

Developmental milestones, occupational roles, and performance across the lifespan are emphasized throughout the curriculum. Students learn to make evidence-based decisions supported by scholarly research, developing strong information literacy skills that guide professional reasoning. Courses such as Professional Issues, Occupational Therapy Management, and Community Practice serve as a bridge to Level II Fieldwork, challenging students to analyze ethical and legal dilemmas and refine their critical thinking for complex practice settings.

Through experiential learning and integrated Level I Fieldwork, students gain exposure to diverse practice areas—including mental health, physical disabilities, pediatrics, and geriatrics—where they apply theory to real-world contexts. These experiences foster adaptability, cultural competence, and the ability to modify occupations and behaviors to meet client and stakeholder needs.

As the curriculum advances, students explore program and professional development, client education, and advocacy. Service learning is interwoven throughout the program, allowing students to participate in community service, identify emerging areas of practice, and develop collaboration and leadership skills while engaging with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Each student develops a two-year professional development plan and maintains a learning portfolio throughout the program, reinforcing the value of lifelong learning. Graduates emerge from South University as reflective, ethical, and skilled practitioners prepared to adapt to the evolving needs of clients and the profession. The hybrid structure promotes early development of self-directed learning, time management, and professional communication skills, which are essential for successful transition to Level II Fieldwork and entry-level practice.

Students develop professional behaviors of increasing complexity as they transition from the academic to fieldwork environment, demonstrating competence in communication, time management, integrity, ethics, and leadership. They become proficient in accessing and applying information for themselves, colleagues, and clients—moving from knowledge acquisition to higher-level synthesis and evaluation.

During the final two quarters, students complete two eight-week Level II Fieldwork experiences under the supervision of licensed occupational therapy practitioners. These experiences solidify entry-level competency as generalist OTA practitioners. Students participate in sessions for preparation and debriefing, maintain communication with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator through the learning management system, and engage in reflective online discussions and assignments that promote ongoing professional growth.

Program faculty meet regularly to review and enhance the curriculum, refine teaching methods, and promote best practices in occupational therapy education. Faculty remain committed to professional growth through ongoing development and continuing education, a commitment reflected in both the program's strategic plan and individual faculty professional development plans.

References

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- Graham, C. R. (2006). *Blended learning systems: Definition, current trends, and future directions*.
- Knowles (1984). *The adult learner: A neglected species* (3rd Ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2013). *The effectiveness of online and blended learning*

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Curriculum

Distance Education

The OTA program at South University prepares the student to enter the workforce as an entry-level Occupational Therapy Assistant working under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist. This 15-month program, inclusive of Level I and Level II fieldwork, begins after the student has satisfied the program's general education requirements.

This 15-month program is offered two times per year (Spring and Fall) in a hybrid format that combines live, instructor-led online classes with scheduled, in-person laboratory experiences and clinical fieldwork. Students attend structured virtual classes in real time, engage with faculty and peers as part of a supportive cohort, and complete hands-on skill development at designated lab locations before progressing to fieldwork in real healthcare settings.

Course Modality Definitions

On-Campus/On-Site (Synchronous): All instructional engagement and activity for the course is delivered face-to-face in a physical classroom or learning environment on a college campus or designated educational facility. Instructor and student are present and together for 100% of the scheduled class time.

Online (Asynchronous): Course is delivered entirely via digital tools and platforms, the internet and Learning Management System (LMS). Instruction occurs by students engaging asynchronously with their instructor and classmates. Students complete work on their own schedule within the parameters of the given weekly/module/assignment due dates and deadlines.

Virtual (Online Synchronous): Course requires students and instructors to be present simultaneously at scheduled times, typically using video conferencing or other real-time communication tools. Instructor and student are present and together for 100% of scheduled class time.

Virtual Teaching Classrooms (VTC): Course is offered simultaneously on-site at multiple campuses, with the host campus broadcasting the instructor to other campuses. All students attend class on their home campus as a group with a proctor, which allows for real-time, interactive communication via video and audio.

Blended: Course is offered through multiple modalities to achieve learning outcomes and meet credit hour requirements.

- **Blended- Campus/Virtual (B-CV):** A course that integrates scheduled on-campus/on-site, in-person classes with synchronous online virtual sessions.
- **Blended- Campus/Online (B-CO):** A course that integrates scheduled on-campus/on-site, in-person classes with asynchronous online learning activities.
- **Blended- Online/Virtual (B- OV):** A course that integrates asynchronous online learning activities with synchronous online virtual sessions.

Site-Based Experience Courses: Modality and locations will vary for supervised, applied learning experiences completed at approved sites such as clinical rotations, practicums, and internships. Modality will be determined by program requirements, accreditation standards, pre-licensing guidelines, and/or other regulatory guidelines.

Associate of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

8 Quarter Curriculum offered at the Tampa Campus

| Prerequisite Course Requirements (43 credits) | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------|
| Quarter 1 | ENG1100 | Composition I | 4 credit hours |
| | AHS1001 | Medical Terminology | 4 credit hours |
| | MAT1001, MAT1005, MAT1500, or MAT2058 | College Algebra I, College Algebra II, College Mathematics, or Statistics (students choose on 4.0 credit course) | 4 credit hours |
| | PSY1001 | General Psychology | 4 credit hours |
| Quarter 2 | BIO1011 | Anatomy Physiology I *must be taken concurrently with BIO1012 | 4 credit hours |
| | BIO1012 | Anatomy Physiology I Lab | 2 credit hours |
| | ENG1200 | Composition II | 4 credit hours |
| | PSY2022 | Human Growth and Development | 4 credit hours |
| Quarter 3 | | Arts and Humanities Elective Pool (students choose one 4.0 credit course) | 4 credit hours |
| | BIO1013 | Anatomy Physiology II *must be taken concurrently with BIO1014 | 4 credit hours |
| | BIO1014 | Anatomy Physiology II Lab | 2 credit hours |
| | OTA1003 | Introduction to Occupational Therapy Assistant (virtual online synchronous) | 3 credit hours |
| Professional Curriculum Requirements: 66 Credits | | | |
| Quarter 4 14 credits | OTA 1011 | Medical Conditions (virtual online synchronous) | 3 credit hours |
| | OTA 1020 | Occupational Analysis I (B-CV) | 4 credit hours |
| | OTA 1031 | Occupational Therapy in Mental Health (B-CV) | 5 credit hours |
| | OTA 1039 | Level I Fieldwork in Mental Health (site-based) | 1 credit hours |
| | OTA 1045 | Professional Documentation (virtual online synchronous) | 1 credit hours |
| Quarter 5 14 credits | OTA 2020 | Occupational Analysis II (B-CV) | 4 credit hours |
| | OTA 2031 | Occupational Therapy for Children and Adolescents (B-CV) | 5 credit hours |
| | OTA 2039 | Level I Fieldwork with Children and Adolescents (site-based) | 1 credit hours |
| | OTA 2041 | Movement for Human Occupation (B-CV) | 4 credit hours |
| Quarter 6 14 credits | OTA 2051 | Occupational Therapy for Adults and the Elderly (B-CV) | 5 credit hours |
| | OTA 2059 | Level I Fieldwork with Adults and the Elderly (site-based) | 1 credit hours |
| | OTA 2060 | Occupational Therapy Management (B-CV) | 4 credit hours |
| | OTA 2071 | Community Practice (virtual online synchronous) | 2 credit hours |
| | OTA 2080 | Professional Issues (virtual online synchronous) | 2 credit hours |
| Quarter 7 12 credits | OTA 2380 | Level II Fieldwork A (site-based) | 8 credit hours |
| | OTA 2385 | Fieldwork Seminar A (B-CV) | 4 credit hours |
| Quarter 8 12 credits | OTA 2390 | Level II Fieldwork B (site-based) | 8 credit hours |
| | OTA 2395 | Fieldwork Seminar B (B-CV) | 4 credit hours |

Relationship Between Program Outcomes and Courses

Each of the OTA courses in the curriculum have student learning outcomes, which contain knowledge, skills and behaviors that students will have the opportunity to gain by the end of each course. The OTA Program itself has a set of outcomes, which also describe knowledge, skills and behaviors that students will have had the opportunity to acquire by the end of the program.

The following table illustrates the relationship between courses in the OTA curriculum and OTA Program Student Learning Outcomes:

| Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) | OTA Courses that Address PSLOs |
|--|---|
| 1. Apply clinical reasoning and evidence informed practice for delivery of occupational therapy services under the supervision of an occupational therapist across a variety of service delivery settings. | OTA1003, OTA1011, OTA1020, OTA1031, OTA2020, OTA2031, OTA2041, OTA2051, OTA2060, OTA2380/OTA2385, OTA2390/OTA2395 |
| 2. Communicate and collaborate effectively with clients, families, and interprofessional team members. | OTA1003, OTA1031, OTA1045, OTA2031, OTA2041, OTA2051, OTA2060, OTA2380/OTA2385, OTA2390/OTA2395 |
| 3. Demonstrate ethical judgment and professional integrity while upholding client rights and dignity in occupational therapy practice. | OTA1031, OTA1045, OTA2020, OTA2031, OTA2051, OTA2060, OTA2071, OTA2080, OTA2380/OTA2385, OTA2390/OTA2395 |
| 4. Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and professional development behaviors that support continued competence and adaptability within evolving practice environments. | OTA1031, OTA2020, OTA2031, OTA2051, OTA2060, OTA2071, OTA2080, OTA2380/OTA2385, OTA2390/OTA2395 |
| 5. Deliver client-centered, culturally responsive occupational therapy services utilizing effective therapeutic use of self to enhance participation, independence, and well-being across diverse populations. | OTA1003, OTA1020, OTA1031, OTA2020, OTA2031, OTA2051, OTA2071, OTA2080, OTA2380/OTA2385, OTA2390/OTA2395 |

Student Rights and Responsibilities

South University is committed to the development of knowledge and ethics that are consistent with responsible professional and social behavior. During orientation to the program, each student receives a copy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Student Handbook (this document), the [South University Student Handbook](#), and the [South University Academic Catalog](#). These documents govern student activity while enrolled in the South University, OTA program. Students are expected to meet academic requirements and demonstrate a sense of responsibility with an understanding of and respect for the rights of others. The atmosphere of the University reflects these goals; and, in turn, each student must be aware of their individual responsibility to act accordingly. By enrolling as a student at South University, a student agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of South University. The rules concerning student behavior are outlined in the *Code of Conduct* section of the [South University Student Handbook](#). Specific professional behavior expectations of the South University, OTA student can be found in the “Professional Behaviors and Essential Functions” section of this handbook. Alleged violations of the program’s Standards of Professional Behavior will be referred to the program’s OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals. Alleged violations of the [University’s Code of Conduct](#) may be referred to the University’s Dean of Student Affairs.

Disability Services

South University Disability Services ensures students with disabilities equal access to the college’s educational programs, opportunities and activities. Qualified students requesting reasonable and appropriate accommodations receive services to eliminate physical, programmatic and attitudinal barriers that may arise with disabilities.

