



Occupational Therapy Professional Master's Student Handbook 2025-2026

Occupational Therapy Department
Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences
305-348-6068 (phone)
ot.fiu.edu

Professional Master of Science Degree Program

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**Occupational Therapy Department
Faculty Contact Information**

| Faculty | Email | Office |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Alma Abdel-Moty, Dr. OT, MS, OTR/L Clinical Professor | abdel@fiu.edu | 305-348-3092 |
| Tana Carson, PhD, OTR/L Assistant Professor | tcarson@fiu.edu | 305-348-9560 |
| Hector Huerta, OTD, MS, OTR/L Clinical Assistant Professor | hhuerta@fiu.edu | 305-348-3906 |
| Ellen Modlin, PhD, OTR/L, BCP Assistant Professor | emodlin@fiu.edu | 305-348-3106 |
| Rebecca Mojica OTD, MS, OTR/L Clinical Assistant Professor | remoji@fiu.edu | 305-348-8122 |
| Amy Paul-Ward, PhD Associate Professor | paulward@fiu.edu | 305-348-3104 |
| Ana Rodriguez, OTD, MS, OTR/L Clinical Associate Professor | acaldero@fiu.edu | 305-348-8124 |
| Ingris Treminio, Dr. OT, OT/L, BCP Clinical Associate Professor | ifilpo@fiu.edu | 305-348-3105 |
| Staff | Email | Office |
| Fatima Parpia Program Coordinator | fparpia@fiu.edu | 305-348-6068 |
| Rachel Perez Program Coordinator | racperez@fiu.edu | 305-348-2922 |

Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Occupational Therapy Department
Florida International University
11200 SW 8th Street, AHC-3
Miami, FL 33199
305-348-6068 (phone)

Introduction

Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences (NWCNHS) **Occupational Therapy Department**

Vision

The vision of the Occupational Therapy Department is to be locally and globally recognized for quality occupational therapy education, community engagement, research, and scholarly activity.

Mission

The mission of the Occupational Therapy Department is to establish excellence in occupational therapy education, research, and scholarly activities as well as to prepare culturally knowledgeable entry-level practitioners who will provide evidence-based occupational therapy services to a locally and globally diverse community. The Department's mission reflects the College's mission to teach, conduct research, and serve the community. The College prepares diverse health care professionals as providers and leaders in the delivery of high quality, accessible, culturally competent care within a highly technological and global environment.

NWCNHS Vision:

The vision of the NWCNHS is to be globally recognized as the destination organization that is innovative inquiry driven and technologically advanced, drawing diverse faculty, students, staff and others for positive transformation of society with a focus on the health care needs of underserved populations.

NWCNHS Mission:

- To prepare healthcare professionals as providers and leaders in the delivery of high quality, accessible, culturally competent, and compassionate care within a highly technological and global environment.
- To teach, conduct research, and practice in service to the community through inter-professional collaboration.
- To create, promote, expand, and validate scientific knowledge and evidence-based practice through interdisciplinary research.

The Occupational Therapy Department is aligned with the College's and University's mission, goals, and vision. The University Mission is: "Florida International University is an urban, multi-campus, public research university serving its students and the diverse population of South Florida. We are committed to high-quality teaching, state-of-the-art research and creative activity, and collaborative engagement with our local and global communities".

Program Philosophy

Philosophical Overview

The FIU Occupational Therapy Department embraces and follows the Philosophical Base of OT as stated by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2017):

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

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

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

Occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupations are fundamental to health promotion and wellness, remediation or restoration, health maintenance, disease and injury prevention, and compensation and adaptation. The use of occupation to promote individual, family, community, and population health is the core of occupational therapy practice, education, research, and advocacy.

Our program philosophy also embodies the American Occupational Therapy Association's Vision 2030: The Future is Now, enriching life for all individuals and society through meaningful engagement in everyday activities.

Core Values

The FIU Occupational Therapy Department follows the 2020 Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics published by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2020). Embedded in the Code of Ethics are the Core Values and Principles of Practice. From the Code of Ethics:

The profession is grounded in seven long-standing Core Values: (1) Altruism, (2) Equality, (3) Freedom, (4) Justice, (5) Dignity, (6) Truth, and (7) Prudence, and the principles of: Beneficence, Nonmaleficence, Autonomy, Justice, Veracity, and Fidelity. Altruism involves demonstrating concern for the welfare of others. Equality refers to treating all people impartially and free of bias. Freedom and personal choice are paramount in a profession in which the values and desires of the client guide our interventions. Justice expresses a state in which diverse communities are inclusive; diverse

communities are organized and structured such that all members can function, flourish, and live a satisfactory life. Occupational therapy personnel, by virtue of the specific nature of the practice of occupational therapy, have a vested interest in addressing unjust inequities that limit opportunities for participation in society (Braveman & Bass-Haugen, 2009).

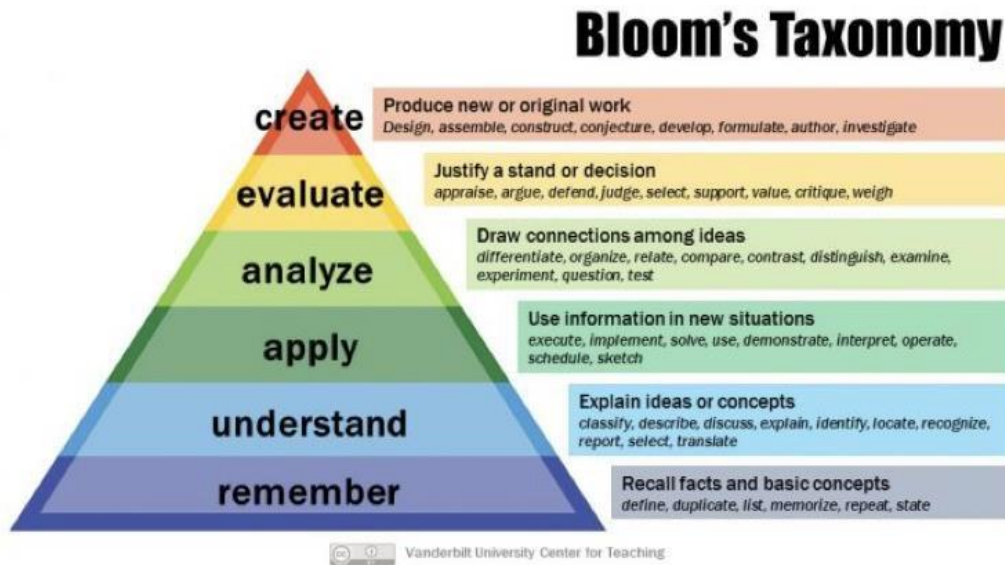
Inherent in the practice of occupational therapy is the promotion and preservation of the individuality and dignity of the client, by treating them with respect in all interactions. In all situations, occupational therapy personnel must provide accurate information in oral, written, and electronic forms (truth). Occupational therapy personnel use their clinical and ethical reasoning skills, sound judgment, and reflection to make decisions in professional and volunteer roles (prudence).

The seven Core Values provide a foundation to guide occupational therapy personnel in their interactions with others. Although the Core Values are not themselves enforceable standards, they are considered when determining the most ethical course of action. As a department, we embrace, model, and teach these values and principles as central to personal and professional practice. By serving the diverse community in south Florida, we focus on cultivating an environment of accessibility, and equal opportunity. Most of our students are the first generation in their family to attend college, and many are bilingual. Many identify a language other than English as their first language. We know from AOTA data that the profession, nationally, does not look like our students (AOTA, 2023). We are particularly proud to serve students that will reflect the uniqueness of our community. Many students come from, will complete their fieldwork, and be employed in medically underserved communities, as identified by the HRSA Data Warehouse (<https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/tools/analyzers/MuaSearchResults.aspx>).

Educational Philosophy

The preparation of entry-level occupational therapists at Florida International University is a collaborative effort between every student, every faculty member, and our fieldwork educators. Graduate students progress into the role of a professional through a developmental sequence – building from foundations of the profession, to theory and assessment, to intervention and practice. At each stage, students are encouraged to be active learners in the process, be self-reflective, and develop higher order thinking skills and clinical reasoning. The curriculum supports active learning through multiple laboratory and fieldwork opportunities and promotes incremental professional growth. Faculty and clinical professionals’ model, support, and guide the students in their journey. Lave and Wenger (1991) described *situated learning* as “a process of participation in communities of practice” that brings newcomers into full participation. Experiential learning and fieldwork experiences at FIU offer opportunities for students to participate in OT communities of practice.

Figure 1:



The Occupational Therapy Department uses the Bloom's Taxonomy and provides students with strategies they could implement throughout their progression in the OT program. Faculty members incorporate this taxonomy into syllabi, thus connecting course content to the curricular philosophy, and design and learning expectations as they relate to Bloom's Taxonomy.

