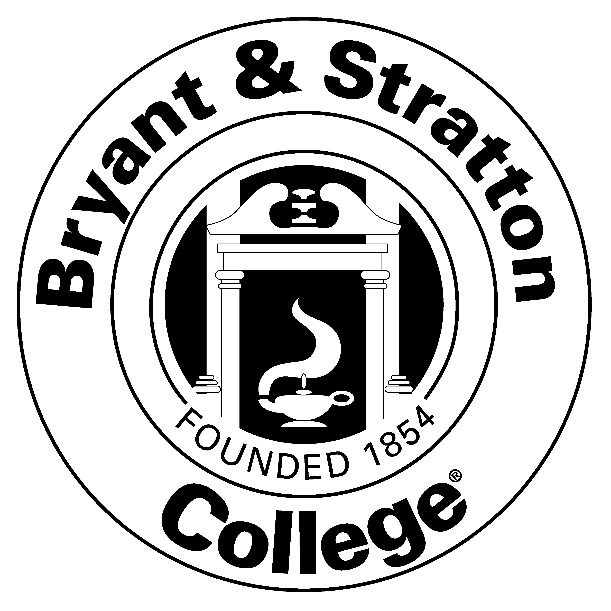
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Fieldwork Manual



*Updated February 2016*

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**Letter from Academic Fieldwork Coordinator**

Fieldwork Students,

Welcome to Bryant & Stratton College’s, Occupational Therapy Assistant program. Fieldwork education is a crucial part of professional preparation and is integrated as a component of the curriculum design. At Bryant & Stratton, we are committed to providing a quality fieldwork experience that incorporates didactic learning experiences with emphasis on development of the entry-Level practitioner. This manual provides guidelines regarding fieldwork experience at Bryant & Stratton College as well as outline the policies and procedures of fieldwork education.

This manual was created to promote successful completion of fieldwork education experiences and to provide clarity regarding the fieldwork placement process. Please be aware that policies and procedures outlined in this manual are subject to change. In the event of any changes to this manual, you will be notified in a timely manner.

Again, we welcome you to the program and look forward to supporting you in your journey to become an occupational therapy assistant.

**Fieldwork Philosophy**

The Fieldwork Practicum component of Bryant & Stratton College’s OTA Program is designed to allow students to apply knowledge in real life situations. It is consistent with the curriculum design and ensures that the student’s fieldwork experience reflects the present state of affairs in health care and current practice trends.

Consistent with the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program standards, students actively participate in fieldwork experiences to ensure the successful transition from classroom to the clinic. The fieldwork education experience is designed to facilitate contextual application of core clinical skills and clinical reasoning. Thus, such experiences lead to the integration and generalization of the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in diverse cultural environments and the community at large.

**Participants in Fieldwork Education Experience**

**Academic Fieldwork Coordinator**

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) is a faculty member who is responsible for the planning, coordination, and implementation of integrated and sustained fieldwork experiences**.** The AFWC negotiates the logistics of recruiting, assigning, confirming, and monitoring Level I and Level II Fieldwork placements.

The AFWC serves as a resource, liaison, and mediator for:

* students
* fieldwork sites
* fieldwork educators
* faculty and advisors

Additionally, the AFWC provides orientation into fieldwork experiences throughout the program. Fieldwork is a required curriculum component and functions as the “bridge” between academic and professional roles for our students (See Appendix B: ACOTE Standards Related to Fieldwork).

The AFWC’s responsibilities, as outlined by the Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards are listed below:

C.1.1 Ensures that the fieldwork program reflects the sequence and scope of content in the curriculum design in collaboration with faculty so that fieldwork experiences strengthen the ties between didactic and fieldwork education.

C.1.2 Documents the criteria and process for selecting fieldwork sites, to include maintaining memoranda of understanding, complying with all site requirements, maintaining site objectives and site data, and communicating this information to students.

C.1.3 Demonstrates that academic and fieldwork educators collaborate in establishing fieldwork objectives and communicate with the student and fieldwork educator about progress and performance during fieldwork.

C.1.4 Ensures that the ratio of fieldwork educators to students enables proper supervision and the ability to provide frequent assessment of student progress in achieving stated fieldwork objectives.

C.1.5 Ensures that fieldwork agreements are sufficient in scope and number to allow completion of graduation requirements in a timely manner in accordance with the policy adopted by the program as required by Standard A.4.14.

C.1.6 Ensures that at least one fieldwork experience (either Level I or Level II) has as its focus psychological and social factors that influence engagement in occupation.

**Fieldwork Educator**

Each individual responsible for student training in the fieldwork education experience is considered a Fieldwork Educator (FWE). The FWE responsibilities include:

* Coordinating appropriate orientation of facility to the student;
* Communicating expectations, objectives, and assignments required for successful completion of fieldwork;
* Supervising the provision of occupational therapy services, documentation, and oral reporting of the students;
* Providing ongoing feedback to students regarding performance including a formal written midterm and a final student performance evaluation; also informally through the fieldwork experience;
* Creating an environment which encourages learning and allows for questions;
* Acting as a professional role model for students;
* Informing AFWC regarding *any* problem situations in regards to student performance

**Student**

This is the OTA student participating in required clinical experience. The fieldwork student’s responsibilities include:

* Completing all required coursework;
* Providing documentation of all fieldwork requirements according to Certified Background deadlines;
* Indicating geographical preferences recognizing that the AFWC ultimately determines fieldwork placements;
* Reading and abiding by policies and procedures of the Fieldwork Manual;
* Collaborating with the AFWC and FWE to ensure compliance with fieldwork experience requirements;
* Arranging transportation to/from the fieldwork site and making their own living arrangements, at their own expense;
* Complying with all policies and procedures of the fieldwork site and Bryant & Stratton College;
* Fulfilling all duties and assignments made by the AFWC and FWE;
* Notifying the AFWC and FWE of contact information including address and phone numbers and *any* changes to this information;
* Using **Bryant & Stratton College** email for ALL fieldwork correspondence;
* Being an active participant in the supervisory process; this process also includes effective communication, constructive response to feedback, reflection on performance, and self-directed learning;
* In the event of any fieldwork-related situations, communicating immediately with AFWC and FWE;
* Complying with the laws, regulations, and standards identified by the AFWC, FWEs, the University, the National Board for the Certification of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT), state licensure boards, and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)