Students who seek reasonable accommodations should notify the Dean of Student Affairs at their campus location. Students will be asked to submit medical documentation of the need for accommodation to the campus Dean of Student Affairs. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as during the Admissions process to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have further questions, contact the Dean of Student Affairs associated with your campus location.

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Disability Services](#) for more information. [Academic Regulations and Policies](#)

Academic regulations, including grievance procedures, are further outlined in the [South University Academic Catalog](#) and the [South University Student Handbook](#). Students enrolled at South University are expected to uphold, at all times, standards of integrity and behavior that will reflect credit upon themselves and South University. Registration at South University implies the student’s acceptance of the published academic regulations and all other rules found in any official publication or announcements. Conduct regulations, are described in the [South University Academic Catalog](#) and the [South University Student Handbook](#).

Non-Discrimination Policy

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Non-Discrimination Policy](#) for the Non-Discrimination policy.

No Harassment Policy

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: No Harassment Policy](#) for the No Harassment policy.

Student Grievance Procedure

For concerns regarding mistreatment, discrimination, harassment (other than sexual harassment), unprofessional relationships, abuse of authority, and abusive and/or intimidating behavior, please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog; Student Grievance Procedure for Internal Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment](#).

Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy and Procedures

For concerns regarding Sexual Misconduct & Relationship Violence, please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Procedures for Handling Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Complaints](#).

Student General Complaint Procedure

If students in the OTA Program have a general complaint or problem, they are encouraged to discuss the issues with the appropriate faculty member or Program Director in the OTA Program. Initial discussion should be with the person most knowledgeable of the issues involved or with immediate decision-making responsibility.

If this does not resolve the issue in a satisfactory way, please refer to the procedure outlined in the [South University Academic Catalog: General Complaint Procedures](#)

OTA students wishing to submit a grievance or feedback to the College of Health Professions may do so using the following links: [Grievances form](#) or [Feedback form](#)

All complaints are to be documented by the appropriate OTA faculty member or Program Director. See [Appendix A](#) for the OTA Program Policy on Complaints.

Academic Integrity

South University defines academic integrity as the complete, accurate, specific, and truthful representation of authorship, origin of ideas, mastery of material, and data, including access to and authorized use of resources. Students must maintain academic integrity in all activities, including observing and reporting academic integrity violations committed by others.

As part of the South University Academic Integrity Policy, students must maintain academic integrity in all activities up to and including observing and reporting integrity violations committed by others. Students who fail to report a witnessed potential violation of Academic Integrity policy will be counseled regarding the importance of so doing and the negative academic impact of failing to report such violations. Repeated instances of failure to report a violation may be referred to the Campus Director & Dean of Academic Affairs and Operations (all programs excluding Pharmacy; for Pharmacy, referrals will be made to the Pharmacy Associate Dean of Academic Affairs) for campus-based students or the Dean of Student Affairs for students online and may result in increasing level violations.

Violations of academic integrity are classified based on the level of seriousness. Brief descriptions, examples, and recommended penalties are provided at the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

Student Records

South University's Registrar's Office maintains a secure system for records of student admission, enrollment, and achievement. Grades and credits for courses are recorded on students' transcripts and permanently maintained by the Registrar's Office as indicated in the Record Retention Schedule.

The OTA Program maintains a secure system for records related to student performance, which includes locked file cabinets in office areas and password-protected electronic systems on computers. The OTA program maintains a physical file with records related to student's performance records and academic tutoring. OTA application documents, including lab reports, are stored digitally with a student background screening company, Castlebranch. Records maintained by the Registrar and Program comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations. Students are granted access to their own personal academic file only as requested by the student in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Please see the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for more information on FERPA.

Students do not have access to academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty and are not permitted in areas that house this material without permission and the accompaniment and supervision of a faculty or staff member.

Student Health

Health Insurance Statement

Occupational therapy is a profession defined as having certain occupational risks. The cost of health care is extremely expensive, even for a short period of hospitalization. It is highly recommended that students entering the program, secure health insurance to cover any medical costs that they may incur while in the program and on clinical sites. South University or the clinical sites will not assume financial responsibility for illness or injury incurred by students while in the program.

Health insurance is not required to enter the OTA Program. However, failure to obtain health insurance, while in the OTA program, may hinder a student's ability to be placed in Level I and/or Level II fieldwork rotations. This may delay or prohibit graduation from the program.

CPR Certification

Students are expected to maintain current certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers (e.g., Red Cross, American Heart Association); students shall have a valid card throughout the OTA Program, including during Level II Fieldwork placements. Students are responsible for acquiring and maintaining this certification at their own expense and on their own time.

Physical Exam and Immunizations

Students are responsible for making sure that their physical exam and required immunizations are up to date. This will support timely student placement on Level I and Level II Fieldwork. Evidence that the Hepatitis B immunization series has been initiated or the signed waiver declining the Hepatitis B immunization must be provided at the time of application. All other immunizations must be completed no later than one week prior to the first clinical rotation. Failure to submit immunization requirements will deem a student ineligible for clinical rotation, which may result in dismissal from the program. For a list of required immunizations, access the website of the entity to which immunizations are submitted/uploaded for entry into the Professional OTA Program (e.g., CastleBranch). Refer to the South University Academic Catalog for additional information on the [OTA Admission Requirements](#).

Comprehensive Background Check-College of Health Professions

Protection of vulnerable patient populations is important to the South University College of Health Professions and its academic programs, faculty, and students and to clinical affiliation sites where students complete clinical requirements for completion of an academic program. Many clinical sites require criminal background checks for employees and students who provide patient care. As clinical placements are a mandatory component of South University College of Health Professions Programs, a positive criminal history impairs the ability of students to be placed in clinical externships required for completion of the program.

The South University College of Health Profession will deny admission and/or continuation to any student and/or applicant with a felony conviction, plea, or adjudication withheld, or any disqualifying misdemeanor, for which a pardon or exemption for disqualification has not been received, including but not limited to rape or sexual abuse or molestation, and abuse, endangerment, or neglect of a child, disabled person, or elderly person.

Students who are considering applying to programs within the College of Health Professions are advised to review the admission and enrollment requirements for background checks listed in the academic catalog and program specific handbook.

Students applying to programs within the College of Health Professions will be subject to a background check that may include, but is not limited to:

1. Social Security Number Verification
2. Criminal Search
3. Violent Sex Offender and Predator Registry Search
4. HHS/OIG List of Excluded Individuals
5. GSA List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs
6. U.S. Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)
7. Applicable State Exclusion List, if available

Note: Some clinical agencies may require additional background check requirements.

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for more information on background checks.
College of Health Professions Substance Abuse and Screening Policy

Due to the nature of the practice of health professions programs, the College of Health Professions maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any violation. Please refer to the [College of Health Professions Drug and Alcohol Policy](#) published in the South University Academic Catalog. See [Appendix B](#) for the Consent for Drug and Alcohol Screening Form.

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

For information on tuition and fees please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

Transcript Fees

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#). Official transcripts are available for order through a third-party vendor, [Parchment](#).

Payment of Tuition and Fees

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

Refund Policy

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Institutional Refund Policy](#) and [South University Academic Catalog: Institutional Refund Policy for Single Courses](#) for information regarding tuition refunds

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Fees](#) for information regarding fees

Financial Aid

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Financial Aid](#).

Official Withdrawal Procedure

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Official Withdrawals from the Institution](#).

Veterans Benefits

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

OTA Program Policies and Procedures

Academic Advising

From the time a student enters the professional curriculum phase in the OTA program at South University, that student will have an academic advisor who is a full time OTA faculty member. The academic advisor will be assigned by the OTA Program Director. This gives the student consistency in having someone specific to go to for academic advising.

Unless there are issues with the pairing of student to advisor, that advising relationship continues throughout the OTA program. Either a student or faculty member may request that a change in advisor might be beneficial by talking with the OTA Program Director and stating the nature of the issue necessitating the change.

Academic advisors deal strictly with academic issues. If students need assistance of a more personal nature (e.g., housing, health, counseling, family) the academic advisor refers students to the Dean of Student Affairs.

The responsibilities of the academic advisor include the following:

- Meet with students in the Professional Curriculum of the OTA Program at midterm each quarter and as needed, to review progress to date and address relevant issues (e.g., professional behaviors, grades, goals, fieldwork performance).
- Talk with the OTA Program Director about unsatisfactory academic progression or issues preventing satisfactory progression.
- Work with the OTA Program Director and student to develop plans to minimize knowledge erosion and/or to develop re-entry plans for those students who receive a grade below a C and have to repeat a course.

In addition to student advising, select OTA faculty serve as advisors to and collaborators with Fieldwork Educators to serve as a bridge between fieldwork educators in practice settings, the academic program and OTA students (e.g., review academic course syllabi with the Fieldwork Educator, respond to questions about course content in relation to practice settings).

Advising and Review for At Risk Students

An 'at risk' student is defined as a student who is in violation of satisfactory academic progression (SAP), on academic warning for potentially violating SAP, not attending classes consistently or otherwise identified as having problems through the 'heads up' identification process. Faculty in the OTA Program are to complete the Head's Up Student Alert Form (see [Appendix C](#)) to apprise the student of and to document any concerns or issues related to, but not limited to, academic performance, attendance, behavior, attitude and assignments.

Advising at-risk students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program involves providing personalized academic support, fostering resilience, and encouraging the development of effective study and time management skills. Advisors should identify early signs of academic or personal struggles, maintain regular check-ins, and connect students with available campus resources such as tutoring, counseling, or disability services to help students feel empowered to seek help and remain engaged in their education, ultimately improving their chances of success in the rigorous OTA curriculum.

All issues that remain unresolved beyond initial use of the Head's Up Student Alert Form will be documented on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP will be written on an official Performance Improvement Plan form (see [Appendix D](#)). The PIP is developed collaboratively by the student's faculty advisor with appropriate input from the OTA program faculty. The plan will have definitive steps to achieve improvement and a timeline for completion. Students required to participate in tutoring as part of a PIP may be referred a content expert or other tutor as appropriate. Students who do not meet the requirements of a Performance Improvement Plan will be referred to the OTA Progress and Promotions Committee for further review.

Attendance Policy

Students in the pre-professional phase of the program are held to the University Attendance Policy. Students accepted into and entering the professional phase will be required to meet the OTA Attendance Policy.

The OTA Program covers a lot of content in a relatively short time. To maximize learning, students are expected to attend all components of every course, including lectures, laboratories and fieldwork, for the entire session. Tardiness, early departure or other time away from class negatively impacts attendance. Academic success is predicated upon class attendance.

Students are expected to submit assignments, take exams and complete course requirements in a timely fashion. Regular attendance is crucial to meeting all deadlines.

If circumstances require that the student miss 25% or more of a course, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course, since the opportunity for adequate teaching and learning is significantly compromised. The OTA Program Director, in collaboration with appropriate individuals, will determine whether additional sanctions will be made (e.g., academic warning or probation), depending on the reason the student is missing 25% or more of the course.

Regardless of the reason for an absence, students are responsible for any and all information presented during each class period. Students are advised to contact a peer and get notes for that class period; students are also encouraged to talk with the instructor.