Our commitment to the teaching and learning process is built on several assumptions (some are described in the revised, 2011, Taxonomy):

1. Learning is an active process. Bloom's taxonomy uses "action words" to describe the cognitive processes by which thinkers encounter and work with knowledge.
2. Building knowledge is the goal. There are different types of knowledge used in cognition: factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge.
3. Inherent in building knowledge is also learning how to learn – creating life-long learners and the ability to transfer knowledge across contexts.
4. Active learning is facilitated through reflection, critiquing, critical analysis, collaboration and discussion.
5. Teaching students to be reflective and critical thinkers is central to the educational process. The curriculum fosters the acquisition of clinical reasoning, critical thinking, and judgment through teaching and active learning activities that promote reflective and evidence-based decision making in a student-centered learning environment.
6. Teaching and learning is a collaborative process between faculty and students. Faculty who are well-informed educators and scholars foster and model the level of excellence required of the students. As a department, we are committed to teaching students how to learn and designing learning activities that challenge the student intellectually, convey accurate information and promote the professional development of the student as an occupation-based and client-centered practitioner.

7. Students have a responsibility in the teaching and learning process to ensure that they have a commitment to a consistent level of preparation and participation in the collaborative process that will ensure mastery at the levels of knowledge, skill, and attitude required.

Framework for the Curriculum Design

The professional program is conceptualized around four curricular themes: **culture and cultural diversity, occupational performance, community engagement, and research and evidence-based practice**. Under Curriculum Sequence, courses are presented by semester, by placement in the curriculum by design (i.e. foundations, occupational performance, etc.), and by the course content in relationship to the curricular themes.

Curriculum Themes

The FIU OT curriculum embodies four themes. The themes are interwoven and emphasized in more depth at different points/courses in the curriculum. Student learning and program outcomes are articulated for each of the themes.

Culture and Cultural Responsiveness: The OT Department's mission statement includes serving the diversity of our community and preparing culturally knowledgeable entry-level practitioners. The demographics of our OT students is 57% Hispanic, 10% Black non-Hispanic, 27% White non-Hispanic, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% other, similar to the overall makeup of FIU and Miami Dade County. The OT Department is committed, through the education of our students, to promote an environment of accessibility and equal opportunity for all populations. Becoming culturally responsive requires students to have self-awareness, knowledge, and skills to respond effectively to all individuals and populations. Courses in the curriculum help students examine their own values and beliefs and become more self-aware. As students interact with the content and with the community of practice (OTs, other professionals, clients, families, etc.) there are opportunities to reflect, learn, and engage in more meaningful/thoughtful ways. This responsiveness can lead to improved outcomes through client-centered and client/family centered practices.

Occupational Performance: "Occupation is used to mean all the things people want, need, or have to do, whether of physical, mental, social, sexual, political, or spiritual nature and is inclusive of sleep and rest. It refers to all aspects of actual human doing, being, becoming, and belonging. The practical, everyday medium of self-expression or of making or experiencing meaning, occupation is the activist element of human existence whether occupations are contemplative, reflective, and meditative or action based" (Wilcock & Townsend, 2014, p. 542).

Occupational therapists recognize the complex nature of occupations and the performance skills required to engage in those occupations. There is an abundance of evidence that engagement in

meaningful occupations has health prevention and promotion benefits. The curriculum focuses on the PEOP (Person, Environment, Occupation, Performance) model, recognizing that the person, environment, and occupation work together to support performance. Through the curriculum and course sequence students are progressively taught about the OT process as defined in the OT Practice Framework (AOTA, 2020b). Students develop skills in clinical reasoning, therapeutic use of self, and activity analysis. Then, using these skills, students apply this knowledge in their approach to addressing performance issues across the lifespan – first in assessments, then planning and goal writing, intervention, and outcomes.

Community Engagement: Community engagement is explicitly a part of the mission and vision of the University, the NWCNHS, and the OT Department. Community is defined as a broad construct including OT, our interdisciplinary partners and team members, individuals and families, and populations that we serve. This engagement has the potential to benefit all stakeholders – the students, clients, and faculty. South Florida is home to a unique population. The goal of community engagement is to provide students with learning opportunities that support professional growth. As stated in the AOTA’s Vision 2030, we strive to create a supportive environment fostering belonging, collaboration, networking, and continuous learning for all professionals to enhance growth and development.

Engagement can take the form of research, programming, and collaborative projects. Throughout the curriculum, students are provided with opportunities to engage with the community – guest lecturers, experts in traditional and emerging practice, community visits, and interactions with people of differing abilities. Teaching, modeling, and assignments assist students to engage, learn, and reflect on community practice skills.

Research and Evidence-Based Practice: Occupational therapy is a science driven profession. One of the pillars of the AOTA’s Vision 2030 is Evidence-Based, Client-Centered, and Innovative Practice. Furthermore, ACOTE standards for MSOT programs recognize that curriculum must promote scholarly activity – to promote the profession, establish new knowledge, and have students be able to interpret knowledge to practice. Standard B.5.2 states: Students will be able to: Participate in scholarly activities that align with current research priorities and advances knowledge translation, professional practice, service delivery or professional issues. (e.g., Scholarship of Integration, Scholarship of Application, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning). Our curriculum is designed to introduce, develop, and foster the appreciation of and use of research and scholarship. Students learn how to choose and apply scientific methodologies to address questions of interest. Students learn how to find and use evidence to drive clinical decision-making. The clinical decision-making process of question development, literature review, appraisals, application, and evaluation of usefulness is broadly applied. Students are asked to provide rationales and supporting evidence when making clinical practice decisions.

Research can help inform and support best practices. The curriculum includes a two-semester sequence where students, in collaboration with faculty mentors, develop and implement a research

project. The project culminates in a research symposium where students disseminate their findings. The research focus is meant to help students develop skills in their appraisal, use of evidence, and contribute to the knowledge base of the profession with the aim of creating a foundation for lifelong learning and support of OT as a science driven/informed profession working to meet society's occupational needs.

Curricular Sequence

To effectively respond to the demands of dynamic healthcare systems, graduates of entry-level occupational therapy programs must be flexible, autonomous, broadly educated generalists and leaders who utilize creativity and sound clinical reasoning while engaging in solution-focused processes. Bloom's Taxonomy is used as a guide to facilitate progress from beginner to entry-level therapist. The curriculum is sequenced to support students as they move up the Taxonomy to more complex learning and knowledge construction (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating). There is a planned progression to build upon and develop knowledge and skills at increasing levels of complexity, competence, and integration. The OT Practice Framework is used to define the OT process and help students construct knowledge and skills necessary to help the people or populations we serve fulfill occupational roles. Learning activities shape the student's holistic understanding of the relationship between occupation and occupational performance including the areas of daily living, work or productive activities, as well as play and leisure.

The curriculum sequence follows a developmental structure from Foundations to the OT Process to Practice. Throughout the stages the four curricular themes are emphasized, and learning is facilitated using Bloom's Taxonomy

1. General Bodies of Knowledge – Reflects broad areas of study (i.e., social, behavioral, biological, and physical sciences, education, and contemporary society) which serve as foundations to the basic premises of occupational therapy. This foundational knowledge is about **remembering and understanding** content to use going forward in the program. It includes our pre-professional classes – the prerequisites.
2. Foundations / Theory – At the start of the program, students gain knowledge of various areas such as: the theoretical foundations of the profession, clinical conditions, activity analysis, human behavior, and occupational performance across the lifespan. The focus is to **remember** and **understand** the interdependent relationship between one's ability or inability to engage in occupation, and participation in life. Students **understand** and begin to **apply** knowledge of practice models and frames of reference to select cases. This requires students to begin to utilize the clinical reasoning process in selecting models and frames of reference in the **application** process.
3. Occupational Performance and Adaptation across the Lifespan: – Focuses on the influence of factors such as: clinical conditions, performance skills, performance patterns, context, activity

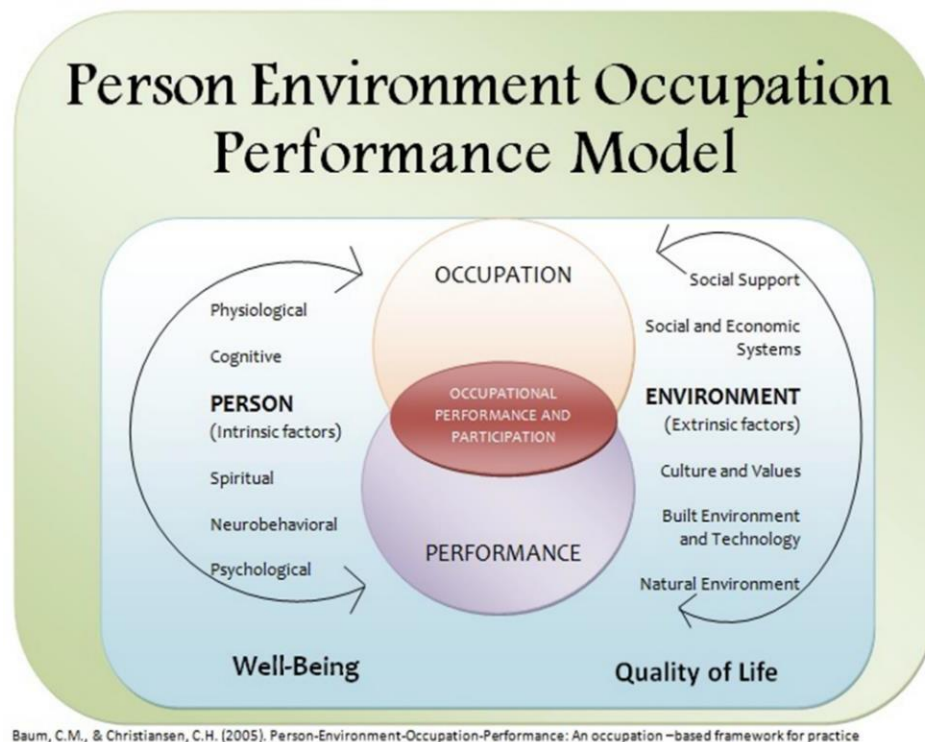
demands and client factors on occupational performance. Typical and non-typical development are examined through the lens of occupational performance. At this stage, previously constructed knowledge is **organized and applied**. For example, in several courses at this stage students are required to complete a case study assignment where they apply theoretical knowledge, knowledge of diagnosed conditions, and PEOP factors across the lifespan. These are primarily lecture courses where information is shared through lecture, discussion, readings, media, and assignments, interactive experiences. Opportunity for practice is in the smaller lab sections.