**Level I Fieldwork**

The goal of Level I Fieldwork is to introduce students to the fieldwork experience, to apply knowledge to practice, and to develop understanding of the needs of clients (ACOTE, 2013). Each of the Level I placements are embedded into a corresponding Assessment and Intervention course:

* OTAP 135 – Fieldwork IA
* OTAP 235 – Fieldwork IB

Throughout these courses, fieldwork experiences serve as a “text” for understanding the occupational therapy process in different contexts and applying clinical reasoning theory to practice. Students develop basic clinical reasoning skills through observation, participation in practice, and reflection on these experiences. Students complete written assignments that combine observation, practice, and reflection on completing assessments, setting goals and treatment planning, note writing, re-assessment, and discharge planning. Successful completion of all Level I Fieldwork experiences is required prior to Level II Fieldwork. Please refer to the policy on *Failure of Fieldwork* for more details.

It is important to note that the Level I experience does not require supervision by a licensed occupational therapist. According to ACOTE standards, supervision of the Level I Fieldwork student must be provided by qualified personnel (see Appendix B).

All courses must be registered for during the registration period established by the College.

**Level II Fieldwork**

The goal of Level II Fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-Level, generalist occupational therapy assistants. Level II Fieldwork is integral to the program’s curriculum design and includes an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation and research, administration, and management of occupational therapy services. Students are exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings. Students may complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting, if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of three different settings. A minimum of 16 weeks of Level II Fieldwork is required, on a full-time basis, to meet ACOTE standards.

Students must have successfully completed all the prior academic and clinical coursework as per the program sequence before commencing Level II Fieldwork courses. Placement sites must meet ACOTE mandate requirements. Level II sites are selected by the AFWC based on quality of clinical experience rather than geographical convenience. Students are encouraged to research sites and speak to their AFWC about placements that broaden their view of occupational therapy. If it is determined that a student will not be successful at a site for certain reasons, the AFWC will investigate and explore other placement solutions. All students will be guided by the AFWC in their selection process in order to ensure successful learning opportunities.

Each Level II placement is a standalone 6.0 credit hour course:

* OTAP 270 – Fieldwork IIA
* OTAP 271 – Fieldwork Practicum IIB

These courses must be registered for during the registration period established by the College.

**Fieldwork Placement Process**

1. Term I
   1. Students receive fieldwork manual and sign Fieldwork Manual Acknowledgement Agreement
   2. Fieldwork process is presented and reviewed with students by the AFWC
   3. Students complete and submit a preference form to the AFWC to explore any special needs or considerations for Level I Fieldwork
   4. AFWC begins placement process for Fieldwork IA
   5. Students receive Level IA confirmation letters by end of Term I
2. Term II
   1. Student completes OTAP 135- Fieldwork IA
   2. AFWC begins placement process for Fieldwork IB
   3. Students receive IB confirmation letters by end of Term II
3. Term III
   1. Student completes OTAP 235- Fieldwork IB
   2. Student meetings are held with AFWC to begin Level II placement process
   3. AFWC begins placement process for Level II
4. Term IV
   1. Fieldwork IIA and IIB confirmation letters distributed by end of term
5. Term V
   1. Student completes OTAP 271 and 271- Level II fieldwork experiences

***IMPORTANT NOTE*:**

*This outline is used as a general guideline. Specific changes may be made at the discretion of the AFWC in conjunction with the Program Director.*

**Fieldwork Placement Policies**

The AFWC will do his/her best to place the student in the site that is determined to be optimal for that specific student. Please review the following information regarding fieldwork assignments:

* Students should expect that the commute (by car) to the site could be up to an hour and 30 minutes (1hr 30 min) travel time. The commute may be longer by public transportation. The calculation of driving distance will be done using Google Maps from student’s address to site address.
* Students are not permitted to contact sites directly to request a placement. Doing so will result in an automatic disqualification for that site.
* There are a multitude of factors that go into placements. Factors include ACOTE accreditation standard requirements as well as student learning styles and supervisory needs. Additionally, there are a limited number of sites available at any given time. Even after a match is confirmed, sites may cancel due to internal institutional issues.
* Student fieldwork assignments are final. Any change request should be done under very limited circumstances. Please be advised that any change in placement may delay your start date and ultimately your graduation date.

**Fieldwork Student Interview**

Some Level II Fieldwork sites require/prefer an interview (face-to-face or phone) as part of their decision making process in selecting a Level II student. The interview serves as a tool to better understand the student’s interest as well as determine if the student is a good fit for the facility.

If a site requires an interview, the student must meet with the AFWC beforehand to discuss strategies and the interview process. Upon completion of the interview, it is strongly encouraged for the student to write a handwritten thank you note to the interviewer(s). Students should present themselves appropriately and be prepared for the interview. Students who do not complete the required interview will *not* be considered for placement at that site.

**Frequently asked Level II Fieldwork interview questions to the student:**

* What are your expectations of this fieldwork?
* What do you hope to learn in this placement?
* How do you learn best?
* Why did you choose occupational therapy as a profession?
* Identify your professional interests.
* What has been your academic and/or fieldwork experience?
* Identify some theories or frames of reference that you are studying that might be relevant to occupational therapy practice in this setting.
* Identify your strengths and areas for growth.
* What are you looking for in regard to supervision?
* Identify past experiences that may be relevant to the fieldwork experience.
* How do you spend your leisure time?
* How do you handle stress?
* What motivates you?
* How do you best orient and familiarize yourself when entering a new system?
* Is there anything that might interfere with your ability to perform the tasks required on this fieldwork?

Students should also be prepared to ask questions of their prospective site/supervisor. Do your research beforehand and come prepared (check out the site file, database, website, prior student’s experiences, etc.).

**Sample Questions for the student to ask site:**

* What are agency/site/patient/client needs in this setting?
* Describe a “typical day” on the job.
* How can a student best prepare for this experience? (readings, theories/models, most common diagnostic conditions, etc.)
* What are the characteristics of successful students in this setting?
* What are the greatest rewards and challenges of being an occupational therapist/health care provider in this setting?
* Are there any medical clearances/requirements that need to be completed prior to starting my placement?