For all distance education courses, students are required to have their webcams on and remain visibly present with their faces clearly visible for the entire session. This ensures active participation, engagement in the virtual learning environment, and verification of student identity. Instructors will use class rosters with student photos to confirm attendance, in compliance with ACOTE Standard A.2.13. Students who turn their camera off, are not visibly present, or leave the screen for extended periods

without instructor approval will be considered absent for that session. If a student is unable to comply with this requirement, they should contact the instructor in advance with any questions or concerns.

Mitigating Circumstances

The OTA Program recognizes that unforeseen or exceptional circumstances may occasionally prevent a student from complying fully with attendance or webcam requirements during distance education courses. Examples include, but are not limited to, sudden illness, documented medical conditions, family emergencies, or significant technological disruptions outside of the student's control.

Students who experience such circumstances must notify the course instructor as soon as possible, preferably in advance of the class session when feasible. Documentation may be required to verify the circumstance. The instructor, in consultation with the Program Director if needed, will determine whether the absence or temporary lack of webcam visibility will be considered excused.

Mitigating circumstances do not eliminate the student's responsibility for course content. Students are expected to review missed material, complete all required assignments, and remain engaged in the learning process. Repeated requests for exceptions may prompt a review of the student's overall progress and professionalism within the program.

Students who officially withdraw or are administratively withdrawn from a course after the Drop/Add period and before 80% of the course duration will receive a W grade. Students who officially withdraw or are administratively withdrawn on or after 80% of the course duration will receive a WF grade. Students should consult with their Financial Aid Advisor to determine the implications of adding or dropping a course.

Students who withdraw or are administratively withdrawn from all courses in a quarter will be withdrawn from the University. Students who fail to register for a quarter will be withdrawn from the University.

Students should refer to the OTA Level I and Level II Fieldwork Education Manual for attendance policies specific to fieldwork placements.

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog OTA Attendance Policy](#)

Grading Policies

The OTA Program follows the South University grading policy; please refer to the South University Academic Catalog for details at <https://catalog.southuniversity.edu/grading-policies>.

As an occupational therapy assistant, you will most likely assess and evaluate staff (or be assessed) as a routine part of your job. In an academic setting, grades are a way of assessing knowledge and performance. The process of learning content, how it is applied, assessed, and subsequently modified on the job or in the classroom, should be our focus. The allocation of points for percent of grade is identified in each OTA course syllabus. OTA faculty develop grading rubrics which identify the standards that illustrate the expectation for each graded assignment. The grading scale is listed below.

GRADING SCALE

| | |
|------------|---|
| 100 – 90 | A |
| 89 – 80 | B |
| 79 – 70 | C |
| 69 – 60 | D |
| 59 – Below | F |

Assignments

Faculty post directions for each assignment in the online platform associated with each course. Specific requirements regarding formatting assignments are included in each course syllabus. Due dates, directions for submission of assignments and penalties for late assignments, if accepted, are also

included in each course syllabus.

Missed Assignment and Test Policy

Assignments and tests are an important part of the learning experience. Students who are absent on a test day must make arrangements with their instructor to retake the exam within five weekdays (Monday through Friday) of the missed exam. Only one make-up test is allowed per course per quarter.

Students who have not made such arrangements or who have not notified faculty of their absence on a test day will receive a "0" for that test.

Assignments are due on or before the date identified in the course syllabus and completed according to the proper format specified in the course syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted. If students have extenuating circumstances, they must talk with the course faculty; faculty reserves the right not to accept late assignments.

If a student does not make prior arrangements with the instructor and fails to turn individual work in on time or if the alternate due date for the late assignment is missed, the following deductions may be applied:

| Calendar Days Late | Maximum Point Deduction |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 day | Up to 10% |
| 2 days | Up to 20% |
| 3 days | Up to 30% |
| 4 days | Up to 40% |
| 5 days | Up to 50% |
| 6 days | Up to 60% |
| 7 days | Up to 70% |
| More than one week | No assignments will be accepted one week after the assigned due date. |

Academic Achievement and Progression Through the OTA Program

All course and fieldwork requirements are contained in the OTA course syllabi, which are provided to students before or during the first class of each course. OTA faculty must comply with published ACOTE standards and course syllabi containing student learning outcomes as well as published requirements for satisfactory student progress throughout the program.

Students are expected to complete all graduation and fieldwork requirements in a timely manner. Students are required to complete the didactic portion of the professional curriculum within 150% of the published length.

Level II Fieldwork A, Fieldwork Seminar A, Level II Fieldwork B and Fieldwork Seminar B must be completed within 24 months of the first day of the cohort's originally scheduled Level II Fieldwork A placement.

South University runs set reports related to Satisfactory Academic Progression (SAP) for each student. The report highlights those students at risk who are not meeting required standards in the OTA Program.

Grades in the Professional OTA Curriculum will be reviewed by the OTA Program Director and faculty at midterm and at the end of each quarter to monitor student progress and academic standing. Students will be notified immediately by the OTA Program Director if they are at risk.

Students will be placed on programmatic academic warning if their cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum standard to remain in the Professional OTA Curriculum. If students do not achieve the required CGPA within the appropriate time, they will be dismissed from the OTA Program. Refer to the OTA Progression Standards in the [South University Academic Catalog](#)

OTA program faculty must comply with published syllabi, course goals and objectives as well as with published requirements for satisfactory progress throughout the program.

1. Students in the Professional Curriculum of the OTA Program must achieve a minimum grade of C in each course and maintain a required minimum GPA of 2.50 in all courses with an OTA prefix.
2. When awarding grades, OTA faculty will observe the following:
 - If extra credit is used, it must be offered within the context of a course and be related to specific course content and offered to every student in that course. Any time faculty consider using extra credit, it must be reviewed and approved by the Program Director prior to implementation. If a student is absent when the extra credit items are offered, that student must have an opportunity to complete the extra credit item(s) on his/her return to class.
 - Faculty will not implement rounding up or down when grading. Students achieve the points they earn, which will be totaled at the end of the quarter and a letter grade awarded. A student has the right to appeal any grade earned.
3. Students in good standing in the OTA Program who achieve a score below 75% on a major assignment, written exam or lab practical exam must receive remediation as determined by the course instructor (e.g., counseling, meeting to review work, remediation session, learning contract). Failure of the student to comply with a remediation plan may result in a failing grade.
4. If a student achieves a grade below a C, that student will not be allowed to progress in the OTA Program. The student is permitted to repeat the course(s) in which s/he achieved a grade below a C the next time the course is offered and based on space availability in the cohort. This repeat course option is only offered once during the Professional Curriculum (twice if the courses involve co-requisites OTA 2380/2385 or OTA 2390/2395).
In collaboration with the course instructor, the Program Director will generate a re-entry plan for students that may include the review of any OTA courses already taken to minimize knowledge erosion and/or assignments to strengthen weak areas. Before re-entry, faculty reserve the right to assess the student's retention of previously learned OT content to further identify areas needing improvement. This information may form the basis of a learning contract.
5. Any student achieving a grade below a B (80%) when retaking an OTA course is dismissed from the OTA Program and is not eligible for reinstatement. Students dismissed from the OTA Program may appeal their dismissal to the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals, as described in the OTA Student Handbook.6
6. Students will be dismissed from the OTA Program if they receive more than one D or F in any quarter in any course with an OTA prefix. The Program Director will notify students in writing. Students dismissed from the OTA Program may appeal their dismissal to the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals, as described in the OTA Student Handbook.
7. Any student who violates the College of Health Professions Background Check or Drug and Alcohol Screening Policy while enrolled in the OTA Program will be referred to the OTA Committee on Progressions and may be dismissed from the program.
8. A student may withdraw from any course with an OTA prefix only once. If a student withdraws from an OTA course more than once, that student will be dismissed from the OTA Program. Students dismissed from the OTA Program must apply for readmission.
 - Level II Fieldwork experiences A and B must be completed within 24 months of the first day of the cohort's originally scheduled Level II Fieldwork A placement.
 - Level II Fieldwork A and B are completed meeting competency standards mandated by the most current American Occupational Therapy Association's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation Form. All Level II Fieldwork is Pass/Fail. *NOTE: It is strongly recommended that students not work during the quarters in which they are placed on corequisites OTA2380 Level II Fieldwork A and OTA2385 Fieldwork Seminar A and corequisite OTA2390 Level II Fieldwork B and OTA2395 Fieldwork Seminar B.*
 - During these last two quarters, of fieldwork, students must achieve entry level competency by demonstrating professionalism, knowledge, skills and abilities sufficient to achieve a passing score on the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation Form. To do

this, students must be physically, emotionally and cognitively able to fully engage at each fieldwork site.

9. Students who fail either Level II Fieldwork A or B due to outside work demands will be dismissed from the Professional OTA Curriculum.
10. Students may appeal their dismissal to the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals, as described in the OTA Student Handbook.
11. The following situations may occur in the last didactic quarter of the Professional OTA Curriculum, the quarter before Level II Fieldwork A begins:
 - If a student achieves a CGPA below 2.50 in the last didactic quarter before Level II Fieldwork A and if it is mathematically possible for the student to achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.50 in the Professional OTA Curriculum, that student may decelerate, receiving remediation to achieve necessary competencies and the minimum required CGPA of 2.50 before progressing in the Professional OTA Curriculum.

Remediation may include, but be not limited to, sitting out a quarter, retaking a course or courses, completing remedial assignments, demonstrating skills or taking exams. Remediation will be documented using a performance improvement plan to include the issue(s), expected outcomes, activities, timeline and supervising faculty member(s). The decision as to whether the student may progress or not rests with the OTA Program Director, based on the advisory capacity of the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals.
 - If, however, it is not mathematically possible for the student to achieve the minimum required CGPA of 2.50 within one quarter of being placed on programmatic academic warning, the student will be dismissed from the Professional OTA Curriculum. Students dismissed may appeal their dismissal to the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals, as described in the OTA Student Handbook.
 - If the issue is unprofessional behavior and/or attitude, a performance improvement plan will be put in place to modify those behaviors and/or attitudes; this plan will include, but be not limited to, the issue(s), expected outcomes, activities, timeline and supervising faculty member(s).

Student competency during remediation will be documented in accordance with the performance improvement plan by supervising faculty and/or the Program Director. A student's failure to adhere to the performance improvement plan may result in a delayed fieldwork placement and up to dismissal from the OTA Program. The decision as to whether the student may progress with the next logical cohort rests with the OTA Program Director, based on the advisory capacity of the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals. Students dismissed may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Student Affairs, as described in the OTA Student Handbook.
12. A student is permitted only one opportunity to repeat a Level I or Level II Fieldwork A or B placement upon approval of the OTA Program Director, based on the advisory capacity of the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals. A student who fails a second Level I or Level II Fieldwork A or B placement will be dismissed from the Professional OTA Curriculum. Students dismissed may appeal their dismissal to the OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals, as described in the OTA Student Handbook.
13. Students dismissed from a Level I, Level II A or Level II B Fieldwork placement by the Fieldwork Educator or by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator prior to completing the placement will be required to sit out from the fieldwork experience while the Program Director and OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals investigates the reasons for the dismissal.
 - If the Program Director and/or committee determine that the dismissal is an indicator that the student will not succeed in the profession, the student will be dismissed from the OTA Program.
 - If the Program Director and/or committee determine the student has a high probability of entering the profession as a safe, proficient practitioner despite the dismissal from a fieldwork placement, the student may be permitted to repeat the Level I, Level II A or Level II B Fieldwork placement when placements are available.
14. If a student withdraws from a Level I or Level II Fieldwork A or B placement, the student can be provided with a remediation plan and a directive to sit out until the course is next offered. The student can be dismissed from the Professional OTA Curriculum, depending on the reason for the withdrawal.
15. Students may be dismissed from the Professional OTA Curriculum for nonacademic issues including, but not limited to, unprofessional conduct, insubordination, violation of the College of

Health Professions Background Check or Substance Abuse Screening policy, university's Code of Conduct Policy and noncompliance with other university or program policies and procedures.