4. Application of the OT Process: Assessment and Planning: – These courses are primarily the lab sections of the lecture course. Students learn about performance and adaptation and then learn about **applying** that information in the small group learning labs. Students learn, practice, and demonstrate competence in selecting assessments, administering assessments, and the initial planning and goal writing process. The coursework reinforces prior and co-requisite learning. At this stage, clinical reasoning is advanced and refined. The student applies knowledge gained through didactic coursework to practical simulations – especially as it applies to linking theory, assessment choices, and developing plans of care. This requires students to **apply, analyze** and **evaluate** OT processes.
5. Application of the OT Process: Intervention: – Our curriculum follows a developmental model where progression of learning is scaffolded across the span of semesters 1 - 4. Students are presented with basic concepts and gradually advance to intervention courses where critical thinking and application are paramount. Students gain knowledge in intervention across the major domains of mental health, physical dysfunction, and pediatrics. The student must apply problem solving skills to assorted clinical contexts for the application of knowledge and skills in diversified environments. Skills will include **analyzing, evaluating, and creating** goals and intervention strategies.
6. Professional Practice Skills: – These courses help the student build a professional identity and instill acceptance of self as a professional with recognition of concomitant responsibilities, duties, and rewards. As a part of the program – engaging in presentations, clinical competencies and fieldwork – the student is expected to embody a professional identity that expresses the curriculum themes. The Integrative Seminar courses help students think broadly about their learning and applications across multiple contexts including emerging practice areas.
7. Synthesis of practice and evidence – There are three research courses across the four didactic semesters. Within the research curriculum, the student is required to **analyze** and combine ideas or results from evidence in meaningful ways. Evidence-based practice requires an ability to formulate a clinical question, find and **evaluate** the strength of relevant evidence, and determine how (or if) there is evidence to answer the clinical question. Students have opportunities to practice these skills throughout the program. In collaboration with faculty, the students plan, implement, and deliver a presentation on a scholarly project. This process, the generation and use of evidence, is a professional responsibility, and students are expected to bring this forward into their Level II FW, and it is a cornerstone of ongoing professional development.

Figure 2: Curricular Sequence

| Pre-OT | | Occupational Foundations | | Occupational Process | | Occupational Practice | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| General Bodies of Knowledge | □ | Foundations Theory | □ | Occupational Performance and Adaptation Across the life span | □ | Application of the OT Process Assessment and Planning | □ | Application of the OT Process Intervention | □ | Professional Practice Skills | □ | Professional Practice of Scholarly Inquiry |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The PEOP Model and our curricular themes are infused throughout the sequence. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 3: PEOP Model for Practice



The curriculum sequence is developmental and organized around Bloom’s Taxonomy. The curricular content is organized around the Person-Environment- Occupation-Performance Model (PEOP) (Baum, Christiansen, & Bass, 2015) which reflects the faculty’s beliefs about occupation-based client-centered practice. The PEOP model is integrated into each course. The curriculum scope and sequence is designed to first expose the students to “typical” occupational development and performance. Based on an understanding of typical development and occupational performance, the second year of the curriculum focuses on occupational performance dysfunction and occupational therapy intervention to support participation in life across the lifespan.

Curricular Sequence: Courses clustered in relationship to curricular sequence

| Curricular Sequence | |
|--|-----------|
| General Bodies of Knowledge- pre-requisites/pre-OT | |
| Human Growth and Development - Life Span | 3 credits |
| Abnormal Psychology | 3 credits |
| Statistics | 3 credits |
| Biology/Lab | 3 credits |
| Physiology* | 3 credits |
| Anatomy/Lab*: | 3-4 crds |
| Kinesiology | 3 credits |
| Medical Terminology | 1-3 crds |
| Neuroscience: 3000 or above | 3 credits |
| *Anatomy & Physiology I & II can substitute for Anatomy/Lab and Physiology | |

| Curricular Sequence | | |
|--|--|---|
| Foundations / Theory | | |
| OTH5011 | Foundations of Occupational Therapy | 3 |
| OTH5202 | Occupational Development: Infancy Throughout Adolescence | 3 |
| OTH 5414 | Analysis & Adaptation in Human Motion | 3 |
| Occupational Performance and Adaptation across the Life Span | | |
| OTH 5162 | Therapeutic Approaches in Occupational Therapy | 3 |
| OTH 5202 | Occupational Development: Infancy Throughout Adolescence | 3 |
| OTH 6195 | Assistive Technology & the Environment | 3 |
| OTH 5430 | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy I | 3 |
| OTH 6431 | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy II | 3 |
| OTH 5301 | Adaptation of Human Occupation and Environment for Psychosocial Practice I | 3 |
| OTH 5524 | Occupation-based Intervention for Pediatric Populations | 3 |
| OTH 5438 | Adult Neuro-rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy | 3 |
| OTH 5843C | Adaptation of Human Occupation and Environment for Psychosocial Practice II | 3 |
| Application of the OT Process: Assessment and Planning | | |
| OTH 5162L | Therapeutic Approaches in Occupational Therapy Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5202L | Occupational Development: Infancy Throughout Adolescence Lab | 1 |
| OTH5414L | Analysis & Adaptation in Human Motion Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5430L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy I Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5217 | Occupational Engagement Throughout the Continuum of Care | 3 |
| OTH 6431L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy II Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5301L | Adaptation of Human Occupation and Environment for Psychosocial Practice I Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5524L | Occupation-based Intervention for Pediatric Populations Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5438L | Adult Neuro-rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5725 | Management and Community Based Practice in Occupational Therapy | 3 |
| Application of the OT Process: Intervention | | |
| OTH 5430L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy I Lab | 1 |

| Curricular Sequence | | |
|--|--|---|
| OTH 5217L | Occupational Engagement Throughout the Continuum of Care Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5301L | Adaptation of Human Occupation and Environment for Psychosocial Practice I Lab | 1 |
| OTH6431L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy II | 1 |
| OTH 5524L | Occupation-based Intervention for Pediatric Populations Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5438L | Adult Neuro-rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy Lab | 1 |
| OTH 5843C | Adaptation of Human Occupation and Environment for Psychosocial Practice II | 2 |
| OTH 5725 | Management and Community Based Practice in Occupational Therapy | 3 |
| Professional Practice Skills | | |
| OTH 5843C | Adaptation of Human Occupation and Environment for Psychosocial Practice II – Level I FW | 3 |
| OTH5430L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy I Lab- Level I FW | 1 |
| OTH 5845 | Level II Fieldwork I | 6 |
| OTH 5846 | Level II Fieldwork II | 6 |
| Professional Practice of Scholarly Inquiry | | |
| OTH 6772 | Evidence Based Practice and Critical Appraisal | 3 |
| OTH 6972 | Master's Project Implementation | 3 |
| OTH 6973 | Master's Project Implementation | 2 |

Student Learning Outcomes:

The Occupational Therapy Department prepares competent entry-level occupational therapists through a curriculum that focuses on cultural diversity and globalization, occupational performance, community engagement, and research and evidence-based practice (**Curricular Themes**). Our graduates demonstrate the following core competencies.

A. Culture and Cultural Diversity

Graduates will:

- a. Understand their own cultural background, attitudes and beliefs and demonstrate knowledge and respect for differences – with the ability to modify responses to meet the needs of individuals and populations.
- b. Identify issues related to culture that impact the delivery of OT services in culturally diverse communities both locally and globally.
- c. As a part of the OT process, demonstrate self-awareness, knowledge, and skill in implementing culturally responsive programming.

B. Occupational Performance: Competent in client-centered, occupation-based practice

Graduates will:

- a. Demonstrate entry-level competencies by engaging in a theoretically informed process of evaluation, screening, and intervention that is client-centered, culturally responsive, and occupation-based across populations, settings, and practice areas.
- b. Utilize clinical reasoning to select relevant screening and assessment methods while considering such factors as client's priorities, context(s), theories, and evidence-based practice.
- c. Collaborate with client, family, and significant others throughout the occupational therapy process.
- d. Establish an accurate and appropriate plan using clinical reasoning and based on the evaluation results, through integrating multiple factors such as client's priorities, context(s), theories, and evidence-based practice.
- e. Demonstrate safe and ethical practice.
- f. Effectively communicate in both oral and written format about the OT process.