**Fieldwork Cancellation**

As noted previously, student fieldwork assignments are *final.* Student requests for a change of affiliation will not be honored unless there are mitigating circumstances or an ethical, legal, or professional issue with the site. Mitigating circumstances are those that are beyond the student’s control, such as: 1) serious illness or injury to the student; 2) death or serious illness of an immediate family member; or 3) other special circumstances that could not have been foreseen.

Documentation of the situation will be required explaining rationale for requesting a change. If, after a review of documentation, it is determined that a change should be made, the following procedure will be implemented:

* Meeting of AFWC and student to discuss preference indicators regarding fieldwork
* AFWC assigns student to a new site
* All involved persons are notified of change by AFWC

**Site Initiated Cancellation**

A fieldwork site may need to cancel a confirmed placement. This happens for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, staffing issues, inadequate supervision, or poor learning environment. In addition, occasionally a facility closes or merges with another organization and the confirmation of placement cannot be honored.

If a cancellation should occur, the procedure is as follows:

* Student and/or AFWC is notified the fieldwork placement has been cancelled by the site
* Meeting of AFWC and student to discuss replacement options
* AFWC will work closely with student to reschedule the experience

**Fieldwork Placement Appeal Process**

The fieldwork placement appeal process is designed to consider extenuating circumstances that are brought forward by students who have received confirmation of fieldwork placement.

Petitions for appeals are not to be made lightly. Students should consider the gravity of their appeal and submit an appeal only if they feel they could not continue in the program and complete their training if the appeal were denied.

Appeals for special consideration in placement are based on demonstrated need for one of the following reasons: dependent care, mitigating circumstances, and students with disabilities who have identified themselves to Bryant & Stratton College’s ADA Coordinator. Appeals found to be made on false claims will be overturned and denied, and students may be removed from the program for this highly unethical behavior.

Students have one week from the date of the fieldwork confirmation letter to complete a Fieldwork Appeal Form (see Appendix C) and return to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Appeal decisions are made subject to the availability of fieldwork sites. All decisions of the faculty will be made final by the Program Director. Student will be provided with an appeal decision within two weeks of submission.

**Cost of Fieldwork**

All students must be prepared financially to assume the costs that will accompany any fieldwork assignment. In addition to Bryant & Stratton College’s full tuition and fees, expenses may include:

* + Transportation
  + Parking
  + Housing
  + Meals
  + Incidental costs (materials for projects, uniforms, clearances/medical requirements)

It is **strongly** advised for a student to have access to a car during fieldwork in the event that public transportation is inadequate. Given the competition for available sites in the geographic area for Level II Fieldwork, all students must be prepared to travel. The cost of fieldwork is varied based upon location. Students should be prepared to budget accordingly for the expenses that may be incurred during fieldwork rotations. In the event of failure of fieldwork, students are required to pay for the above-mentioned expenses in addition to repeated course tuition and fees.

**Housing, Transportation, and Food**

* Students are responsible for all housing needs related to their fieldwork assignments; therefore, it is important to plan ahead to meet all financial obligations during fieldwork
* Tuition as well as travel, living arrangements, commuting/parking costs, and day-to-day personal expenses may be greater than the expenses incurred during an academic semester
* Transportation and food is the sole responsibility of the student. This includes transportation expenses to and from the sites as well as between sites
* Many fieldwork sites require students to commute between locations during the fieldwork; therefore, a car may be necessary
* Problems with transportation and housing are not acceptable reasons for requesting a change in fieldwork assignment as students are given placement information in advance, allowing time for appropriate arrangements to be made
* Students are able to indicate their fieldwork site geographical preferences prior to the fieldwork selection process; however, no fieldwork request can be guaranteed

**Fieldwork Supervision When No Occupational Therapist on Site**

In general, students in the OTA program will not be placed in Level II fieldwork settings where no occupational therapy services exist. However, should this case arise, the following plan will be in effect:

An OTR with at least 3 years of full time experience or a COTA who is working under the direction of an OTR and with at least 3 years of full time experience will be secured contractually by the College’s OTA program to provide supervision.

This fieldwork supervisor will be contracted to provide a minimum of eight hours per week of direct supervision on site with the student. The OT practitioner will share contact information with the student to allow contact during and outside of fieldwork hours via: home phone, cell phone, email, text, and other methods as deemed appropriate by the college OTA program.

Additionally, the fieldwork supervisor will regularly (at least weekly) contact the AFWC to report on the student’s progress at the site. An onsite supervisor designee will be chosen by the AFWC in collaboration with the fieldwork site and the OT fieldwork supervisor.

The supervisor designee will be in a position to guide the student daily in his/her work and provide fieldwork education. The supervisor designee will also have access to the OT fieldwork supervisors contact information during and outside of work hours.

The supervisor designee and the OT fieldwork supervisor will have face to face contact at least weekly, and phone/email contact at least twice weekly during the course of the student’s placement.

**Employment During Fieldwork**

Given the expense of a college education, many students feel the need to work during the school year. Bryant & Stratton College OTA students are expected to prioritize their responsibilities:

* Class attendance and fieldwork appointments are top priorities
* Fieldwork is a full-time clinical commitment, not unlike having a full-time job
* With this understanding, full-time work is not realistic and can lead to decreased performance at the fieldwork site
* **Reasonable work hours can be incorporated into your schedule; however, you are expected to rearrange your work schedule to accommodate class and fieldwork requirements including allowing adequate time for study**

Students are **strongly discouraged** from pursuing employment while they are completing full-time fieldwork experiences. It is very common for fieldwork assignments to require additional time beyond the regular 40-hour work week, *including evening hours and weekend shifts.*

* The focus of fieldwork is on the integration of professional knowledge and behaviors and general clinical skills. In addition, outside readings, reports, and/or special projects are often required
* Site hours for fieldwork affiliation are **not negotiable**. The hours of the affiliation are set by the facility. You are expected to maintain the same work schedule as your fieldwork educator
* The weekly schedule will be determined by each fieldwork educator and/or site
* Any changes to the dates for the fieldwork experience **must be** approved and documented in writing by the AFWC and the fieldwork educator before the start of the fieldwork experience

**Fieldwork Performance Evaluation**

**Level I**

Level I Fieldwork experiences are part of the OTAP 135 (Fieldwork IA) and OTAP 235 (Fieldwork IB) courses.