- Infractions may result in progressive disciplinary action that includes, but is not limited to, feedback on continuing student review forms, counseling, verbal warning, written warning or dismissal from the OTA Program.
 - If a student receives two or more written warnings, the case will be considered by the OTA Progressions Committee in an advisory capacity to the OTA Program Director, who will make the final decision.
 - If an infraction from unprofessional behavior places the well-being of any individual at risk or violates the ethical code of the occupational therapy profession, the student will be dismissed immediately from the OTA Program. Students dismissed from the OTA Program because of a nonacademic issue may appeal their dismissal to the Campus Dean of Student Affairs, as described in the South University Campus Handbook.
16. If a student is eligible for re-entry into the OTA Program, that student has up to one year from the date of last attendance to re-enter the OTA Program without having to reapply as a new student.
 17. If a student is eligible for re-entry into the OTA Program and it is more than one year from date of last attendance, the student must reapply for admission to the university and into the Professional Curriculum of the OTA Program as a new student, regardless of grades obtained during prior enrollment.
 18. OTA students wishing to appeal a Satisfactory Academic Progress dismissal can submit an appeal request to the OTA Department Chair within five business days of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Department Chair, the student may appeal further to the Assistant Dean of the College, within five business days. If the student is not satisfied with the Assistant Dean of the College's decision, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions within five business days of receiving the decision. The decision of the Dean of the College of Health Professions is final. If a student is dismissed a second time while in the professional phase of the OTA program, the student will be permanently dismissed from the program and will not be eligible for readmission into any South University OTA program.

Reinstatement

Students who have withdrawn from the Professional Curriculum of the OTA Program and wish to be considered for reinstatement must reapply using the process described below.

The reinstatement process will be offered only once to a student. There is no guarantee of reinstatement into the OTA Program. Students who have been dismissed from the OTA Program for any reason and whose appeals for re-entry have been denied are not eligible for re-instatement.

1. No later than the third week of the academic quarter before the quarter in which the student wishes to reenroll, the student must submit a written letter to the Program Director requesting reinstatement in the OTA Program.

The reinstatement letter must include the following:

- Reasons why student was unsuccessful in the past, supported by documentation (e.g., letter from physician, notice of death in family, eviction notice from landlord)
 - What has changed to lead the student to believe success is possible examples of how student plans to ensure future success
 - Examples of how student plans to ensure future success
2. The OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals will review reinstatement letters and advise the Program Director.
 3. No later than midterm in the quarter before the student seeks to reenroll, the OTA Program Director will determine whether reinstatement into the OTA Program is warranted.

4. The decision will be based on availability of space in the cohort and on the student's potential to achieve success in the OTA curriculum, as determined by the Program Director.
5. Students may appeal decisions made by the OTA Program Director to the OTA Department Chair within five business days of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Department Chair, the student may appeal further to the Assistant Dean of the College, within five business days. If the student is not satisfied with the Assistant Dean of the College's decision, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions within five business days of receiving the decision. The decision of the Dean of the College of Health Professions is final.
6. At any time in the re-entry process, the student may be asked to meet with his or her academic advisor.
7. The reinstated student will be required to comply with the curriculum and requirements in force at the time of reinstatement, including any changes made to the curriculum or prerequisites during his or her absence from the program.
8. Students who are eligible for reinstatement and have been out of the program for any reason for less than one year since the last date of attendance may apply for re-entry by the process described above.
9. Students who are eligible for reinstatement and have been out of the program for any reason longer than one year from date of last attendance must reapply for admission to South University and to the OTA Program as a new student.

Remediation

Remediation may be useful to help students avoid or recover from programmatic academic warnings or to minimize knowledge erosion when sitting out for a quarter. See the OTA Progression Standards for the point at which remediation in the Professional OTA Curriculum becomes mandatory and other details at the [South University Academic Catalog](#)

Remediation might include such strategies as OTA faculty providing extra readings, assignments or worksheets or extra time in the lab to strengthen requisite knowledge and skills. Remediation might also include tutoring in the Academic Success Center or with the South University librarian. Peer mentoring might also be incorporated into the remediation process.

Key faculty members, including the course and program directors, must take part in the remediation process, providing the student with clear direction and timelines.

Failure of the student to comply with remediation procedures may result in a course grade of Incomplete, denial of re-entry into the OTA Program or dismissal from the OTA Program. Refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for requirements for resolution of an Incomplete grade.

OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals

The OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals is an advisory committee to the OTA Program Director, involved in helping resolve issues related to student progress in the OTA Program; the committee also considers level one appeals made by students as part of the multi-level appeals process.

The OTA Committee on Progression and Appeals is made up of the OTA Program Director, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and one faculty member from the OTA Program or from another academic discipline (e.g., PTA, Physician Assistant, Nursing).

OTA Graduation Requirements

South University and the OTA Program reserve the right to make changes to any and all systems, policies and procedures related to the OTA Program at any time. This includes changes to admissions, financial

aid, and the curriculum and graduation requirements. Please consult the most current South University Academic Catalog or most current addendum for updated information.

In order to graduate from the Associate of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant program or the Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant, a student must:

1. Complete the course requirements described in the catalog in effect when the student enrolled. However, academic programs are subject to change at the discretion of the institution. Students who leave the University longer than one calendar year will be required to meet catalog requirements in effect at the time of their return. Students may request department chair/coordinator approval for a course substitution or waiver. The OTA Program Director in consultation with the Campus Director & Dean of Academic Affairs and Operations and Dean, College of Health Professions must approve deviation from any program requirements. Students must complete Level II Fieldwork within 24 months following completion of the didactic portion of the program.
2. Achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher in all courses in the student's major in the Professional OTA Curriculum.
3. Achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher for all coursework taken at the University.
4. Abide by all University rules and regulations before graduation.

Students are expected to complete all graduation and fieldwork requirements in a timely manner. Students are required to complete the didactic portion of the professional curriculum within 150% of the published length. Level II Fieldwork A, Fieldwork Seminar A, Level II Fieldwork B, and Fieldwork Seminar B must be completed within 24 months of the first day of the cohort's originally scheduled Level II Fieldwork A placement.

Refer to the OTA Graduation Requirements in the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

Professional Behaviors and Essential Functions for the OTA Program

Entry-level occupational therapy assistants are not only expected to demonstrate mastery of academic information and technical skills, but effectively demonstrate a set of characteristic behaviors referred to as professional behavior. It is expected that OTA students demonstrate professional behaviors while representing South University, including, but not limited to, excellence in behaviors, attitudes and skills described by the Essential Functions.

The OTA faculty will reinforce adoption of professional behaviors throughout the curriculum, particularly in courses with labs. The presence (or absence) of professional behaviors will be included in the final grade for each course, as described in course syllabi.

Students will display professional behaviors, assess their own performance with respect to the behaviors, and be ready to make behavioral changes as directed by academic and clinical faculty.

Students must demonstrate competency in essential functions related to the profession of occupational therapy to be successful in the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program *and* in future employment as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA).

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) bans discrimination against persons with disabilities. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the OTA Program at South University to inform students considering a career as a COTA about the essential functions required both in the academic program and in the workforce. Factors and requirements will vary, depending on the specific area of practice and work setting.

Students must not have any impairment that would prevent them from safe and continuous application of these essential functions or of any and all others that are integral to the success of the OTA student and future

occupational therapy practitioner. Students will display professional behaviors, assess their own performance with respect to the behaviors, and be ready to make behavioral changes as directed by academic and clinical faculty.

It is the policy of South University and of the OTA Program to provide reasonable accommodations to students with special needs who request them to meet OTA Program requirements; the OTA Program is not required to substantially alter the requirements or nature of the program.

If students in the Professional Curriculum of the OTA Program cannot meet the essential functions, they must contact the Dean of Student Affairs for information about a reasonable accommodation and provide documentation to support the request for a reasonable accommodation, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In collaboration with the Dean of Student Affairs, OTA faculty will make every effort to see to it that the student meets the essential functions as the student moves through the Professional OTA Curriculum.

In addition, the OTA Committee for Progression and Appeals may become involved in issues related to a student's performance of the essential functions. The OTA Committee for Progression and Appeals may make recommendations to the OTA Program Director that result in, but are not limited to, a lower course grade, the creation of a remediation plan, exclusion from a course, dismissal from a Level I or Level II Fieldwork experience, professional behavior probation or dismissal from the OTA Program and/or South University. Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C.A. Section 794, and the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination against "otherwise qualified" persons with a disability. If an applicant can perform the Core Performance Standards listed above, he or she is "otherwise qualified" under the law and must be treated the same as a person without a disability. A person who cannot perform the Core Performance Standards is not "otherwise qualified" and may be denied access to the program without discrimination.

There may be certain requirements that the OTA Program cannot accommodate, such as failure to meet essential functions set forth below. In addition, there are essential functions that cannot be accommodated such as in the areas of safety and judgment.