C. Community Engagement

Graduates will:

- a. Effectively articulate the value of occupation to diverse communities.
- b. Collaborate with stakeholders in developing therapeutic programs based upon the needs identified by the community including emerging practice areas

- c. Influence policies, practice, and education by being advocates for the distinct value of occupational therapy for individuals, populations, organizations by promoting an environment of inclusivity and equal access.
- d. Engage in formal/informal leadership activities at local and global level to enhance the role of occupational therapy and serve communities and communities of OT practice.

D. Competent Research and Evidence-Based Practitioners

Graduates will:

- a. Evaluate, synthesize, and apply evidence-based practice (EBP) to create a specific program and/or intervention to promote efficacious, client-centered, culturally relevant practice.
- b. Increase the body of knowledge in OT practice and health-related professions through preparation & dissemination of scholarship.

Program Outcomes:

Graduates of Florida International University Occupational Therapy Program shall:

- A. Understand and appreciate the importance and relevance of human occupation and **occupational performance** to the unique characteristics of the person and environment in which the person is functioning.
 - a. Identify, with the client, the personal meaning of occupations that yield unique characteristics of the individual and the context
 - b. Enable the client to perform personally valued and relevant occupations by collaborating with the client to remediate and/or compensate for performance skills that have been barriers
 - c. Design and provide services to ameliorate, maintain, or prevent deficits in occupational performance of self-care, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation
 - d. Solve problems related to occupational performance through creative reasoning skills that regenerate the client's sense of hope.
- B. Be committed to **evidence-based practice** and be competent in **research**
 - a. Assume responsibility to seek evidence for continuously improving practice
 - b. Participate in activities that advance theoretical and practical knowledge through preparation and dissemination of scholarship
 - c. Engage in learning about new development and emerging areas of practice and critically apply new skills into practice
 - d. Select relevant screening and assessment methods while considering such factors as client's priorities, context(s), theories, and evidence-based practice
 - e. Establish an accurate and appropriate plan based on the evaluation results, through integrating multiple factors such as client's priorities, context(s), theories, and evidence-based practice.
- C. Be competent in **culturally aware**, client-centered, occupation-based, interprofessional practice (**local & global**, emerging practice)
 - a. Practice with the belief that the most important and valid perspective regarding occupational therapy outcome is that of the client
 - b. Build and maintain collaborative relationships with the client, family, and significant others, other members of the healthcare teams throughout the occupational therapy process

- c. Demonstrate entry-level competencies by engaging in a theoretically informed process of evaluation, screening and intervention that is client-centered, culturally responsive, and occupation-based
 - d. Reflect the values and attitudes of the profession through ethical practice, social justice, and cultural responsibility
 - e. Identify issues related to culture that impact the delivery of OT services in a culturally diverse community
 - f. Influence policies, practice, and education by being advocates for occupational therapy for all individuals, populations, and organizations.
 - g. Honor the uniqueness of all clients through a non-judgmental relationship that fosters inclusivity and equal access.
 - h. Respect the trust granted by a client and appreciate the responsibility of consensual therapy by exercising sound clinical judgment
 - i. Develop partnerships with groups representing persons who are disabled in order to advocate for social justice and promote full participation in valued roles
 - j. Openly experience the perspective of different cultural groups with the global community
- D. Adopt a stance of life-long **community engagement** and contribute to the **local and global community** in the health and well-being
- a. Collaborate with stakeholders in developing programming based upon the needs identified by the community including emerging practice areas
 - b. Act at the local level in one's immediate community recognizing that by participating locally one is also contributing globally.

Curricular Sequence: Courses clustered in relationship to the academic calendar

| Florida International University Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences Professional Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Curriculum Sequence (Effective Fall 2025) | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Fall 2025 - (Year 1) | | |
| OTH 5011 | Foundation of Occupational Therapy Practice | 3 credits |
| OTH 5162 | Therapeutic Approaches in Occupational Therapy | 3 credits |
| OTH 5162L | Therapeutic Approaches in Occupational Therapy Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 5414 | Analysis & Adaptation Human Motion | 3 credits |
| OTH 5414L | Analysis & Adaptation Human Motion Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 6772 | Evidence Based Practice & Critical Appraisal | 3 credits |
| | | Total: 14 credits |
| Spring 2026 - (Year 1) | | |
| OTH 5202 | Occupational Development: Infancy Throughout Adolescence | 3 credits |
| OTH 5202L | Occupational Development: Infancy Throughout Adolescence Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 5430 | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy I | 3 credits |
| OTH 5430L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy I Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 5217 | Occupational Engagement Throughout the Continuum of Care | 3 credits |
| OTH 5217L | Occupational Engagement Throughout the Continuum of Care Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 6972 | Master's Project | 3 credits |
| | | Total: 15 Credits |
| Summer 2026 - (Year 1) | | |
| OTH 6431 | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy II | 3 credits |
| OTH 6431L | Biomechanical & Rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy II Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 5301 | Adaptation of Human Occupation & Environment for Psychosocial Practice I | 3 credits |
| OTH 5301L | Adaptation of Human Occupation & Environment for Psychosocial Practice I Lab | 1 credit |
| | | Total: 8 credits |
| Fall 2026 - (Year 2) | | |
| OTH 5438 | Adult Neuro-rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy | 3 credits |
| OTH 5438L | Adult Neuro-rehabilitative Approaches in Occupational Therapy Lab | 1 credit |
| OTH 5725 | Management & Community Based Practice in Occupational Therapy | 3 credits |
| OTH 6973 | Master's Project | 2 credits |
| OTH 5843C | Adaptation of Human Occupation & Environment for Psychosocial Practice II | 2 credits |
| OTH 5524 | Occupation-based Intervention for Pediatric Populations | 3 credits |
| OTH 5524L | Occupation-based Intervention for Pediatric Populations Lab | 1 credit |
| | | Total: 15 credits |
| Spring 2027 - (Year 2) | | |
| OTH 6195 | Assistive Technology & the Environment | 3 credits |
| OTH 5845 | Level II Fieldwork I | 6 credits |
| | | Total: 9 credits |
| Summer 2027 - (Year 2) | | |
| OTH 5846 | Level II Fieldwork II | 6 credits |
| | | Total: 6 credits |
| TOTAL CREDITS FOR MSOT PROGRAM | | 67 Credits |

Accreditation Status:

The Occupational Therapy Program at Florida International University is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy

Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number is (301) 652-6611.

Certification and Licensure

Graduates of the entry-level Professional Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program are eligible to sit for the National Certification Examination for Occupational Therapists administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). All states require licensure to practice, licensure requirements may vary by state. State licensure in Florida requires graduation from an accredited OT Program and successful completion of the NBCOT certification examination.

A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT Certification Examination or attain state licensure. Students should be aware that it is difficult (or impossible) to obtain a license if they have ever been convicted, plead guilty or nolo contendere to a felony violation. Any student who is in this circumstance must investigate further before attending OT school.

Access, Compliance and Equal Opportunity

FIU is committed to cultivating an environment of accessibility and equal opportunity, where all are welcomed to learn, earn, and thrive. Programs, compliance requirements, and equal opportunity initiatives protected by federal and state obligations pertaining to accessibility, civil rights compliance, and equal opportunity will transition to and continue within the Division of Human Resources, with operational support by the [Department of Access, Compliance, and Equal Opportunity \(ACE\)](#). Visit ace.fiu.edu for more information.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are functional, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities with the necessary support to complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center (GC) 190.

The Occupational Therapy Department is committed to the creation of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, which supports learning and professional growth and development. As a community of educators, researchers, health professionals, and disability advocates, we recognize and celebrate the landscape of human difference, recognizing the inherent benefit to us all when everyone participates. An inclusive environment embraces all individuals. We strive to understand and address the existing structural biases within the university, the occupational therapy profession, and society. We acknowledge our responsibility for fostering a welcoming and inclusive learning environment that values the diverse experiences of all members.

Section I: General Information

Occupational Therapy Department Information

Student Performance Standards: If a student cannot demonstrate the skills and abilities identified in the Student Performance Standard document (see Appendix II), it is the responsibility of the student to request an appropriate accommodation. If a student has a documented disability, they **MUST** register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). It is the student's responsibility to work with the DRC to manage all aspects of requested accommodations. FIU will provide reasonable accommodation if it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered and does not impose an undue hardship, such as those that cause a significant expense, difficulty or are unduly disruptive to the educational process.

Email accounts: You are required to have a FIU email account. All communication from the department, faculty, and staff will be via the FIU email. We also expect that when you contact anyone in relationship to your role as a student – faculty, fieldwork, community member – that you will use the @fiu.edu email.

Attendance: Regular attendance at all lectures and labs is expected. Each faculty member determines the specific attendance policy for their respective courses. Students should consult with individual faculty members and course syllabus for specific information on attendance policies. In the event of an emergency or sickness, students are expected to contact their instructors prior to the start of class. Students are responsible for the material covered while they are absent.

Tardiness: Entering a classroom/lab late is disruptive to the faculty and other students. Occasional unexpected situations may prevent punctuality, but chronic tardiness is a sign of poor work habits and non-professional behavior. Faculty can refuse entry to the classroom to any student who is tardy.

Duplication Services: The department copy machine may not be used by students. Copy machines are available at the Green Library and on the second floor of AHC-3 building.