Students will receive a letter grade for each experience based on input/feedback from the FWE, the evaluation received on the Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Level I Fieldwork Student Evaluation (see Appendix D) completion of required assignments/ projects (as per site and course syllabi), and at the discretion of the AFWC.

The student’s performance is evaluated through class assignments that are tied to the clinical reasoning process as well as by the fieldwork educator according to the Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Level I Fieldwork Student Evaluation (see Appendix D). A student must complete all coursework at a passing level and receive minimum competency on the Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Level I Fieldwork Student Evaluation (no more than one item below a 2 OR no more than two items below a 3). Students are asked to rate their Level I fieldwork experience using Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Student Evaluation of Level I Fieldwork (see Appendix E).

*Level I Fieldwork Evaluation Forms (C.1.10)*

* Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Level I Fieldwork Student Evaluation   
  (see Appendix D)
* Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Student Evaluation of Level I Fieldwork   
  (see Appendix E)

**Level II**

Each Level II Fieldwork experience is designated as OTAP 270 and OTAP 271. Educational objectives have been developed and learning experiences identified by fieldwork sites/educators. Students will receive a “passing” or “failing” grade for each experience based on input/feedback of the FWE, the evaluation received on the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student (FWPE) (see Appendix F), and completion of required assignments/projects. In summary, students are *evaluated* by the fieldwork educator using the FWPE; however, the final outcome for the Level II Fieldwork course(s) is governed by the AFWC.

The AFWC reserves the right, on behalf of the OTA Program, to assign a “failing” grade other than that which is reflected by earned points on the FWPE alone. Justification for doing so may include but are not limited to such reasons as the failure of the student to maintain and/or provide in a timely fashion proof of health requirements/ clearances/evaluation forms, evidence of academic misconduct, failure to maintain required correspondence with AFWC/and or faculty, unethical behavior, or violation of the Occupational Therapy Program Professional Behavior Rubric (see Appendix G).

Students must earn a minimum of passing scores on the FWPE and all required assignments to receive a passing grade for the fieldwork education courses. Grading criteria include the FWPE and other specified fieldwork education assignments as designated by each site. See course syllabus for description of required assignments on Level II Fieldwork.

**The decision regarding the student’s final grade for the fieldwork courses rests solely with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator at Bryant & Stratton College and NOT the fieldwork site.**

Performance items on the FWPE include:

* Fundamentals of Practice
* Basic Tenets of Occupational Therapy
* Evaluation and Screening
* Intervention
* Management of OT Services
* Communication
* Professional Behaviors

**The student must achieve an overall score at or above 70 points AND must receive a 3 or above on items 1-3 in Section 1 of the AOTA FWPE for the OTA Student**.

Students must complete all Level II Fieldwork at a passing Level in order to graduate and be eligible to sit for the NBCOT exam.

Students provide feedback on their fieldwork sites as part of our ongoing process to improve the fieldwork learning experience. After completing a fieldwork placement, the student will be required to provide a thoughtful analysis and critique of their experience. Students will use the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) form (see Appendix H), developed by the AOTA Commission on Education, to analyze and critique Level II Fieldwork. **This form must be completed and received by the AFWC in order to receive a grade**. Evaluative information is used by the fieldwork site and Bryant & Stratton College to improve its fieldwork experience and academic program. This process also provides the student an opportunity to practice their ability to objectively assess an experience in a professionally acceptable manner (C.1.15) (C.1.18). SEFWE forms that are returned incomplete could delay reporting your grades and your graduation date.

Be sure to keep a copy of all weekly review forms, mid-term evaluations, final evaluations, and learning plans for your personal files**.**

It is necessary for the original evaluation forms to be returned to the AFWC (signed by **both** the student and fieldwork educator), within a timely fashion. The evaluation forms should be post-marked no later than 3 business days from the last day of fieldwork or returned directly to the fieldwork office.

*Level II FW Evaluation Forms (C.1.18 and C1.1.15)*

* AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student   
  (see Appendix F)
* Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience (see Appendix H)

**Grading Process for Level II Fieldwork**

Due to deadlines established by the Office of the Registrar for submission of final grades, it may be necessary to enter final grades for Level II Fieldwork prior to receipt of evaluation forms; therefore, per College policy, an “Incomplete” (I) may be processed as the initial grade for Level II Fieldwork. Passing grades will only be given when the completed AOTA FWPE and Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience forms have been received by the AFWC.

Refer to the Bryant & Stratton College Official Catalog for the Incomplete Policy.

**Failure of Fieldwork**

Fieldwork education is the opportunity to put academic learning into practice. This applied knowledge and critical thinking are paramount to being a successful occupational therapy practitioner. It is necessary to demonstrate proficiency in both the clinical and academic components of both entry level occupational therapy practice and the professional world of healthcare. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency within the timelines established for fieldwork risk failure.

The AFWC reserves the right, on behalf of Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, to assign a grade other than that which is reflected by earned points alone on the fieldwork performance evaluation. Justification for doing so could include such things as the failure of the student to maintain and/or provide in a timely fashion proof of health requirements/clearances, evidence of academic misconduct, unethical behavior, or violation of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Professional Behavior Rubric (see Appendix G) and the student handbook. Prior to adjusting the grade, the AFWC will consult with the student, the FWE, Academic Advisor and Program Director as deemed appropriate.

In addition, the fieldwork site may terminate a student at any time if performance is not satisfactory and threatens the patient’s treatment/safety. Termination may also occur if the student violates a facility policy or procedure, the violation of which, if done by an employee of the facility, would cause immediate termination of the employee. Examples include drug use, theft of property, unsafe practice, unprofessional behavior, violation of patient’s rights, violation of AOTA Code of Ethics, excessive tardiness/absenteeism, or HIPAA violations. It is important for students to be familiar with facility policies and procedures, particularly policies related to patient confidentiality.