Students must demonstrate competency in the following essential functions related to the profession of occupational therapy:

| BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONS | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Function | Description of Function | Examples of Necessary Activities |
| Adaptation | The ability to respond with flexibility to change or difference. | Adapt to and work with people of diverse cultures and experiences; adapt activities and occupations to support client success; demonstrate flexibility in planning and scheduling client intervention; respond with flexibility to changes in policies and procedures; adapt own behaviors, as required, to meet changing societal needs. |
| Emotional stability | The ability to control one's own emotions, differentiate between different emotions and identify each appropriately; use emotions to guide thinking and direct behavior. | Recognize stressors to self and others; controls emotions in response to others and the environment; identifies appropriate responses, given the situation; complete timed written and practical exams; respond in nonthreatening way to aggressive client behavior; prioritizes multiple commitments in personal and professional lives. |
| Interpersonal skills | The ability to interact effectively with others. | Work effectively with individuals or in groups; demonstrate respect in all interactions with others; establish rapport and maintain professional boundaries with peers, clients and families; accept others; demonstrate confidence; motivate others; |

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| | | effectively resolve conflict; maintain confidentiality of client information. |
| Safety | Maintain the well-being of others in compliance with policies and procedures. | Recognize and remedy safety concerns during client care; ask for assistance when needed for safe practice, use appropriate body mechanics and guarding techniques; practice universal or standard precautions at all times; demonstrate safe handling of clients and equipment; familiarize self with and comply with risk management policies, emergency plans and reporting procedures. |
| Ethics | The ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to comply with authority and with policies and procedures. | Demonstrate academic honesty; comply with ethical standards of the occupational therapy profession (e.g., American Occupational Therapy Standards of Conduct, Code of Ethics, State Practice Act), fieldwork facilities and school policies; confirm informed consent from patient; exercise discretion; maintain confidentiality; manage personal affairs in a way that does not interfere with professional responsibilities; respect authority and comply with decisions of those in authority. |
| Professional appearance and behavior | The ability to adjust behavior and appearance in response to given circumstances. | Maintain personal hygiene; comply with the university and program dress code; demonstrate a positive attitude; demonstrate neutral and non-judgmental attitude; demonstrate patience; demonstrate dependability; assume responsibility; arrive on time; follow through with commitments; comply with local, state and federal laws, policies and procedures, rules and regulations of the university, program and practice settings. |
| COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS | | |
| Function | Description of Function | Examples of Necessary Activities |
| Critical thinking | The ability to define and resolve issues by asking questions, gathering and analyzing information. | Demonstrate sound clinical judgment in the appropriate and safe delivery of occupational therapy services; problem solve and modify approach, as needed; synthesize information, |
| Time management | The ability to identify and prioritize tasks to be accomplished and maintain work pace appropriate to given work load. | Demonstrate ability to plan, schedule and treat clients with flexibility when nursing, medical and other therapy schedules interfere with occupational therapy; plan for client discharge; complete documentation in timely way; notify supervisor if unable to meet scheduled number of minutes for client treatment. |
| Math, reading comprehension | The ability to apply basic math functions, calculate time and simple measurements; comprehend written words. | Calculates number of treatment minutes remaining, reads goniometer accurately when measuring range of motion; comprehends content of medical records, documents, evaluations, manuals, evidence-based research, instructions, policies and procedures. |
| Perception | The ability to be aware of things in relation to others and to discriminate between those relationships. | The ability to perceive is to discriminate relationships in the following areas: figure-ground; spatial relationships (e.g., over, under, right, left); depth perception (e.g., far, close); sequencing; visual |

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| | | memory; perceive relevant detail in objects, models, graphs, pictures and make visual comparisons. |
| COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS | | |
| Function | Description of Function | Examples of Necessary Activities |
| Verbal | The ability to speak using the English language, clearly communicating and clarifying information. | Communicate effectively using all methods of verbal communication (e.g., phone, face to face) with clients, family members, peers, faculty, other professionals and stakeholders in meetings, evaluations and treatment sessions and in class; explain role of occupational therapy and purpose of interventions; use professional terminology appropriately and translate for the layperson. |
| Written | The ability to communicate legibly and concisely in English, using proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, style and formatting. | Demonstrate effective written skills using all written methods of communication (e.g., handwritten and electronic communication); document client-specific data using professional terminology and information related to service delivery; apply APA style to assignments |
| Listen, comprehend and respond | The ability to hear, understand and respond appropriately to what was communicated. | Demonstrate a conscious decision to listen to and understand others using active listening skills; give others time to explain; use verbal and nonverbal cues (e.g., make eye contact, smile, ask questions, nod, avoid distractions); modify approach to those with speech and hearing impairments or those whose first language is not English. |
| SENSORY FUNCTIONS | | |
| Function | Description of Function | Examples of Necessary Activities |
| Hearing | The auditory ability to detect sound within 10 feet away, sufficient to monitor clients and interact with others. | The ability to hear sufficient enough to hear communication between clients, families, peers and others; hear client distress sounds and calls for assistance up to 10 feet away; the ability to hear verbal conversations, instructions and multimedia (e.g., audio, video, DVD) in the classroom, lab or practice setting; detect alarms generated by mechanical systems (e.g., vital signs, wheelchair, fire). |
| Touch | The ability to come into physical contact with something and perceive that it is there. | Physical assessment of a client that includes palpation of anatomical structures (e.g., muscle contractions, subluxation), assessing muscle tone, edema and skin characteristics; distinguish between hot/cold; identify points touched, identify objects in hand without looking at them. |
| Vision | The ability to look at and see something or someone close-up and from a distance greater than 20 feet, noting verbal and nonverbal postures or behaviors. | Monitor client movement, expressions and posture during interactions; see to gather data using measurement instruments (e.g., goniometer); see to monitor equipment settings on dials; read instructions; see to detect changes in client condition for safe practices (e.g., pale/flush, sweating, edema, atrophy); see video, graphics, and written language on the computer or in the medical record; see to detect safety hazards. See and recognize numbers, letters, printed, typed, |

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| | | and cursive writing in medical documents; read English to gather information for occupational profile. |
| PHYSICAL FUNCTIONS | | |
| Function | Description of Function | Examples of Necessary Activities |
| Fine motor dexterity | The ability to coordinate small muscle groups during movement, usually involving coordination between the hands, fingers and eyes to manipulate small objects. | Grasp and release items of various sizes in one or both hands (e.g., small bead, safety pin, pencil); demonstrate hand steadiness; demonstrate two point, three point and lateral pinch sufficient to do daily activities; have sufficient coordination to type on a keyboard and manipulate a mouse to complete client documentation. |
| Gross motor skills | The ability to coordinate large muscle groups to move and to stabilize the head, trunk, arms and legs to reach, lift, push, pull, stand, balance, walk, run, bend, kneel and crouch; possess minimum grip strength of 30 pounds in one or both hands, and the ability to stand up to 30 minutes at a time, push up to 250 pounds and lift/transfer up to 250 pounds. | Demonstrate independent control of upper and lower limb; have a minimum grip strength of 30 pounds to lift in one or both hands; complete transfer and positioning activities with another person to lift and complete a level patient transfer up to 250 pounds; push up to 250 pounds (e.g., client in wheelchair); stand for up to 30 minutes at a time; pull IV poles; kneel to assist in lower limb dressing; physically support clients to ensure safety during treatment; demonstrate sufficient strength and balance to safely transfer, move and assist clients in daily activities. |
| Mobility | The ability to independently move easily from point A to point B. | Move physically from room to room; navigate on level, inclined, stepped and uneven terrain; maneuver in small places, around medical equipment or in bathroom; commute to/from classes and fieldwork. |
| Endurance | The ability to exert self and remain active for a long period of time (e.g., 45 minutes); stamina. | The body's ability to successfully transfer the client from the bed to the wheelchair into the van and secure in place; perform repetitive work without fatigue. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL FUNCTIONS | | |
| Function | Description of Function | Examples of Necessary Activities |
| Working conditions | The ability to recognize, avoid and prevent safety and health hazards in the work setting. | Work in fast-paced, noisy practice setting both around and with others; work around medical equipment; transfer client from/to various surfaces in confined space; exposed to grease, oil or solvents when working with wheelchairs and splints; wear face mask, gloves and gown to comply with infection control policies. |

Social Media Statement

As members of the South University Occupational Therapy Program, students must comply with all applicable professionalism and conduct policies when utilizing social media. In addition, all students must follow university privacy and confidentiality policies, such as those outlined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Sharing patient information—including photos or any identifiable details—is strictly prohibited. Social media behavior violations of program professionalism standards will be referred to the OTA Progress and Promotions Committee.

Professional Development During the OTA Program

During the OTA Program at South University, there are opportunities for students to engage in professional development activities. Such activities might include, but not be limited to, continuing education courses in CORE as well as the NBCOT OTA Exam Review course. The Student Occupational Therapy Association also provides opportunities for professional development.

Students are expected to record their participation in these activities and document these activities in their student learning portfolios.

Student Learning Portfolios

Students in the OTA Program are expected to create and maintain learning portfolios, containing copies of professional development, professional membership and a select sample of work from each course (e.g., sample treatment plan, progress note or discharge summary; example of paper or course project). This portfolio can be used to demonstrate progress in the academic program and in fieldwork placements. In addition, the portfolio serves as a resource tool.

Student and Professional Organizations

To contribute to their professional development, students are encouraged to be a student member of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and their state occupational therapy association throughout the OTA Program, including during Level II Fieldwork placements. Students are responsible for obtaining the student membership for AOTA at their own expense on their own time.

Students are encouraged to join the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). Talk with the faculty liaison to the SOTA or the OTA Program Director to learn more.

Minimum Technology Requirements

All on campus and online students will need a computer and certain technology to complete their studies.

Students can use either a laptop or a desktop computer, based on their preferences. A laptop will offer more portability and flexibility. It is recommended that computers be no more than 3 years old at the start of a program.

Chromebooks (Chrome OS), tablets/iPads, and smartphones do not meet the minimum requirements for coursework at South University (SU). SU recognizes these devices are convenient and can be used for some course functions, but they cannot be your primary device, nor can they be your only device. These devices offer limited functionality and will not work with some courseware used at SU. They should be considered supplemental devices to your primary computer/laptop.

Refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for further information and general technology requirements.

Technology and Communication

Electronic devices or technology refers to, but is not limited to, personal computers, laptop computers, iPads, iPods, cell phones, cameras, tablets and smartphones. The program includes the use of computers as part of the learning process.

Examples of when electronic devices are used include distance education courses, meetings with advisors, group activities, and seminar course discussions. At a minimum, students will be required to have access to a computer with a functioning camera.

If there is any question about the propriety of student behavior and the use of electronic devices, it is the course or clinical instructor who decides whether student behavior is disruptive. Any violation of this policy will be addressed by the OTA Program Director and/or the Campus Dean of Student Affairs.

Prior to the beginning of each class, all student cellular phones must either be turned off or placed on silent/vibrate mode. The ringing of cell phones in class is disruptive and will not be tolerated. Texting and checking voicemail messages are also unacceptable during class time. An exception to this guideline would be the activation of numerous devices at the same time as part of the University's emergency notification system.

If the student must take a call (e.g., sick child or similar circumstance), the student must inform the instructor at the beginning of class that the student may need to leave the classroom to take an important call. If a student is using technology or electronic devices for anything other than activities pertaining to that class, s/he will be asked to leave the class.

If a student is found to be 'texting' while class is in session, s/he will be asked to leave the class. Technology in the classroom is intended to enhance the learning environment for all students. Using laptop computers in the classroom to take notes and for any other authorized use may be permitted at the instructor's discretion. However, the use of laptops for any other reason is unacceptable.

Electronic devices may be used for professional needs in some courses. If a student wishes to record classroom lectures, prior written permission must be obtained from the instructor. This permission slip must be dated and signed by both parties. Every effort must be made to avoid distracting others when recording; demonstrations will not be repeated to get a 'better shot' for student videos. Any audio or video recording must be used solely for that individual student's learning; no audio or video recorded lectures may be posted to any Internet or social media site.

Use of electronic devices is prohibited if their use violates laws, such as intellectual property rights or copyrights, invasion of privacy, sexual harassment or copying information from confidential records. Furthermore, students are prohibited from taking pictures at South University without the written consent of the subject(s). Upon entry into the OTA Program, each student will sign a Photo Release Form (see [Appendix E](#)).