Borrowing Equipment: All borrowed equipment must be signed-out by a faculty member. You are responsible for returning it to its original location and signing it back in with the individual faculty member. You assume financial responsibility for the equipment until it is returned.

Posting Grades: Posting individual student grades by name or social security number is strictly prohibited (Buckley Amendment). Grades may not be given over telephone by department staff or faculty. Faculty, in their individual courses, will notify students how grades/exams/papers are returned.

Cancellations: The faculty of the Occupational Therapy Department makes every effort to avoid cancellation of classes except for holidays recognized by the University. If a class is canceled, advance notification will be given to students, when possible, and an effort will be made to reschedule the class.

Laboratories: Students are responsible for keeping labs clean and neat. At the close of all laboratory sessions, students are responsible for clean-up and for returning the lab to a neat and clean appearance. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Lab manual (to be distributed in a lab section) outlining all issues of safety and management of materials (i.e. proper hand washing, protective equipment, exposure incidents).

Smoking: FIU is a smoke-free facility. Smoking or vaping are not permitted anywhere on campus.

Recording Lectures: Students must ask for the instructor's permission to record lectures. The instructor has the right to refuse.

Phones: Departmental telephones are not available for personal use by students. Cellular phones **MUST** be kept on "silent" mode while class is in session. Use of cellular phones during class is disruptive and is not permitted. If a student has a situation where they need to be available, the student should inform the instructor prior to class that they may have to leave the classroom for a call.

Visitors: If a student wishes to bring a visitor to class, they must obtain permission from the faculty member in advance. The instructor has the right to refuse.

Graduation: Students are responsible for applying for graduation by the semester deadline listed in the [academic calendar](#). Failure to meet this deadline will result in the inability to graduate that semester.

To apply for graduation, students must log into their [MyFIU](#). Students will receive a confirmation email once your graduation application has been successfully submitted.

***Note:** Applying for graduation does not automatically register you for your commencement ceremony. For more information on how to register for your commencement ceremony, commencement registration deadlines, and information on how to order guest tickets please visit <https://commencement.fiu.edu>.*

Social Media: All students are expected to follow the following guidelines when using social media.

- As a student in a professional program and a representative of FIU posts should be mature, responsible, and professional in manner.
- Separate your social media presence between professional and personal and use privacy settings.
- Discourse should be civil and respectful.
- Avoid the display of language and/or photographs that imply disrespect for any individual or group.

Student Services

Occupational therapy students can access FIU student resources at: [FIU Student Services](#)

Use this link to access student services offered by the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences: [NWCNHS Student Services](#)

Bookstore: The FIU Bookstore is located in the Graham Center building on the Modesto Maidique Campus. The bookstore carries all required and recommended occupational therapy texts, general student supplies, and personal items.

Library: Libraries are located on both campuses. Most of the material directly related to occupational therapy is found at the Modesto Maidique Campus library. Use this link to access a guide and help center for students and researchers in occupational at FIU: [Occupational Therapy Library Guide](#)

Center for Academic Success: Students are highly encouraged to utilize the services offered by the Center for Academic Success. Some of the programs offered include dealing with test anxiety, improving study habits, preparing for examinations, and improving reading and/or writing skills. The center is located in Green Library GL 120, 305 348-2441. Here is a link to their webpage: [Center for Academic Success](#)

Center for Excellence in Writing: Students are encouraged to utilize the Center for Excellence in Writing. The Writing Center offers personalized attention from trained peer consultants for all writing assignments from brainstorming, drafting, revising, and/or polishing. The writing center offers assistance on papers, resumes, group projects, and PowerPoint presentations. The writing center is located in GL 125. For more information, please contact [Center for Excellence in Writing](#)

Student Health Center: The Student Health Center office is located at the University Health Services Complex (UHSC). Student Health Services are available to current students by appointment only, services may not be utilized for family members. Healthcare providers are available during regular office hours to provide assistance and consultation on a variety of health care concerns. For further information, please contact 305-348-8385 or go here: [Student Health Center](#)

Counseling: Any student who appears to be experiencing academic difficulty in any course may receive written notification from the Occupational Therapy Department and will be requested to schedule an appointment with their faculty advisor. Students who perceive that they are experiencing difficulty or anticipate that problems may occur are encouraged to discuss these problems with their advisors.

The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center offers personal and confidential counseling services to students. The counseling center is located at the University Park Campus in UHSC 270, 305-348-2277 (CAPS). At the Biscayne Bay Campus, it is located in room WUC 320, 305 919-5305 or go here for more information: [CAPS](#)

The Victim Empowerment Program's (VEP) mission is to provide free confidential assistance to FIU students, faculty, staff and university visitors who have been victimized through threatened or actual violence and to support the healing process. Confidential support and academic advocacy can be found with the Victim Empowerment Program on their 24-hour crisis line, 305-348-3000 and at <http://vep.fiu.edu>. You may file an anonymous complaint using our Ethical Panther Reporting Line, by calling 888-520-0570 or online at [Reporting Line](#). Reports to law enforcement can be made to Florida International University Police Department at (305) 348-5911.

Health Insurance: Students enrolled in the OT program at FIU are **required to obtain and maintain major medical health insurance** to cover health and medical expenses. The student health fee is **not an insurance policy** and only covers some on-campus clinical and mental health services provided by FIU's Student Health Clinics and Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CAPS) during the semester(s) that student health fee is paid. To purchase a health insurance plan, visit the [health insurance marketplace](#) or view the [FIU-sponsored plan](#).

Campus Safety and Emergency Plans:

Policy and procedures for on-campus safety can be found on the [FIU Police Website](#) at Campus Security. Campus police: 305-348-5911.

Policy and procedures for emergency management are published on the FIU Emergency Management website at Emergency Management.

Policy and procedures for occupational therapy classroom, laboratory and fieldwork safety and precautions are published in the Occupational Therapy Student Laboratory and Safety Manual. The manual is published on the OT Department website and is reviewed with the students in the first semester.

University Ombudsperson:

The University Ombudsperson provides a forum for students to address and resolve student issues with faculty, staff, departments, or programs. The University Ombudsperson can be the first resource when a student does not know where to get information for in a particular situation; or as a last resort, when normal channels of communication have failed to bring resolution to a difficulty. The Ombudsperson can be found in GC 219 or by phone at 305-348-2797 or using this link: [FIU Ombudsperson](#)

Student Organizations:

Student Occupational Therapy Association: The mission of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) at FIU is aiding and promoting the growth and development of professionalism of both thought and action in students participating in the Occupational Therapy Program. Membership is open to all occupational therapy students who are registered for courses. Officers of SOTA include President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. A faculty advisor is selected to offer suggestions and guidance concerning SOTA's goals. Students must be in good standing to run for office.

Occupational Therapy Honor Society (Pi Theta Epsilon): The National Occupational Therapy Honor Society is Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE). The purposes of the honor society are:

1. To recognize and encourage scholastic excellence in occupational therapy students.
2. To contribute to the advancement of the field of occupational therapy through scholarly activities; and
3. To provide a vehicle for professional, entry-level students enrolled in accredited programs in occupational therapy to exchange information and to collaborate on scholarly activities.

Specific membership criteria is available from the Pi Theta Faculty Advisor. The faculty advisor will notify eligible students at the start of each semester and invite them to become members. A formal induction ceremony for the Mu Chapter at FIU is held every spring semester.

Section II: Policies and Procedures

This section describes OT Department, Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and University Graduate School policies and procedures for student retention and program progress and completion.

Students may access the FIU Graduate School Policies and Procedures at:

<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/>

2.1 Requirements for Program Completion

The Professional Master of Science in Occupational Therapy curriculum is designed to be completed in six semesters on a full-time basis including all clinical fieldwork requirements. All fieldwork must be completed within 24 months following completion of the didactic portion of the program.

Transfer Credits

According to Graduate School policy, a maximum of 16 credits of graduate coursework earned from another institution, or 20% of the total required coursework, may be accepted. This is subject to approval by the Department Chair. [Use this link to review the Transfer Credit Policy.](#)

Progression

The following circumstances may/will affect a student's progression in the program, delaying program completion, graduation, and credentialing. Section 2.3 specifies policies on retention.

- Failure of required professional curriculum courses including fieldwork.
- Graduate GPA below 3.0.
- Dismissal or disciplinary actions by the Department or the University.
- Student withdrawal from the program.

To be eligible for graduation:

- The student must satisfactorily complete all didactic and fieldwork requirements within program guidelines.
- Have a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0.
- Meet University deadlines for graduation applications.
- Students must be enrolled in courses during the semester they graduate. Students cannot graduate the same semester they are re-admitted to the university.

2.2 Faculty Advisors

Upon admission, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor for their professional coursework. It is recommended that students meet with their advisors a **minimum of one time each semester** to discuss their progression in the program and review their course GPA. Additional advising sessions are available to students during faculty members' regular office hours or by appointment to discuss issues relating to academic or clinical performance, questions or concerns related to the occupational therapy program, or other issues related to the student's educational program. Faculty may request to meet with a student as indicated. A conference form will be filled out by the faculty advisor after each meeting. You may be asked to sign the conference form to acknowledge its content. Faculty advisors do not provide personal counseling to students but may serve as a referral source for students desiring counseling of a more personal nature.