Additionally, depending on the nature of the problem, a student may be withdrawn immediately from the fieldwork site and/or the OTA Program and not provided an additional fieldwork experience.

**Level I Fieldwork Failure**

A student who fails a Level I Fieldwork experience *may* be allowed one additional opportunity to complete the experience successfully, as long as no other OTAP classes have been failed. If deemed eligible to proceed, a remediation plan and learning contract will be developed and attested to. If he/she fails any Level I experience a second time, the process for release from the OTA Program will be initiated.

**Level II Fieldwork Failure**

When a student fails Level II Fieldwork, a second opportunity *may* be given if no other OTAP courses have been failed. A plan of remediation must be successfully completed. If deemed eligible to continue, the student must repeat the failed experience before beginning the next fieldwork. In order to repeat the fieldwork experience, he/she must re-register for the same course when it is offered by the college. The dates and location of the new assignment are dependent on the availability of a placement.

A student failing fieldwork may be terminated from the fieldwork placement prior to the end date, and, in such cases, fail the placement. Or, a student failing fieldwork may complete the entire placement, and fail the placement. In either case, the decision to continue or terminate a placement is made by the AFWC in conjunction with the FWE.

In the event where a student is requested to extend the fieldwork experience in order to ensure entry-level competence, he/she must agree to the extension or accept failure of the fieldwork experience.

A student who receives an unsatisfactory score (53 or below) at midterm will be required to complete a Learning Contract (see Appendix I) in order to continue the fieldwork experience. Failure to complete the Learning Contract will result in immediate failure of the fieldwork experience.

**Fieldwork Site Policies and Procedures**

While participating in Fieldwork Experiences, students remain registered at Bryant & Stratton College. Students must adhere to all College and Occupational Therapy Program policies in addition to any policies or procedures of the fieldwork site.

Most fieldwork locations will have their own policies and procedures manual; therefore, it is the student’s responsibility to review the manual and ensure all policies are adhered to. If a student violates a fieldwork site policy, termination and/or failure may occur. Examples include substance use, theft, excessive tardiness/absenteeism, insubordination, or discussion of a patient in an inappropriate situation. If the clinical site does not have a particular policy or manual, the student shall confer with the AFWC or refer to the Fieldwork Manual regarding expectations.

**Student Fieldwork Manuals Onsite**

Student fieldwork manuals that contain specific assignments, personalized fieldwork experiences, site-specific objectives, weekly expectations, etc., may be provided by the fieldwork site. Check with your site upon arrival. Weekly expectations tend to keep students (as well as FWE) on track during placement. Students should bring this Bryant & Stratton College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Fieldwork Manual to their fieldwork site to share with the FWE and refer to it often.

**Special Needs**

Students with a disability are encouraged to voluntarily disclose their needs for fieldwork accommodations with the ADA coordinator well in advance of fieldwork placement. They are also encouraged to voluntarily disclose their need for accommodations with the academic fieldwork coordinator prior to selection of fieldwork sites. Then, through collaboration with the academic fieldwork coordinator, ADA coordinator, and the student, an accommodation plan may be developed. As with classroom expectations, fieldwork outcome expectations will be the same for all students regardless of abilities/disabilities. However, strategies to achieve entry-level competency may differ based on individual needs. Once an eligible student has disclosed the need for accommodation and/or accessibility to the academic fieldwork coordinator, and has signed a release of information, the fieldwork educator and/or fieldwork supervisor may then be contacted to discuss strategies to be implemented at the fieldwork site.

**Professional Liability Insurance**

Bryant & Stratton College maintains professional liability coverage for enrolled students in the program that is limited to activities performed during the course of approved curricular fieldwork assignments.

**Safety**

Students and faculty are required to follow the safety, infection control, and emergency procedures at their assigned fieldwork site. Students are advised to **follow universal precautions at all times** to protect themselves and patients during their fieldwork rotations. Students who demonstrate any signs of illness or infection should immediately advise their fieldwork educator and call the AFWC to report their missed days. Students need to use their best judgment as to whether they are well enough to perform their assigned duties. Students should always consider their own health and the health of patients / clients at risk of exposure to illness when making the decision as to whether to miss a day of fieldwork due to illness.

**Incident Reports**

Students are required to report all critical incidents to the AFWC. When the incident occurs, the student should notify the FWE **and** AFWC. The student should complete an incident report as directed by the FWE/clinical coordinator, and then the student is to contact the AFWC.

Critical incidents include:

* Patient falls
* Patient injury
* Patient upset/complaint with student
* Any other incidents considered “critical”

If a student is unsure if an incident is considered critical, they are to contact the AFWC. Should the student, in the course of their fieldwork experience, have a health-related incident or accident, they need to complete an incident report within 24 hours of the occurrence. A copy of the incident report should be sent to the AFWC.

**Conflict of Interest**

Student will **not** be placed at a clinical site where a family member may be in a supervisory capacity of the student or student’s supervisor. A student will not be assigned to a site where he or she has already accepted a job or is negotiating employment. In addition, students are not permitted to do fieldwork placements at facilities where they have been previously employed.

**Student Health Reports and Clearances**

Certain records need to be kept and, at times, provided to prospective fieldwork sites. These include health and immunization records, background checks (criminal, child/elder abuse, OIG Sanctions), certificates of HIPAA training, Bloodborne pathogen training certification, and drug screens. Each prospective fieldwork site has its own policies and procedures on what records are required and how these records are handled. At times, the student is required to present these records to the fieldwork site or to the AFWC to review and sign off. Students are required to keep a record of all of the mandatory information. Bryant & Stratton College’s OTA Program requires the following checks and records prior to the start of the first Level I Fieldwork (many of these items are required prior to the start of the program):

* Immunization records
  + Annual influenza (declination will only be accepted if documented on Influenza Medical/Religious Exemption Form- see Appendix J
  + Varicella
  + Measles, Mumps, Rubella
  + Tetanus
  + Hepatitis B (declination will only be accepted if documented on Hepatitis B Informed Consent Form- Appendix K
  + Initial TB testing
* Annual physical exam (please use Bryant & Stratton Medical Exam Form)-See Appendix L
* Federal Criminal Background check
* OIG Sanctions Check
* State Child Abuse Clearance
* Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training
* CPR Certification
* Fingerprinting (if required by the state or placement setting)

Student health records are maintained at the campus. If a site lists specific health requirements, these are kept with the site contracts in the AFWC’s office. The AFWC will review a student’s health records and sign off on them.