Electronic Equipment During Testing

To maintain academic integrity in the classroom during testing, the following steps will be followed:

- No personal communication devices are allowed on the desk or to be used by the student during exams. If such devices are found, the student will receive a grade of "0" for that test.
- Do not bring any textbooks, notebooks, papers, handouts, book bags, purses, etc. to your desk area on testing days. A break will be provided after all tests.
- Any student found to be 'texting' or using any other electronic device(s) in an unauthorized way during an examination will have their test confiscated and will receive a grade of "0" for that test.
- If extenuating circumstances exist, students must notify faculty prior to taking the test.

Respondus Lockdown Browser

Respondus Lockdown Browser will be used for all OTA exams. Students are required to download Respondus Lockdown Browser to their personal computers/laptop. The student should contact the instructor or contact IT if they have any questions or concerns.

Webcam Use in Class

OTA courses will require the student to use a webcam for class sessions and/or assessments. Classes and assessments may be conducted using Kaltura, or other technology selected by the instructor which will use the computer's webcam or other technologies to communicate, monitor, and/or record classes, class activities, and assessments. Assessments will also be conducted using proctoring software, which may listen to the student, monitor the computer screen, view student surroundings, and record (including visual and audio recordings) all activity during the proctoring process.

Students are required to use their webcams during all distance education courses. This allows instructors to clearly identify that the student registered for the distance education course is the same student participating in the course. Instructors use a class roster with the student's photo to assist identifying those students in attendance. This ensures that the program is in compliance with ACOTE standard A.2.13. The student should contact the instructor if they are unable to comply or have any questions or concerns.

Dress Code Policy

Throughout the OTA Program, each student will be held accountable for the highest quality of personal hygiene, grooming and professional attire.

There are approved uniforms for OTA students from which the OTA Program Director and faculty on each campus can choose.

Please refer to [Appendix F](#) to learn more about the dress code.

OTA Classroom Space

South University provides multiple spaces in which students and faculty meet for educational purposes. The dedicated OTA Lab was created for use solely by the OTA Program and contains a bathroom that has a bathtub, toilet and vanity/sink to allow for simulated practice in transfers, hygiene, grooming and bathing/showering. A storage room is located in the OTA Lab in which to store equipment and supplies.

The kitchen area contains a washer and dryer, kitchen cabinets and countertops, stove/oven and refrigerator. This offers students opportunities for simulated practice in related activities of daily living related to food preparation, home management and laundry. The bedroom area contains a bed to allow student practice in bed mobility, transfers from bed to chair and activities of daily living (e.g., dressing, grooming, hygiene) done bedside.

An open area provides students with an area in which to engage in didactic learning or lab experiences that promote practice in activities related to client evaluation and intervention. Additional cabinetry and countertop space is also found in this area of the OTA Lab.

The OTA Program also has use of classroom space that is assigned to the OTA Program on a priority basis, consistent with space for other academic programs at the institution. This classroom space has tables, chairs, a white board, screen, projector, and computer. Students may connect to the Internet and World Wide Web during related learning activities in the classroom and OTA Lab.

Lab Conduct and Safety

Faculty will orient students to the OTA Lab at the start of each course with a lab component. This orientation will include, but not be limited to: safety precautions; infection control guidelines and standard precautions; the location and proper use of the nearest fire extinguisher and eye wash station; location of the first aid kit; review of Safety Data Sheets (SDS); and emergency procedures, including evacuation routes.

Students are also expected to use all equipment and supplies in the OTA classrooms, laboratories, and simulation areas safely and responsibly. Proper handling, cleaning, disinfection, and storage of materials are essential to maintaining a safe learning environment and controlling the spread of infection. Faculty will provide instruction and supervision to ensure proper use of therapeutic tools and lab materials. Misuse of equipment, failure to follow safety protocols, or disregard for infection control procedures may result in disciplinary action and/or remediation. Violation of lab conduct or safety protocol will result in dismissal from the laboratory session. Dismissed students are still responsible for all material addressed during that class session.

For detailed information on equipment usage, safety expectations, and infection control procedures, please refer to [Appendix G](#) and [Appendix H](#).

South University is committed to maintaining a safe work environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each individual—faculty, staff, and student—to maintain and promote safety. Your attitude, knowledge of safe practices, and personal actions are key to preventing accidents, injuries, and occupational exposures or disease in the laboratory and ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations.

The OTA Lab Rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Professional behavior is expected at *all* times.
2. Students will respect others, including personal space and culture, during labs involving palpation, range of motion, muscle testing, sensory testing and assessing body alignment.
3. Students will not be in the OTA lab without supervision of an OTA faculty member or lab assistant.
4. No student will use equipment or materials until its correct use, contraindications and precautions have been reviewed by a faculty member or lab assistant. No equipment or materials will be used without supervision of a faculty member or lab assistant.
5. Students will know the location of and how to use the following items: first aid kit, eye wash station, fire extinguisher, incident report forms, emergency evaluation route, and Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
6. Students will wear safety goggles when working with sharp items (e.g., reed for weaving, copper wire, rivets) and wear any other personal protective equipment (e.g., masks) to remain safe when working in the OTA Lab.
7. Students will report any incident occurring in the OTA Lab immediately to the faculty member in charge.
8. Students will keep the OTA Lab clean, orderly and in working order; students will follow faculty instructions for correct use of sanitizing sprays and wipes or the handling of soiled linens, or storage of supplies in compliance with all agency mandates (e.g., OSHA, Department of Health); students will report any dysfunctional equipment to the faculty in charge.
9. Students will keep all personal belongings in a section of the OTA Lab not in use during that class to keep pathways clear.
10. Students will wash hands per universal precautions with soap and water before leaving the OTA Lab.
11. Students will not remove equipment or supplies from the OTA Lab or campus without the written permission of the Program Director or faculty member in charge (e.g., documenting loan on equipment log).

12. Students will assist in ensuring security of personal belongings when in the OTA Lab. Any theft of student, University, or faculty property will be dealt with by authorities in law enforcement.
13. Only plain water in clear plastic re-sealable containers is permitted in the lab; no other beverage or food is permitted.
14. Failure to comply with the OTA Lab Guidelines is grounds for dismissal from the course.

Incident Reports

In case of an incident, students and involved OTA faculty or staff complete an incident report, available from the OTA Program Director, OTA Faculty, Campus Dean of Student Affairs or designee. A copy will be kept in the OTA Program office before submitting the original to either the Campus Dean of Student Affairs or designee. The OTA Program Incident Report Form can be found in [Appendix I](#).

All students participating in clinical experiences are required to immediately report Reportable Incidents to appropriate University personnel. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the clinical site and/or dismissal from the program. The Clinical Site Incident Reporting Policy can be found in [Appendix J](#).

APPENDIX A: OTA Program Policy on Complaints

Policy:

Grievances and complaints made against the OTA Program will be documented and resolved in a timely manner, in compliance with ACOTE Standard A.4.4, which states that “policy and procedures for processing student and faculty grievances must be defined and published.” Complaints may be submitted in writing or electronically. If a complaint is specifically against the OTA Program Director an alternative process is followed to maintain neutrality and uphold student rights.

Responsible Party:

The OTA Program Director and/or faculty will be responsible for documenting all complaints.

Effective date: January 13, 2017

Revised date: May 31, 2025

Purpose:

Every written or electronically submitted complaint against the OTA Program will be documented in the OTA Complaint Log Manual to ensure timely tracking and intervention for resolution.

Procedure:

1. Complaints against the OTA Program may be submitted in one of two ways:
 - a. In writing to the OTA Program Director, or
 - b. Electronically using the OTA Program Grievances Form available on the OTA Program webpage and in the OTA Student Handbook.
2. All complaints, whether submitted in person or online, must be documented in the OTA Complaint Log Manual, located in the office of the OTA Program Director.
3. The date of the complaint, a description of the complaint or issue, complainant name, and others involved should be entered into the log by OTA faculty or the Program Director.

| Date | Complaint or Issue | Complainant | Others Involved | Resolution and Date |
|------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | | | | |

4. The OTA Program Director shall be notified by involved faculty or South University staff/faculty whenever a complaint has been issued so that the Program Director can meet with those involved, as appropriate, to assist in timely resolution.
5. The resolution must be described and dated in the Complaint Log once the issue has been resolved. As appropriate, the information about the complaint may be filed in the student file.

Procedure for Complaints Against the OTA Program Director

1. Complaints against the OTA Program Director may be submitted in writing or electronically using the OTA Program Grievances Form.
2. Complaints involving the OTA Program Director will be documented and reviewed by the College of Health Professions Deans.
 - a. The OTA Program Director will not have access to the grievance until an initial review and resolution plan is determined.
3. The Deans will investigate the complaint, communicate with all involved parties, and work toward a fair and timely resolution. If needed, human resources may be consulted.

All complaints will be handled with strict confidentiality. Retaliation against students who submit complaints is strictly prohibited.

APPENDIX B: Consent for Drug and Alcohol Screening

Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

I, _____, hereby voluntarily agree to provide urine, blood, or hair as required for testing for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol. I authorize that the results of my drug screen be released to South University and the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. I understand that the results of the drug screen will be used to determine: 1) eligibility for clinical placement, 2) fitness for duty, 3) violation of substance abuse policy, or 4) disciplinary action against me, up to and including dismissal from programs within the College of Health Professions. I understand that the results of the drug and alcohol test will be shared with clinical placement sites as required. I understand that my willingness to submit to the requested screening is completely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse. I am aware that my refusal to submit to the drug and alcohol screening is grounds for disciplinary action and further actions as outlined in the Substance Abuse Policies of the College of Health Professions and South University. I have read and agreed to the terms of the Substance Abuse Policy for the South University College of Health Professions.

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this signed form.

Student's Signature and Date

Student's Printed Name and Date

APPENDIX C: Head's Up Student Alert Form

Student name: _____

Course number and name: _____

Instructor name (print): _____

Current grade (circle or bold/underline): A B C D F

Please identify any *deficiencies or concerns* along with supporting examples for any of the following areas:

ACADEMICS: (e.g. study skills, understanding of content, concepts or theories, ability to integrate or apply knowledge, submitting work on time, class participation)

ATTENDANCE: (e.g., multiple absences, even if not contiguous, missing a single class without providing appropriate notification to instructor)

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS: (e.g., respectful peer and faculty interactions, maturity and self-awareness, appropriate empathy and boundaries, appropriate language, responsiveness to feedback, acceptance of others, multicultural attitude)

WRITTEN AND ORAL PRESENTATION: (e.g., clarity and organization of ideas with conceptual coherence, adherence to APA style, proper grammar and sentence structure, articulate oral presentation, ability to formulate and express observations and impressions)

OTHER: (any other concern that does not fall under the previous categories)

REMEDICATION STEPS TAKEN WITH STUDENT: (e.g., spoke with student directly, phoned student, sent an email, suggested possible steps to improve, provided referrals, provided resources)

Student signature: _____

Date: _____

Print student name: _____

Instructor signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Performance Improvement Plan

Student Name: _____

Student Identification Number: _____

Name and Position of Person Completing Record: _____

Date of Discussion: _____

Others Present: _____

Prior discussion related to this issue: [] Yes [] No If yes, provide the date: _____

Complete the following set of descriptors for *each* identified issue:

Issue (describe the gap between the student's performance behavior and the performance behavior required by the program (provide examples and dates occurred):

Goal:

Target Date:

Methods to accomplish (things the student should do or stop doing that would determine that the situation has been resolved):

Evaluation – how will we know the goal is achieved?