It is the Department's policy that faculty meets with a student individually when requested by the student. Spouses, parents, and/or significant others are not to be present during these meetings unless the student has previously complied with the related University's policies and procedures.

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator for the program is primarily responsible for assigning students to their fieldwork sites. Other faculty will be responsible, in accordance with their faculty course assignments, to advise students during their Level I and Level II clinical fieldwork. Fieldwork advising is documented in the student's department file.

2.2.1 Student Concerns

When a student has an issue related to any course within the program, they must follow a communication chain of command. If you do not feel that your issue has been satisfactorily resolved, then you communicate up the chain of command in this progression:

1. Course instructor (if related to specific course).
2. Academic Advisor
3. Department chairperson.
4. Dean of the College or designee.

If the concern is individual and a specific academic grievance about a course/instructor then the student must follow the specific grievance procedure within the College (see below in section 2.3.9)

If a student has an issue that does not relate to a specific course or does not rise to the level of a specific or formal grievance within the occupational therapy program, they may consult with their advisor or the department chairperson. If several members of the class have an issue or

concern within the program, then the elected SOTA class representative shall follow the chain of command listed above.

Concerns or complaints must be documented in writing. The Department will address concerns on an ongoing basis and provide written responses to the student or student group and keep a record of all complaints.

If a student has a concern that they feel they cannot report internally (within the department) they should follow the procedures on the [Student Academic Affairs website](#). There is a form to use to report any behaviors of concern involving other FIU students here: [Student Academic Affairs Incident Reporting Form](#)

2.3 Retention

2.3.1 Academic Standing and Retention

Graduate students are required by the University to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Students may not have a cumulative GPA below 3.0 in OT courses for more than two semesters. The first semester a student's cumulative OT coursework GPA falls below 3.0 they will be placed on academic warning. The second semester a student's cumulative OT Coursework GPA is below 3.0 they will be placed on academic probation. If the student's cumulative OT Coursework is below 3.0 for a third semester, the student will be dismissed from the program. Instances of academic warning, academic probation, and dismissal may or may not occur in consecutive semesters. No student will be dismissed who has not attempted a minimum of 12 credits. For more information, please visit <https://policies.fiu.edu/files/758.pdf>.

2.3.2 Good Standing:

To achieve and maintain a classification of "good standing", the student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses with a minimum of a "C+" (77%) or better in all required OT courses including OT electives.

2.3.3 Progression in the OT MS Program:

The student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in required OT graduate courses with a minimum of a "C+" (77%) or better in all required OT courses including OT electives.

If a student earns less than a C+ in any OT course, the course must be repeated and the student must earn a grade of “B” or better. If this course is a pre-requisite for another course, the student will not be allowed to continue enrollment. Only one course repeat in the program will be allowed. Therefore, a student who earns a grade below a C+ in more than one OT course will be dismissed from the OT program.

Students may not have a cumulative GPA below 3.0 in the OT didactic courses for more than two semesters (this encompasses semesters one through four). If the cumulative GPA for required coursework is below 3.0 for a third semester, the student will be dismissed from the program.

A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to enroll in semesters five and six; courses OTH 5845 and OTH 5846 (Level II fieldwork courses).

Graduation Requirements

To be eligible for graduation the student must:

- Meet all University Graduate School requirements for graduation.
- Satisfactorily complete all didactic and fieldwork requirements within OT degree program guidelines.

2.3.4 Academic Failure:

If a student earns less than a C+ in any OT course, the course must be repeated and a grade of “B” or better must be earned.

A student who earns a grade below a C+ in two OT courses will be dismissed from the OT program.

The Occupational Therapy Department abides by the following grading scale:

| Letter Grade | Percentage | Grade points per credit hours |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A | 93 – 100 | 4.00 |
| A- | 90 – 92 | 3.67 |
| B+ | 87 – 89 | 3.33 |

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| B | 83 – 86 | 3.00 |
| B- | 80 – 82 | 2.67 |
| C+ | 77 – 79 (PASSING LEVEL) | 2.33 |
| C | 73 – 76 | 2.00 |
| D | 60 – 72 | 1.00 |
| F | 0 – 59 | 0.00 |

PASS/FAIL GRADES

| Letter Grade | Percentage | Grade points per credit hours |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| P | 77-100 | N/A |
| F | 0-76 | N/A |

2.3.5 Academic Dismissal:

There are several ways to be academically dismissed from the OT Program.

- Two “academic failures” of required courses. Refer to 2.3.4
- Three instances of poor academic standing (academic warning or probation, either consecutively or non-consecutively)
- Violation of the rules of student conduct leading to disciplinary action

If dismissed, the student will meet with the Chair of the OT program and will be given a written dismissal verification notice. A copy will be included in the student’s academic file maintained by the Department. The student may appeal a course grade via the NWCNHS grievance process. This process represents dismissal from the OT program (not necessarily the University). The student may seek other program options at FIU or transfer to another institution.

2.3.6 Re-Admission:

Criteria for accepting a student back into the program who has left and / or been dismissed.

Students who leave or are dismissed and want to request returning to the program are provided with the following information regarding policy and procedure:

A student who has been academically dismissed or who has withdrawn from the OT program may apply for re-admission to the OT program after one year and before two years. There is no automatic readmission to the program after dismissal or voluntary withdrawal from the program. Re-admission criteria shall include consideration of previous performance in the graduate program in addition to the current admission requirements. Individuals requesting readmission to the OT program must reapply through the OT Centralized Application System (OTCAS) before the February deadline.

The OT Admissions Committee will consider the student's overall academic performance, reflection on issues around dismissal/withdrawal, and plan for moving forward. The student will be considered for re-admission in relation to the applicant pool for that year.

2.3.7 Curriculum Sequence Disruption:

Students who have an academic failure, academic dismissal or who have withdrawn from the program for a period of time and successfully re-entered the program will have a revised plan of program progression. Students must repeat and pass any class that was failed or not completed prior to moving on to other coursework (i.e., students will not be able to take courses for which they do not meet the prerequisites).

2.3.8 Leave of Absence:

Students who experience extenuating circumstances affecting course attendance for a timeframe greater than one month must communicate with OT faculty and the OT Chairperson. Accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis. As stated in the University Graduate School Policy, a student who finds it necessary to be excused from registration in a graduate program for one term must formally request a leave of absence from the graduate program. Leave time must be requested prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave time and must be approved by the OT Chairperson, the Dean of the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the Dean of the University Graduate School. Leave will generally be granted in cases involving personal hardship or family need. Academic standing is not considered a reason for granting a leave of absence.

2.3.9 Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Student Grievance/Appeal Procedure

NWCNHS students have the right to appeal grading, course requirements, and program progression/dismissal decisions. Students who wish to appeal MUST FIRST follow the NWCNHS clinical grievance/appeal procedure found on the NWCNHS website and in Appendix I.

NWCNHS Appeal Process

For more information about the grievance procedure, see the NWCNHS clinical grievance/appeal procedure found in the NWCNHS website:

<https://cnhs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/resources/nwcnhhs-student-academic-grievance.pdf>

FIU Appeal Process

Graduate Students

Following the College process, if the grievance remains unresolved and the student wants to file a formal grievance the student must use the appropriate form (linked below for graduate) and follow the process and timeline to continue at the University level: <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/academic-grievances/assets/docs/graduate-formal-academic-grievance-form.pdf>

2.4 Integrity and Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct and any additional policies described in individual course syllabi. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to the instructor to discuss it as soon as possible. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of integrity. Charges will be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in accordance with the regulations outlined in "The Student Conduct and Honor Code" at Florida International University. Students are responsible for understanding and abiding by the University's code of student conduct.

Please visit: [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity | Division of Academic & Student Affairs | Florida International University \(fiu.edu\)](#)

Academic Misconduct

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of Florida International University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook. Students who plagiarize or cheat can be charged with academic misconduct. Penalties for academic misconduct can include up to dismissal from the University.

Use this link to review the 2023 Student Conduct and Honor Code:
<https://regulations.fiu.edu/docs=301>

2.5 Guidelines for Exams

Departmental procedure is that when exams are administered, students are required to store all personal belongings including, but not limited to: any books, notes, bags, phones, PDAs, all watches, including digital, analog and smartwatches, and other electronic, recording, listening, scanning or photographic devices, and any other unapproved items. ALL cellular phones and electronic devices MUST be on “silent” mode, not vibration. If you are seen using or accessing any of these electronic devices and/or transmitting data, including but not limited to text messaging, email, and photographs, your device will be inspected and confiscated. You may not access your phone during testing or during breaks. University policy also states that students do not wear caps during exams. Failure to comply will result in a formal complaint of Academic Misconduct.

Exam rules may be specified by instructors. In the case of taking exams remotely, students need to be prepared to take exams online and use online security measures when indicated.

2.6 Professional Behavior:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors necessary for occupational therapy practice. These behaviors include but are not limited to arriving to class on time, staying for the duration of the session, notifying the instructor prior to an absence, demonstrating active listening, participating in class discussions, asking for clarification when needed, and showing respect for the instructor and fellow classmates and the environment by **not** using email, social media, and text messaging during class sessions.

Students are required to purchase a minimum of 1 navy blue polo embroidered with the FIU OT logo. The polos are sold by Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE). The dress code is navy-blue FIU OT polo, pants (no jeans) and closed toed shoes. The dress code will be enforced for various class activities, clinical competencies, guest visits, site visits, field trips, etc.