Regular audit reports are completed and students are notified in writing or electronically of what is needed to bring their records into compliance. Any student out of compliance with their fieldwork site’s specific record requirements will not be able to begin their fieldwork placement.

Students **must** keep all Certified Background requirements up to date at all times. A student who does not keep current with the requirements may be dismissed from fieldwork or the OTA Program until all requirements are current.

**Drug Screens**

At times, students may be required to have a drug screen performed prior to the beginning of a fieldwork experience. Please defer to the fieldwork site for requirements related to drug screening.

**Federal/State Criminal Background Checks, OIG Sanctions Check**

Bryant & Stratton College OTA students are required to have a background check performed each year prior to the start of fieldwork. An additional fee may apply to complete the background screenings. Please be aware that specific fieldwork sites may require additional screenings. Please defer to the fieldwork site for requirements related to background checks.

**State Child Abuse Registry Checks**

May be applicable.

**Fingerprinting**

May be applicable.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training**

Students receive HIPAA training in OTAP 135. Upon completion, the student should print two certificates, keep one and give one to the AFWC. Record and verification of this training is provided to fieldwork sites upon request.

**Bloodborne Pathogen Training**

All students will participate in bloodborne pathogen training prior to fieldwork through a web-based program provided by the College’s Medical Waste Management and Compliance Organization. A certificate of compliance should be printed and made available to fieldwork sites upon request.

**CPR Certification**

Many fieldwork sites, both Level I and Level II, require CPR certification. Students are required to take the training prior to Level I fieldwork. CPR training should be done through the American Heart Association or American Red Cross Healthcare Provider course. Students are required to maintain CPR certification throughout duration of the program. Students are expected to provide proof of certification upon request of their fieldwork site.

**Professionalism**

**Professional Behaviors**

The term professionalism means conforming to the standards of a profession. Positive professional behaviors are critical to effective occupational therapy assistant practice. An occupational therapy assistant must:

* Demonstrate professional behavior and values, moral and ethical standards and attitudes consistent with the profession of occupational therapy.
* Appreciate the distinct roles and responsibilities of the occupational therapy assistant as they apply to interaction with clients, family members, and other professionals including occupational therapists.
* Be an advocate for clients, services and for the profession.
* Apply occupational therapy principles and theories to evaluation and intervention in order to achieve desired outcomes.
* Provide services to clients of varied backgrounds in various systems without bias.
* Value research, evidence-based practice, the need to keep current and life-long learning.

These student learning outcomes are addressed throughout the curriculum at Bryant & Stratton College. Becoming an occupational therapy assistant encompasses development of clinical as well as professional skills. Communication, receptiveness to feedback, taking initiative, dependability, and other interpersonal behaviors are essential learning outcomes of fieldwork and coursework.

As Occupational Therapy Assistant students, you are expected to dress and present yourselves in a professional manner at all times and adhere to the AOTA Code of Ethics (see Appendix M) which apply to all Level I and Level II fieldwork.

As a health professionals in training, students should demonstrate appropriate professional behavior during all clinical activities. Remember that on fieldwork, students are representing Bryant & Stratton College, the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, and the profession of occupational therapy. Professional behavior criteria along with occupational therapy values and attitudes are outlined in the AOTA Code of Ethics as mentioned above. They include but are not limited to:

* Being punctual for and attending all clinical activities
* Arriving before scheduled time to begin and not asking to leave early
* Notifying supervisor and AFWC of emergencies and/or illnesses
* Being respectful of others
* Being organized and self-directed
* Completing assignments (from college and fieldwork site) in a timely manner

Students should feel free to ask questions, but not to challenge the supervisor’s authority or competence.

**Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and personal electronic devices are considered distractions to the learning environment. These devices are to be turned off and out of site (no sound, vibrating, or text messaging) during clinical experiences. In many clinical sites, electronic devices are prohibited from use and may cause technical difficulties with medical equipment. If a student has extenuating circumstances (emergency only) that require accessibility by phone, he or she should inform the FWE to determine if accommodations will be considered.

**Social Media**

Since online social media and social networking have become one of the options for daily communication with others, it is necessary to clarify professional behavior expectations with its use, especially pertaining to fieldwork education. It is important to consider what is posted on the Internet, in addition to adhering to the AOTA Code of Ethics. The ethical concepts include:

* Beneficence
* Nonmaleficence
* Confidentiality
* Procedural justice
* Veracity
* Fidelity

Adherence of this policy is expected of all OTA students. These guidelines are intended to protect the privacy and confidentiality of fellow students, faculty and staff, clinical educators and facility staff, and any clients of a facility. These guidelines may continually change as new social networking technologies emerge. Compliance with this policy is expected at all times. Violation of these guidelines will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the OTA Program.

Students are responsible for what is posted. A posting should never reference (or allude to) a client’s name, fieldwork site name, FWE name, criticism about site or information about what is happening, or any other disclosure of confidential material to unauthorized parties in a posting or reference to Bryant & Stratton College.

A posting should never disclose confidential or HIPAA‐related information. Sharing this type of information, even unintentionally, can result in legal action against the student, Bryant & Stratton College, and/or the fieldwork site.

It is important to adhere to copyright laws and reference or cite sources appropriately. Plagiarism applies online as well.

The content of the postings should be respectful. Students should consider what is posted on ANY social networking site. Many potential employers go to these sites to see what has been posted and often determine if they are interested in offering an employment opportunity.

Do not ask the FWE to “friend” you while on fieldwork. This puts the FWE and yourself in an awkward situation with personal information about each other. If you mutually decide to do this after the fieldwork experience, this is your personal choice.