Describe the communicated consequences of failure to improve performance or correct behavior and/or how the person's actions are negatively impacting the program, school or practice setting:

Please note the student's reaction to the discussion and any pertinent student comments (may be handwritten during meeting to facilitate signatures):

Student Name

Date reviewed

Faculty Member Name, as appropriate

Date reviewed

Program Director Name, as appropriate

Date reviewed

Distribution of Performance Improvement Plan: Academic Advisor, Student and Program Director

APPENDIX E: Photo/Likeness/Voice/Words Release Form

Name: (print) _____ Date: _____

Grant Permission

I hereby irrevocably give to South University, LLC at 709 Mall Blvd. Savannah, GA 31406, and its affiliated companies and schools, (collectively, the "Schools"), and the Schools' assigns, licensees and successors the right to include my likeness in videoconference formats, photograph, film and/or videotape me and/or to otherwise record my image and/or likeness, to quote me, to record my words and to use, publish, display, reproduce, copy and distribute my image and/or likeness, voice and words, in all forms of media now known or later developed, including composite or modified representations and including on the Internet, for promotional activities for the Schools, including advertising, direct mail, catalogs, websites, exhibitions, film festivals and classroom presentations, throughout the world and in perpetuity. The Schools are permitted, although not obligated, to include my name in connection with my image and/or likeness, voice and words. I waive the right to inspect or approve versions of my image and/or likeness used for publication or the written copy that may be used in connection therewith and agree that the Schools shall not be liable to me for any distortion or illusionary effect resulting from the use, publication or display of my image or likeness. The Schools are not obligated to utilize any of the rights granted in this Agreement. I agree that I shall have no ownership of or other rights in the photographs, film, videotapes or other recordings of my image and/or likeness, voice and words taken or made by or on behalf of the Schools. I understand that the Schools shall not be responsible for unauthorized duplications/use of my image and/or likeness, voice and words by third parties on the Internet or otherwise.

Release

I release South University LLC from any claims that may arise regarding the use of my image and/or likeness, voice and words, including any claims of defamation, invasion of privacy, or infringement of moral rights, rights of publicity or copyright.

Signature

I have read, understand and agree to the terms of this Agreement.

Signature of person named above: _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Consent [Please execute if the subject of this Photo Release is under 18 years of age.]

I am the parent or guardian of the minor named above, who is aged _____. I have the legal right to consent to and do consent to the terms of this Agreement.

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

APPENDIX F: OTA Dress Code Policy

While attending the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, each student is expected to wear the designated uniform determined by the individual campus OTA program. Uniform requirements can vary significantly between different campuses. While some campuses may enforce strict uniform policies with specific guidelines, such as color schemes, types of clothing, and accessories, others may have more relaxed or even no uniform requirements at all. It is important for OTA students to familiarize themselves with the specific uniform policies of each campus to ensure compliance and avoid any confusion or potential disciplinary actions.

The designated OTA Program uniform can be purchased from the designated vendor identified by the campus. Students will be expected to wear the designated uniform in all OTA courses (i.e., on ground and distance learning courses), during community outings and/or when on campus during the Professional OTA Curriculum. A South University identification badge must be worn at all times, placed so that others can clearly see the badge. Failure to do so is considered to be a breach of professional behavior.

Wearing of this uniform reflects both the professional identity of the student in the field of occupational therapy and promotes the identity of South University. Wearing the uniform also results in opportunities to be an advocate for this newly chosen profession, as the student explains the purpose of occupational therapy when asked questions.

Unacceptable attire includes the following:

- Sandals or open-toed shoes
- Shorts or leggings
- Jeans or low riding slacks or scrubs

Special attire for some labs

Because of the need to palpate bony landmarks to assess range of motion and to view muscle contractions during activity in Movement for Human Occupation, students will be instructed to dress so that the areas assessed that day will be easily accessible while maintaining the dignity and integrity of the student. Gym attire is acceptable for labs in this course.

Any student who is uncomfortable palpating bony landmarks should notify the course director prior to the laboratory so that an alternative can be identified prior to the learning experience.

Hygiene and Grooming

- Cleanliness of body, hair and breath is expected at all times
- Hair should be neat and secured so as not to touch clients or restrict visibility; hair should be a natural color (e.g., blonde, brown, auburn, black, grey)
- Facial hair must be trimmed neatly, not touching clients or restricting visibility
- Fingernails must be trimmed and filed so as not to cut clients; if worn, nail polish must be neat and worn with discretion in a color suited to a professional setting. Acrylic nails are not permitted on campus or in any fieldwork setting.
- Jewelry and body piercings may be worn in moderation, with no sharp or rough edges that could injure clients or distract from care; dangling earrings, necklaces, or chains are not permitted.
- Tattoos that could be perceived as unprofessional may need to be covered when on campus and on fieldwork (i.e., inappropriate language and symbols)
- Ear gauges must be covered with flesh covered caps
- Cosmetics are to be applied in moderation and with professional taste

- The wearing of perfumes and colognes by men and women is not permitted

Non-compliance with Dress Code Policy

The OTA Program at South University takes professionalism very seriously; non-compliance with the dress code policy is viewed as a violation of professional standards.

First violation. The first time a student violates the dress code policy, the course director will issue a verbal warning to remind the student of the policy. A notice of this warning will be placed in the student's OTA Program file.

Second violation. The second time the student violates this dress code policy, the course director will dismiss the student from the class and issue a written warning. A copy of the warning will be placed in the student's OTA Program file. The student remains responsible for learning material covered during that missed class session.

Third violation. The third time the student violates this dress code policy, the course director will refer the student to the OTA Program Director for further review.

Dress Code Policy Off-campus at Level I and Level II Fieldwork

Please refer to the Level I and Level II Fieldwork Manual for the dress code for all fieldwork experiences.

APPENDIX G: Infection Control and Emergency Policy for OTA Instructional Settings

Responsible

Party: OTA faculty

Purpose: This policy ensures that anyone in the OTA classrooms or lab observes standard precautions to control the spread of pathogens and to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for everyone at all times. It also ensures that all individuals are aware of and prepared to follow established evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency, thereby supporting a comprehensive approach to health, safety, and emergency readiness within the OTA Program.

It is the policy of the South University, Occupational therapy Assistant program to follow the guidelines and recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regarding standard precautions.

This policy helps supports program compliance with ACOTE Standard A.4.4.

Effective Date: April 3, 2017

Revision Date: June 9, 2025

Procedure:

Faculty will review this policy and procedure with students in each course at the beginning of each quarter, noting which parts of the policy pertain to that particular course. For example, standard precautions pertaining to hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene are relevant in lecture courses as well as lab courses. Environmental cleaning and disinfection pertain more to classes held in the OTA Lab, although cleaning may be necessary of common keyboards and a mouse in a classroom if a faculty member does not bring his/her own.

Standard Precautions

Standard Precautions are the minimum infection prevention practices that apply to all patient care, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status of the patient, in any setting where healthcare is delivered. Standard Precautions combine the major features of Universal Precautions and Body Substance Isolation and are based on the principle that all blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes may contain transmissible infectious agents.

These practices include:

- Hand hygiene
- The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., gloves, gowns, masks) for mouth, nose, eye protection
- Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette
- Safe handling of potentially contaminated equipment or surfaces

1. Hand hygiene

- Alcohol-based sanitizer

When an alcohol-based sanitizer is used, apply sanitizer the size of a quarter in hands, rubbing

hands together for 20-30 seconds. Once this method has been used for hand hygiene three consecutive times hands should be washed using soap and water before using hand sanitizer again.

As it relates specifically to the OTA Program, hand sanitizer is available in each faculty office area and the OTA Lab.

- Soap and water

To wash hands using soap and water, wet hands and apply soap; rub all surfaces for 40-60 seconds (or sing Happy Birthday twice); rinse hands and dry thoroughly with a single use (disposable) towel; use towel to turn off faucet.

Soap and water should *always* be used in the following situations:

- After touching contaminated objects/body sites
- After sneezing, coughing into a tissue as part of respiratory hygiene
- When hands are visibly dirty, contaminated or soiled
- After using the restroom
- Before eating or preparing food

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE includes things like gloves, masks, eyewear worn to protect the body from injury and/or infection. The PPE creates barriers that protect the skin, clothing, mucous membranes and the respiratory tract from infectious agents.

- Face mask or goggles protect eyes
 - Wear when working in the lab with anything that can enter the eye (e.g., weaving with long reed, contouring copper wire, pounding rivets, spraying paint or Cold Spray)
- Gloves
 - Wear if have contact with substances or irritants to mucous membranes, non-intact skin or contaminated items (e.g., Lysol antibacterial wipes, picking up a tissue and transferring to garbage)
 - Remove after use and before touching non-contaminated items and surfaces
 - Wash hands immediately after glove removal
- Surgical style mask over nose and mouth
 - Wear if coughing and/or sneezing to contain respiratory droplets

3. Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette

Individuals can spread infections to others in the same general area.

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues and throw them away.
- Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer every time you touch your mouth or nose.

- Provide tissues and no-touch receptacles for their disposal.
- Provide resources for performing hand hygiene in or near waiting areas.
- Offer masks to symptomatic patients when they enter the dental setting.
- Provide space and encourage symptomatic patients to sit as far away from others as possible. Facilities may wish to place these patients in a separate area, if available, while waiting for care.

4. Linens

OTA Labs may contain towels, sheets, blankets, pillowcases and hospital gowns for use in class labs.

Linens may be used once and then handled in a way that prevents transfer of microorganisms to others or into the environment by folding the item with the outside facing in and placing the item in the laundry basket provided by the designated linen service for pickup and laundering.

5. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

Use procedures for the routine care, cleaning and disinfection of environmental and surfaces that are often touched and used.

- Tables in the OTA Lab must be wiped off *after each class*.
- Faculty instruct students to wipe off equipment (e.g., crutches, canes, mats, therapy balls, exercise weights) after each *use and at the end of each class*.
- Sinks, doorknobs and other surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned routinely to minimize transmission of germs.

Note: Most disinfectants are not effective if dirt and organic matter are present. Surfaces must be wiped clean before being disinfected in one of several ways:

- Put gloves on. Use disinfectant wipes to clean and disinfect surfaces and items; dispose of wipes in the covered trash can.
- Put gloves on. Use a spray solution of a disinfectant and/or germicidal solution (e.g., Safetec SaniZide Plus Germicidal Solution)
 - Pour disinfectant solution into spray bottles and use full strength. Spray solution onto surface. Let sit for 5 minutes before wiping off. Dispose of wipes/paper towels in covered trash can.
 - Note: Rinsing the surface is only required for surfaces that have direct contact with food.
- Put gloves on. Use a bleach solution (1:10 of bleach to water) in a spray bottle to disinfect contaminated surfaces and items when it is suspected that pathogens such as the norovirus and Clostridium Difficile are present. Dispose of all wipes in the covered trash can.
- Put gloves on. Use alcohol prep pads to clean the sphygmomanometer, pulse oximeter and any other equipment used when taking vital signs. Dispose of all wipes in the covered trash can.