Use of Laptops and Other Technology

Use of electronic technology in the classroom will be limited to note-taking or for the purpose of enhancing learning of the topic under discussion. Laptops and other electronic media may not be used in class to check email, surf the web, text message, or complete other instructors’ assignments, etc. Use of laptops and other electronic devices is at the instructor’s discretion.

2.7 Online Courses:

Some occupational therapy courses may be offered as on-line and/or hybrid courses.

In the event that the University is exercising remote learning practices, students will need to participate in online classes, including face to face video conferencing, for 30 or more hours per week during each academic semester.

Classes consist of a combination of online and in-person lecture, discussion, laboratory, clinical activities, and various testing methods including video monitoring of online exams.

Essential tasks:

Maintain personal appearance and hygiene conducive to classroom, virtual, and clinical settings, including adhering to a professional dress code.

Establish a location conducive to video conferencing, virtual fieldwork, and test monitoring.

2.8 Program Policies on Written Work:

The occupational therapy faculty established the following policies on written assignments.

These policies will be followed in all occupational therapy classes:

1. Assignments, so designated, are to be submitted in typed form. Instructors may refuse to accept handwritten papers.
2. Grades on written assignments may be lowered by one letter or up to 10% of the numerical grade for the following types of deficiencies:
 - Spelling errors
 - Poor sentence structure
 - Poor grammatical usage
 - Poor organization of paper
 - Redundancy
 - Inappropriate use of technical terminology
 - Typographical errors
 - Hand corrected typing errors, or messy corrections
 - Failure to effectively proofread papers

The style of organization and referencing which is required for all papers written in this program is the **American Psychological Association (APA) Style Manual (7th edition)**. It is available in the campus bookstore.

Students who have problems with writing or are unsure of their grammar or spelling should make full use of the services at the [Writing Center](#) and the [Center for Academic Success](#)

Section III: Fieldwork

3.0 Students must satisfactorily complete all Level I and Level II fieldwork placements and assignments. The policies and procedures for fieldwork education are in the Student Fieldwork Handbook located on the Occupational Therapy Department website. Students are responsible for reading and following all policies and procedures contained in the Student Fieldwork Handbook. <https://cnhs.fiu.edu/resources/students/clinical-fieldwork/ot/index.html>

3.1. Students are required to attend all fieldwork meetings. It is the student's responsibility to personally contact the fieldwork coordinator if they are unable to attend any meetings. Students will be placed on fieldwork ONLY if they are on good academic standing. Students must complete all didactic training prior to initiating their Level II fieldwork experience.

3.1.1 Students will be placed in fieldwork ONLY if all requirements are met by established deadlines. This includes all health, background information, forms submitted, etc. Failure to submit required information in a timely manner may jeopardize your placement and delay graduation. Some fieldwork placements require that students provide documentation of receiving and remaining current with vaccinations. In the case that an OT student is placed in a setting that requires a vaccine, the OT Department will abide by clinical site's exemption protocols. Students on fieldwork are expected to comply with all requirements that are mandated by the fieldwork site. In some cases, clinical sites allow a medical exemption. If the student is unable to obtain a medical exemption, the AFWC will attempt to place the student in a different clinical site. If the AFWC is not able to find a placement, it may delay the student's progression in the program until an alternative fieldwork site can be secured.

3.1.2 Students must meet the demands of the program and possess the abilities reflected in the Student Performance Standards (SPS) (see Appendix II) with or without accommodation for successful completion of degree requirements.

3.1.3 Accommodations:

Students with disabilities, registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/disability-resource-center/> that may affect their clinical performance may request reasonable accommodation for clinical placements.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) staff are available to collaborate with you in achieving your next academic milestone. The DRC can assist in your planning by meeting with you and reviewing which accommodations you are eligible for and if they are available in the various environments you will encounter during this phase of your training. **It is important to note that the accommodations which you were previously qualified and eligible for, and received in the classroom setting, will be reviewed and subject to change due to the training and preparation requirements of the applied knowledge educational environment.** Please note you will still be able to use your accommodations in any non-applied knowledge experiences as you typically would during this phase of your education. Refer to <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/disability-resource-center/request-accommodations/index.html>

Students must be eligible under the definitions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in order to request accommodation. Students requesting accommodation should contact the fieldwork coordinator prior to placement. It is highly recommended students disclose a disability prior to starting fieldwork. The fieldwork coordinator will work with students requiring accommodation to provide the student equal opportunities in fieldwork while meeting their individual needs. Students who neglect to do so may find that the site cannot accommodate their needs at the last minute.

3.1.4 Students must follow facility/ FIU dress code requirements.

3.1.5 Students must conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner at all times and abide by the current AOTA Code of Ethics.

3.1.6 Drug Testing/Criminal Background Checks:

Fieldwork facilities may require drug testing or a current (within a year) criminal background check prior to clinical affiliation. Students will be required to cover any costs associated with these requirements.

3.1.7 Withdrawal or Termination of Fieldwork Due to Inadequate Performance:

Students who withdraw from an internship or are asked to withdraw due to inadequate performance will receive a failing grade for that fieldwork. Inadequate performance may include unprofessional workplace behaviors, poor skill performance, poor clinical judgment, and any behaviors that put a patient/client at safety risk. There is no credit for partial time served in an internship that must be terminated due to inadequate performance. Students who fail an

internship may repeat one and only one internship. Students who fail two clinical internships will be dismissed from the program. Students who have not completed six months of Level II fieldwork will not be eligible to receive their master's degree in occupational therapy. Students must complete all Level II Fieldwork within 24 months of the completion of didactic coursework.

Students who withdraw from fieldwork due to illness are required to provide a physician's statement indicating the student's ability to resume full duties before being rescheduled for a clinical internship.

Any student who fails or withdraws from a clinical internship loses the right to choose clinical placement sites. For level II fieldwork, students will be placed a maximum of three (3) times for clinical sites. The student will be required to meet with the academic fieldwork coordinator and may be required to sign a contractual letter regarding responsibilities for subsequent clinical placements. Credit for time served will NOT be granted. Students who withdraw or are withdrawn from a scheduled fieldwork are not eligible to start another fieldwork until the next scheduled rotation. Students who marginally pass may be required to complete additional fieldwork.

A student who is having difficulty during fieldwork should attempt to discuss the issues with the supervisor and should immediately contact the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC). The AFWC will discuss options for a successful continuation and completion of fieldwork. For specific information regarding fieldwork please refer to the Fieldwork Handbook.

3.2 Preparation for NBCOT National Certification Review Course:

The OT Program provides multiple resources to help prepare students for the NBCOT exam. Some examples include course exams with multiple choice questions that follow the NBCOT question format, a seminar review course, practice exam, support materials, review courses. Some of these supports may be integrated into specific courses, including Level II FW.

APPENDIX I

NWCNHS Student Academic Grievance/Appeal Procedure (approved April 24, 2025)

NWCNHS students have the right to grieve/appeal academic grading/course complaints/controversies and program progression/dismissal decisions. According to the FIU Student Policy (undergraduate and graduate) written guidelines:

The FIU Academic Grievance Procedure indicates that reasons for an academic grievance include “are defined as any complaint or controversy alleging: 1) arbitrary or capricious awarding of grades; 2) unprofessional conduct by a professor which adversely affects either a student’s ability to satisfy academic expectations, whether in the classroom, the field, or a lab, or the student’s actual performance; 3) Inappropriate or inadequate academic advising; 4) arbitrary dismissal from a ... course or program; 5) Irregularities in the implementation of policies or procedures in grievance hearings”. See here: <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/academic-grievances/>

For a grievance to proceed, it must be within the scope of this policy. Students who wish to appeal **MUST FIRST** follow the NWCNHS academic grievance/appeal procedure as outlined below. The student must communicate first with the faculty member, then, if necessary, the chair, and if needed, with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, then the Dean/Dean’s designee to settle the grievance informally via open and transparent processes of communication. After all levels of informal resolution have been exhausted, the student may proceed to file a formal academic grievance with the Faculty Fellow for Academic Integrity using the following link:
<https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/academic-grievances/>

Please note that all of the submission timelines outlined below are based on “working days”, which are defined as Monday through Friday from 9:00am/ET to 5:00pm/ET wherein the university is open. Days in which the university is closed are not working days. All parties involved should be mindful of informal grievance processes commencing on or around university closures, especially during winter recess.

Step 1.

If a grade impacts the student’s program progression for the subsequent semester and the student wishes to grieve, the student must begin the grievance process within three (3) working days after the grade is officially posted by communicating with the faculty member.

Communicate with the course faculty member(s) about the grade or other controversies/course complaints within three (3) working days after grade is posted or controversy occurs.

Communication with the course faculty member may include email, text, in-person, or virtual meetings. The student must explain the nature (what is the reason) and condition (what are the facts to support the complaint/controversy) of the appeal.

These meetings must be documented – time, place, with whom, and the outcome. It is highly recommended that the faculty member responds with an email or other written communication (i.e., through the PSN/ HighPoint system) to the student that summarizes the nature of the meeting, grievance, and outcome (i.e., is the grade staying the same, changing) and the student acknowledges receipt within (2) working days.