**Dress Code** (Dress code acknowledgement must be signed - See Appendix N)

As a health care professional in training, all students should demonstrate professional appearance during all clinical activities including observational opportunities specifically in fieldwork. Bryant & Stratton College will expect students to present themselves in a professional and courteous manner.

Students will be required to abide by the dress code of the facility. These include but are not limited to:

* No jeans or shorts (unless otherwise instructed to do so)
* No bare skin showing at the midriff/back or chest
* No cleavage showing - tops must cover you completely
* No short skirts or dresses
* No sweat pants/leggings or crop pants
* Proper footwear (no sandals, high heels or open toe/open back shoes unless otherwise instructed to do so)
* No visible tattoos (please cover them out of respect for our consumers)
* No excessive jewelry (please limit earrings to one or two pairs, no large hoop or dangling earrings for safety reasons)
* No facial piercing including tongue studs (please cover or remove them out of respect for our consumers)
* Excellent personal hygiene is expected of all, including keeping hair, facial hair and nails well groomed
* When caring for patients, hair must be pulled away from head and not hang in the patient care area
* Use or chewing tobacco or gum is strictly prohibited at any time in presence of patients, visitors, physicians, guests or while on telephone

Students may be asked to wear name tags and/or facility identification. These are to be worn throughout the placement.

In some cases, lab coats or hospital scrubs are required and are the responsibility of the student both in purchasing and maintaining.

Please be aware that some facilities may have dress codes and identification policies which are more stringent than what is listed here. In such cases, you should follow the policies of your facility.

**Tardiness or Absenteeism**

Attendance is required for all fieldwork education experiences. No excused days are given upfront; therefore, you are **not** entitled to any days off during fieldwork. While the possibility of extenuating life and/or crisis circumstances is acknowledged, absences from the experiential learning environment causes significant concern regarding clinical and professional skill development. This impacts knowledge acquisition as it relates to the integration and utilization of occupational therapy theory and best practice. Personal illness and personal or family emergencies are the only excused absences. Students must request time off for religious observances from the FWE in advance and must make up the time.

Requests for time off/variances in schedule to attend conferences, interviews, study for exams, personal appointments, outside employment, weddings/honeymoons, family vacations/ reunions or other personal purposes are **not** considered valid excuses for missing fieldwork and/or alternating start/end dates of experiences.

The AFWC must be notified of all planned/unplanned absences. In the event of an illness or emergency, students must notify the FWE prior to the start of the work day. It is recommended that the student and FWE exchange phone numbers and for the student to be aware of the attendance policy/call-off procedure of the site. The student must speak with both the FWE and AFWC. Voicemails and text messages are not acceptable forms of communication.

Students are to follow the work schedule established by the fieldwork site, *not the academic calendar of Bryant & Stratton College*. Students need to be aware that the hours/schedule may include evenings, weekends, and holidays. Make-up days for absences on fieldwork are only an option when the missed days are determined excusable (i.e. unplanned emergencies/circumstances), according to the reasons listed above, and at discretion of the AFWC. The plan for make-up days must be created with permission of, and at the availability of the FWE, and agreed upon by the AFWC; therefore, any changes to the fieldwork schedule (including but not limited to start/end date) need approval from the AFWC. It is not permitted that the student/FWE changes the end date if no days are missed, or based upon good performance.

Please be aware that time missed in the IIA fieldwork placement may affect the student’s ability to begin the IIB placement. If the completion date of the first fieldwork is affected, the student must notify the AFWC to discuss arrangements for the change of the IIB fieldwork start date. Tardiness and absenteeism which is excessive and patterned is not acceptable.

**Repeated and/or excessive lateness or absence or failure to comply with this stated attendance policy may require repeating or failure of the experience**.

**Holidays**

During the clinical fieldwork experience, the student will follow the holiday schedule established by the fieldwork site, **not** the academic schedule of Bryant & Stratton College; therefore, whatever schedule your supervisor/site requests of you during the holidays, you are expected to be present and committed to your clinical duties – without exception. School systems and clinics that normally schedule days-off around the holidays during Level II placements may extend the fieldwork experience and require make­up days, at the discretion of the FWE and AFWC.

**Inclement Weather**

As students of an allied health professional program, fieldwork sites expect the same attendance from students as they do from their employees. Make sure to address inclement weather and emergency policies (as they affect attendance) with the FWE on the first visit/orientation period. Some FWEs may wish to exchange home telephone numbers in case of emergency. Please note that students follow the inclement weather policy of the fieldwork site, and **not** Bryant & Stratton College while on fieldwork. Any missed days due to inclement weather **must** be made up at the discretion of the fieldwork site.

**Confidentiality, Privacy, and HIPAA**

On April 14, 2003, a new law, entitled the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) came into effect. This law pertains to protection of health information relating to the health of an individual, the care provided, or payment for care. HIPAA includes classroom case-related activities and clinical experiences (including observations, research, fieldwork, etc.) where you would have access to an individual’s health information.

On fieldwork, you will have opportunities to see many situations that are new to you, and possibly encounter clinical situation(s) that involve a person(s) you know. Although it is understandable that you may wish to discuss these events with others, the sharing of confidential information must be avoided – without exception.

It is also essential that confidentiality within your setting be maintained; information pertaining to one client/patient may never be shared with another client. Keeping patients’ health information confidential is part of a clinicians’ job responsibility and professional behaviors.

Students are expected to respect and comply with confidentiality and other ethical and legal standards of care. Students should be familiar with the AOTA Code of Ethics.

Students are expected to maintain the guidelines of confidentiality and privacy in all clinical settings. Students receive documented training regarding the HIPAA regulations prior to fieldwork experiences and are expected to be able to provide proof of training at the request of the fieldwork site; however, students may also have to take additional training per site guidelines or sign a confidentiality statement. Examples of general HIPAA/Privacy guidelines can include, but are not limited to:

* No papers, forms, medical chart information or documents of any kind should be taken out of the facility without permission from the supervisor
* Any assignments relating to chart reviews, patient care or treatment must have all patient/client identification information removed
* No discussion relating to specific clients should take place in public areas **without exception**
* Any discussion in class or in treatment areas should **not** reveal the client’s identification in any way
* Do not discuss client’s medical or personal information with other clients, friends, relatives, or professionals that are not involved with the client’s direct care
* If you are not the treating student-therapist, than you are not on a “need-to-know-basis”

The principles state that client information should be accessed or disclosed only as necessary in order to provide services to the patient or as authorized by the patient of the law. You are only permitted to access and use patient information as it relates to your role as a student practitioner. If you see or hear patient information in the course of doing your job that you do not need to know, remember that this information is confidential. You are not permitted to repeat it or share it with others – even friends, family, or other employees who do not have a need to know. Always consult the fieldwork site’s facilities policies for further clarification.