6. Emergency Evacuation Procedures General

Students should familiarize themselves with all posted evacuation maps and procedures during the initial lab orientation and are encouraged to review emergency exits in each learning space.

If an evacuation has been ordered:

- At the sound of the fire alarm or verbal directive from faculty or emergency personnel, stop all activities immediately.
- Do not attempt to retrieve personal items unless instructed to do so and it is safe.
- Leave the lab or classroom in an orderly fashion using the designated evacuation route posted near the lab exit.
- Use the nearest safe exit; do not use elevators.
- If smoke is present, stay low to the ground.
- Help individuals with mobility limitations, if you are able, or notify faculty or emergency personnel immediately.
- Report to the Designated Assembly Area
- Once outside, proceed to the pre-determined assembly area (e.g., campus parking lot, open green space, etc.—location to be defined by campus).
- Stay with your class or group so attendance and safety checks can be completed.
- Do not return to the lab, classroom, or building until an official “all clear” has been given by campus safety officers or emergency responders.

Emergency Exits

- Emergency exits for the entire building are posted in the hallways outside of classrooms.
- The closest emergency exit is located in the hallway outside the OTA lab. This hallway provides an exit to the parking lot.
- The OT lab has a refuge area located at the back of the lab behind the bedroom area for those who cannot safely leave the building without assistance from medical or rescue personnel

Student Injuries

If a student is injured in the OTA lab, an incident report must be completed immediately following the occurrence. The supervising faculty member is responsible for ensuring the student receives appropriate first aid or medical attention as needed and for initiating the incident report process. The report should include a detailed account of the incident, individuals involved, witnesses, and any actions taken. Completed incident reports must be submitted to the OTA Program Director and the appropriate university designee in accordance with South University’s policies. Prompt reporting ensures timely follow-up, supports student safety, and helps prevent future occurrences.

OTA Lab Standard Precautions Tracker
To be posted in the OTA lab and used for all classes

| Date | Time | Area/Equipment Disinfected | Student Initials | Faculty Initials |
|------|------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

APPENDIX H: Policy on Use of Equipment and Supplies for Educational Activities

Policy: The objective of this policy is to ensure the proper and safe use, maintenance, storage, and disposal of all equipment and supplies utilized in the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program. This includes instructional, laboratory, and simulated clinical settings. The policy is designed to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, and clients by promoting consistent adherence to established procedures, manufacturer guidelines, and professional standards. It also supports compliance with institutional and accreditation requirements (ACOTE Standard A.4.4) while fostering a culture of accountability and safe practice.

Responsible Party: The OTA Program Director and OTA Faculty will be responsible for ensuring proper use of equipment and supplies during educational activities.

Procedure:

All equipment and supplies provided by the OTA program are intended for instructional use only and must be used responsibly and exclusively for activities that support student learning, clinical skill development, and academic projects approved by OTA faculty.

Access and Authorization:

- Students may access OTA program equipment and supplies only under the supervision of faculty or with prior written approval.
- Equipment may not be removed from program facilities unless explicitly authorized by faculty for off-site academic use.
- All equipment and supplies must be signed out using the designated sign-out form prior to use or removal.

Proper Use and Care:

- Equipment must be used according to instructional guidelines and safety protocols provided during lab sessions.
- Students are responsible for the appropriate handling and maintenance of equipment and supplies during use.
- Any damaged, lost, or malfunctioning items must be reported to faculty immediately.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- All reusable therapy tools (e.g., therapy tools, sensory bins, ADL equipment, splinting tools) must be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use, following the manufacturer's recommendations and OTA Program protocols.
- Shared surfaces and tools must be disinfected between users during lab or simulation

sessions using approved cleaning agents.

Use of Disposable and Single-Use Items

- Items such as gloves, electrodes, tongue depressors, or any other single-use materials may not be reused and must be discarded immediately in appropriate waste containers after use.

Storage and Maintenance of Supplies:

- Clean and contaminated materials must be stored separately. Clean materials must be kept in designated storage areas that are clearly labeled and regularly monitored.
- All borrowed equipment must be returned by the agreed-upon deadline and placed in their designated storage areas in clean and functional condition.
- Upon return, equipment must be inspected by a faculty member to ensure it is in proper working order.
- Supplies should be used efficiently and only in quantities necessary for the approved educational activity.
- Expired materials must be promptly removed from circulation.

Student Accountability

- Demonstrate competency in the proper handling and sanitation of equipment as part of their lab practical evaluations.
- Report any misuse, malfunction, or contamination of equipment immediately to faculty.
- Students who misuse, damage, or lose equipment or supplies due to negligence may be held financially responsible.
- Repeated misuse or failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including possible removal from lab participation.

Faculty Responsibilities

- Provide students with clear instruction on the correct use, handling, cleaning, and storage of all lab and clinical equipment.
- Incorporate demonstrations and supervised practice into lab activities to reinforce safe equipment usage.
- Actively supervise students during hands-on activities to ensure proper use of tools, therapeutic equipment, and materials.
- Routinely inspect equipment and supplies for damage, malfunction, or wear and remove any items that are unsafe or no longer functional.
- Report and document maintenance needs or hazards to the OTA Program Director and/or facilities staff promptly.

Review and Updates:

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect changes in equipment inventory, safety standards, or educational practices.

Effective Date: May 31, 2025

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Equipment and Supplies Sign-Out/In Sheet

| Date | Student Name | Course or Purpose | Item(s) Description | Quantity | Time Out | Faculty Initial (Out) | Time In | Faculty Initial (In) | Condition Upon Return | Notes |
|------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------|
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APPENDIX I: Incident Report Form

Student Name: _____

Incident Date: _____

Time: _____ AM/PM

Location of Incident: _____

Nature of Incident: _____

Incident Cause: _____

Give brief description of incident, including predominating and contributing causes as well as actions taken following the incident:

State corrective action taken to prevent recurrence. Indicate if further investigation is warranted.

Did you seek medical care? Yes No

Date/Time/Method Program was notified: _____

Date/Time of Report to preceptor/clinical department manager: _____

Name of Faculty/Advisor reviewing the report: _____

Signature of Injured Student: _____

APPENDIX J: Clinical Site Incident Reporting

Standard Operating Procedure: Clinical Site Incident Reporting

Purpose: To establish clear procedures for reporting incidents, adverse events, and other significant occurrences during clinical placements to ensure student safety, patient safety, and institutional compliance.

Policy Statement:

All students participating in clinical experiences are required to immediately report Reportable Incidents to appropriate University personnel. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the clinical site and/or dismissal from the program.

Reportable Incidents - Students Must Report:

You must immediately report any of the following incidents:

1. Patient-Related Incidents:

- o Patient death during or after your involvement in care
- o Serious patient injury or adverse outcome during your care
- o Medication errors or near-misses
- o Patient falls or safety events
- o Equipment failure or malfunction
- o Any situation where patient safety was or could have been compromised

2. Student Safety Incidents:

- o Needlestick injuries or blood/body fluid exposures
- o Injury to yourself at the clinical site
- o Exposure to infectious diseases
- o Physical or verbal threats to your safety
- o Unsafe working conditions

3. Professional Conduct Issues:

- o Allegations of unprofessional behavior against you
- o Witness to unprofessional or unethical conduct by others
- o HIPAA violations or potential privacy breaches
- o Conflicts with clinical site staff or preceptors
- o Removal or request to leave the clinical site for any reason

4. Legal or Regulatory Matters:

- o Requests for your involvement in legal proceedings
- o Inquiries from attorneys, law enforcement, or regulatory agencies
- o Receipt of any legal documents related to clinical activities
- o Complaints filed against you by patients or families

5. Other Significant Events:

- o Any incident requiring completion of a clinical site incident report
- o Situations that receive media attention
- o Any event that causes you concern about patient or your own safety
- o Requests from patients or families for your personal contact information

Reporting Procedures:

STEP 1: IMMEDIATE ACTION (Within 1 hour of incident or as soon as safely possible)

1. Ensure patient safety and follow clinical site protocols
2. Notify your on-site preceptor/supervisor immediately
3. Contact University personnel immediately by phone:
 - o **PRIMARY CONTACT:** Clinical Instructor/Clinical Coordinator
 - o **IF PRIMARY UNAVAILABLE:** College Dean
3. For after-hours emergencies: Call Emergency Contact Line and leave detailed message; call will be returned within 2 hours

STEP 2: WRITTEN NOTIFICATION (Within 24 hours)

Submit a written incident report using the Clinical Incident Report Form available on [student portal/website to: clinical_incident@southuniversity.edu and your Clinical Instructor/Faculty/Staff.

Your written report must include:

- Date, time, and location of incident
- Detailed description of what occurred
- Names of witnesses and involved parties
- Actions you took in response
- Name of clinical site personnel notified
- Your contact information including enrolled program of study and campus for follow-up

STEP 3: FOLLOW-UP

- Attend any required meetings to discuss the incident
- Cooperate fully with any University or clinical site investigations
- Complete any remediation or additional training as required
- Maintain confidentiality regarding the incident investigation

Critical Reminders:

- **WHEN IN DOUBT, REPORT.** It is always better to report an incident that turns out to be minor than to fail to report a serious incident.
- **TIME MATTERS:** "Immediately" means as soon as you can safely do so, ideally within 1 hour of the incident.
- **DOCUMENT EVERYTHING:** Keep your own contemporaneous notes about the incident.
- **DO NOT DISCUSS:** Do not discuss the incident on social media or with anyone other than appropriate University and clinical site personnel.
- **PROTECT PRIVACY:** Maintain patient confidentiality in all reports and discussions.
- **YOU ARE PROTECTED:** The University prohibits retaliation against students who report incidents in good faith.

Consequences of Failure to Report:

Failure to report a Reportable Incident may result in:

- Removal from clinical site
- Clinical course failure
- Academic probation or dismissal from program
- Professional licensure implications
- Inability to complete degree requirements

Questions?

Contact your Clinical Coordinator/Faculty or College Dean if you have questions about whether an incident is reportable or how to complete a report

APPENDIX K: Student Handbook Acknowledgement

This signature page (“Agreement”) signifies that you have read the complete *OTA Student Handbook*. This Agreement also signifies that you agree to abide by the terms of the *OTA Student Handbook* throughout your tenure in the South University OTA Program.

I, (*print your name*) _____

have read the *OTA Student Handbook* and agree to abide by the policies and procedures within. I also acknowledge that I have reviewed the policies referenced in the *OTA Student Handbook* as outlined in the South University Academic Catalog. I accept and agree to abide by the terms stated in this *OTA Student Handbook* for the duration of my enrollment in the OTA Program.

I understand that I may be dismissed from the OTA Program if I am found to be in violation of any policies or procedures contained in this Handbook or in the referenced policies from the Academic Catalog.

I understand that the contents of this *OTA Student Handbook* may change at any time. Should changes occur, I understand that I will be provided with an updated version of the Handbook and a new signature page.

Student Name (print): _____

Student ID Number: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____