A student who is dismissed from a program and files a grievance will NOT be allowed to enroll in courses until the grievance process is completed.

Step 2.

If unresolved at the faculty level, the student has seven (7) working days from notification from the faculty member to proceed with the appeal to the level of the department chair/director (or designee) if the student desires. The appeal must be in writing and include the nature (reason) and condition (set of factors with data) of the grievance, and a summary of previous efforts to resolve it. The written appeal must be addressed to the department chair/director. Electronic submission of the grievance will be accepted. The student must include a current address and telephone contact number(s). An appointment to meet with the department chair/director may be made.

Step 3.

After the student submits the written appeal and meets with the chair/director of the program, a written response to the student from the Chair or their designee will occur within seven (7) working days of the notification or meeting. The notification to the student can be via email. If a student has not received a response within ten (10) working days of the submitted appeal, the student MUST contact the office of the Chair/director to follow up on the grievance.

Step 4.

If the complaint is still unresolved the student has seven (7) working days from receipt of the letter from the chair/director of the program to proceed with the appeal to the level of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (or designee) if the student desires. A written document must include the nature and condition of the grievance, plus a summary of previous efforts to resolve it. The written appeal must be addressed to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and signed and date-stamped by program staff upon receipt (the date of receipt of the e-mail would be the date stamp). An appointment to meet with the Associate Dean may be made.

NOTE: For a clinical course or clinical progression complaint/controversy, the student appeals to the Faculty Assembly Student Affairs Committee following the same process as stated above in 4. The level of appeals for a clinical course or clinical progression complaint/controversy is first (#1)—faculty member; second (#2)—Chair, Faculty Assembly Student Affairs Committee; third (#3)—Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; and fourth (#4)—Dean.

Step 5.

After the student submits the written appeal and meets with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, a written response to the student via email from the administrator or their designee will occur within seven (7) working days of the date-stamped appeal. If a student has not received an email within ten (10) working days of the submitted appeal, the student **MUST** contact the office of the Associate Dean to follow up on the grievance.

Step 6.

If the grievance remains unresolved the student has seven (7) working days from the date on the letter to proceed with the appeal to the level of the Dean (or designee) if the student desires. The document must include the nature and condition of the grievance, plus a summary of previous efforts to resolve it. The written appeal must be addressed to the Dean; a hard copy or email must be signed by the student and be date-stamped by program staff upon receipt (the date of receipt of the e-mail would be the date stamp). An appointment to meet with the Dean may be made.

Step 7.

After the student submits the written appeal and meets with the Dean, a written response to the student via email from the Dean or their designee will occur within seven (7) working days after the date-stamped appeal. If a student has not received an email within ten (10) working days of the submitted appeal, the student **MUST** contact the office of the Dean to follow up on the process.

Step 8.

Following the College process, if the grievance remains unresolved and the student wants to file a formal grievance the student must use the appropriate form (linked below for undergraduate or graduate) and follow the process and timeline to continue at the University level.

The following links and forms are for Formal Grievances.

Graduate formal grievance form: https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/academic-grievances/_assets/docs/graduate-formal-academic-grievance-form.pdf

APPENDIX II

STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Successful participation and completion of the Occupational Therapy Program requires that the student must be able to consistently meet the demands of the program. Occupational therapy students must be able to perform academically in a safe, reliable, and efficient manner in classrooms, laboratories, and clinical situations. At all times, the student must demonstrate behavior, skills, and abilities in compliance with legal and ethical standards as set forth by the AOTA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

Students acquire the foundation of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors needed throughout the progression in the program. Those abilities that the student must possess and be able to demonstrate 100% of the time, to practice safely are reflected in the standards that

follow.

Occupational therapy students must at all times, be able to meet these minimum standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, for successful completion of degree requirements. These are the minimum standards; however, some placements may require a higher level of performance.

| Student Performance Standard (Student must meet minimum requirement 100% of the time) | | Examples |
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| Critical Thinking | Demonstrates critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment and problem solving. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Applies critical thinking processes to work in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.- Exercises judgment in decision making abilities during class, laboratory and in clinical experiences.- Follows safety procedures established for each class, laboratory, and clinical experience.- Demonstrates the ability to self-evaluate.- Demonstrates the ability to identify problems and offer possible solutions. |

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| Interpersonal | <p>Demonstrates the ability to interact and relate to other people beyond giving and receiving instructions.</p> <p>Cooperates with others.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates interest in classmates, faculty, patients/clients. - Demonstrates the ability to get along with and cooperate with others. - Demonstrates the ability to listen to others - Demonstrates the ability to provide suggestions/ recommendations to others. - Demonstrates ability to maintain poise and flexibility in stressful or changing conditions. - Recognizes and responds appropriately to individuals of all ages, genders, races, socio-economic, religious, sexual preferences, and cultural backgrounds. |
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| Communication | <p>Demonstrates the ability to communicate clearly with patients/clients, physicians, others health professionals, family members, significant others, care givers, community or professional groups and colleagues. Communication includes speech, language, nonverbal, reading, writing and computer literacy.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicates effectively with classmates in simulated laboratory activities and situations for data collection, instruction, and intervention - Participates in group meetings to deliver and receive information and respond to questions from a variety of sources. - Reports clearly and legibly through progress notes in patient/clients charts, communicates with physicians and insurance providers including billing and order/referral forms. - Responds to patient calling or any other warning call and machine alarm. - Demonstrates skill in utilizing various computer programs to prepare assignments, presentations, and documentation as required in the classroom, laboratory and clinical environments. |
| Motor Skills | <p>Demonstrates the ability to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency care and treatment to patients/clients.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moves around in classroom, laboratory, patient/client's room, therapy/treatment area. - Moves to and from departments to patient/client's rooms. - Provides patient/client safety and well-being in all therapeutic or transporting activities by utilizing proper body mechanics. - Exhibits sufficient manual dexterity to manipulate small and large equipment, provide support, assistance and resistance as needed for movement, exercise, data collection and interventions. - Knowledge of how to perform CPR |

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| Hearing | Demonstrates functional use of hearing to monitor and assess health needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates ability to obtain and utilize information directly from instructors, fieldwork supervisors and classmates in lectures, laboratory simulations/ activities and clinical experiences. - Demonstrates ability to obtain appropriate medical history and data collection directly from the patient/client, caretaker and/or family member. - Responds to monitor alarms or cry for help and/or assistance. |
| Visual | Demonstrates visual acuity and perception sufficient for observation and assessment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates ability to obtain and utilize information directly from lectures, and laboratory demonstrations/activities. - Demonstrates the ability to obtain and utilize information via observation from patients/clients, e.g. movement, posture, body mechanics, etc., necessary for comparison to normal standards for purposes of evaluation of performance and response to interventions. - Receives information from treatment environment. |

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| Tactile | Demonstrates tactile abilities sufficient to gather assessment information and provide intervention. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates the ability to senses changes in an individual's muscle tone, muscle strength, skin quality, joint mobility, kinesthesia, and temperature. - Demonstrates the ability to gather accurate objective evaluative information via tactile abilities in a timely manner. - Demonstrates the ability to obtain and utilize information about an individual via tactile abilities during treatment activities. |
| Self-Care | Maintains general good health and self-care in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical setting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintains hygiene while in lectures, laboratory experiences, and clinical experiences. - Demonstrates safety habits and work area neatness. - Understands components of a healthy lifestyle. - Meets all health requirements of the OT Program. |
| Intellectual Abilities | Demonstrates the ability to read, write, speak, and understand English at a level consistent with successful course completion and development of a positive patient-student relationship. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates ability to comprehend and follow verbal and written instructions. - Consistently meets course requirements of all courses in the OT Program, passing courses with a grade of "C+" or better. - Can learn to reconcile conflicting information - Written communication: Demonstrates ability to use proper punctuation, grammar, spelling. Completed work is neat and legible. |
| Commitment to Learning | Demonstrates a positive attitude towards decision-making, policies and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completes readings, assignments, and other activities outside of class hours. |

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| | operating methods, rules, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates initiative, motivation and enthusiasm related to course requirements. - Demonstrates ability to complete all work without evidence of cheating or plagiarism. - Attends all lectures/ laboratory/clinical assignments as assigned. - Is consistently punctual to all class, laboratory, and clinical assignments. |
| Affective Learning Skills (behavioral & social attitudes) | Demonstrate appropriate affective behaviors and mental attitudes in order not to jeopardize the emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral safety of clients and other individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical setting. Acknowledges and respects individual values and opinions in order to foster harmonious working relationships with colleagues, peers and patients/clients. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates ability to sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program, which includes an academic and clinical component, that occur within set time constraints. - Demonstrates willingness to accept challenges. - Open to feedback. - Listens actively. - Follows guidelines and rules for the program and university. |

(Adapted from D. Chasanoff, MEd., 2007, Manatee Community College, FLOTEC)

If a student cannot demonstrate the minimum skills and abilities identified above 100% of the time, it is the responsibility of the student to request appropriate accommodation. FIU will provide reasonable accommodation if it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered and does not impose an undue hardship such as those that cause a significant expense, difficulty or are unduly disruptive to the educational process. Everyone's safety (students, clients, family members & team) is paramount. For a student to receive reasonable accommodation, they must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC).

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