The welfare of clients shall be the primary concern of the student. Students must ensure the integrity of the client and respect the confidentiality of client/patient information regardless of the source (patient, therapist, records, and charts). This trust cannot be breached either verbally or in writing. When in doubt as to the amount of information that can be disclosed, the AFWC/ FWE should be consulted.

A breach of confidentiality, privacy and/or security (whether intentional or unintentional) could impact in a negative way on the care of a client and may be viewed as serious misconduct on the part of the student. The level of violation of HIPAA will be determined by the fieldwork site and the AFWC. Inability to follow HIPAA policies/expectations of the fieldwork site may result in immediate dismissal from fieldwork.

**AFWC Monitoring and Site Visits**

Close communication with fieldwork sites is vital to the process of fieldwork education. Email is used extensively, along with other methods such as phone, fax and U.S. mail. During the first week of Level II Fieldwork, each student will email the AFWC with the Fieldwork Site Placement Information Form (see Appendix O). The AFWC will communicate with students via Bryant & Stratton College email which students should check daily throughout fieldwork experience. In addition, the AFWC will provide all students with necessary contact information.

The AFWC of the OTA Program works hard to maintain a positive relationship between the Bryant & Stratton College and all fieldwork sites. The purpose of site visits and monitoring is multidimensional and may include, but is not limited to:

* Student performance evaluation
* Clinical site evaluation
* Clinical instructor evaluation
* Assistance with implementation of fieldwork education program
* Assistance with managing student performance issues
* Clinical staff education and development

Site visits can be announced and/or unannounced. On-site visits are scheduled whenever possible to assist in this relationship and to ensure that sites are providing students with opportunities that relate to our curriculum. The AFWC remains in contact with the FWE regarding student’s progress and performance throughout the fieldwork placement.

Problem areas may be identified by the AFWC, FWE, student, or department faculty. The AFWC shall assist in the problem solving process of resolving performance issues related to the student, facility, or educational program. If a site visit is needed, the visit will entail meeting with the student and the FWE both individually and together to discuss the types of learning experiences, strengths, and weaknesses of the student’s performance/academic preparation. The discussion will be documented and appropriate information will be shared with the AFWC as appropriate (C.1.3).

**Access to Email**

Students will need to have regular access to a computer with an internet connection and email during fieldwork. It is the student’s responsibility to check email and Blackboard on a regular basis to maintain correspondence with the AFWC. Your Bryant & Stratton College student email account is the official method of communication for all Bryant & Stratton College administrative matters. You are required to check your email and Blackboard daily for critical notices or other important alerts/administrative notices requiring a timely response. Failure to check your email account and Blackboard does not excuse or exempt you from any actions required of you by the Program or College. It is expected that students respond to phone call or email from the AFWC or Bryant & Stratton College faculty within 48 hours.

**Blackboard Communication**

Level II Fieldwork courses are located on Blackboard, our on-line teaching system. Through this means, students are able to access the Fieldwork Manual, syllabi, and evaluation forms as needed, along with any other relevant information or forms. All students are required to use Blackboard to communicate and share individual experiences or to ask group questions. At several points in each of the two Level II Fieldwork placements, students are sent instructor generated reflection questions to ascertain how the student is doing on their placement. Questions are posted in discussion board format and focused around curricular themes and professional development. Students are required to post several times on each fieldwork rotation. Discussions and postings are monitored by the AFWC and responded to as needed. The student is highly encouraged to contact the AFWC at the first sign of any concern with the fieldwork placement and/or supervision. Routine communication is encouraged throughout the fieldwork experience (C.1.3). **See course syllabus for specifics on Blackboard postings requirements.**

**List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Fieldwork Manual Acknowledgement Agreement

Appendix B: ACOTE Standards Related to Fieldwork

Appendix C: Fieldwork Appeal Form

Appendix D: Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Level I Fieldwork Student Evaluation

Appendix E: Philadelphia Region Fieldwork Consortium Student Evaluation of Level I Fieldwork

Appendix F: AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation

Appendix G: Occupational Therapy Program Professional Behavior Rubric

Appendix H: Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience

Appendix I: Learning Contract

Appendix J: Influenza Medical/Religious Exemption Form

Appendix K: Hepatitis B Informed Consent Form

Appendix L: Bryant & Stratton College Medical Examination Form

Appendix M: AOTA Code of Ethics

Appendix N: Dress Code Acknowledgement

Appendix O: Fieldwork Site Placement Information Form

**Fieldwork Manual Acknowledgement Agreement**(Appendix A)

All OTA students entering the fieldwork education phase of the program are required to **read and understand** the information contained in this manual and to **abide** by the procedures defined therein.

Students are required to sign this Fieldwork Manual Acknowledgment Agreement indicating their understanding and acceptance of these procedures. This signed copy will be kept in the student’s file.

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the Fieldwork Procedures as outlined in the Fieldwork Manual.

* I agree to follow and take responsibility for my actions as outlined in the Fieldwork Manual.
* If I do not abide by the policies outlined in the Fieldwork Manual, I will accept full responsibility for any consequences as a result of those actions in accordance with Program, and Institutional Policy.
* I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Fieldwork Manual for my reference throughout the program.
* This confirms that I have read and fully understand the Bryant & Stratton College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Fieldwork Manual.

If you have any questions concerning the policies of this manual, please speak with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) prior to signing this form.

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Occupational Therapy Assistant Student Date

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Academic Fieldwork Coordinator Date

***IMPORTANT NOTE*:**

*The material contained herein is subject to revisions. The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program reserves the right to alter or amend the terms, conditions, and requirements as necessary.*