



School of Health Professions and Education

Occupational Therapy Program

Master of Science

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Updated March 2025

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Welcome!

The faculty and staff welcome you to the occupational therapy (OT) program at Utica University! We hope you find your time with us both challenging and satisfying.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our students and graduates. Our graduates work in a variety of arenas in health care including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools, nursing homes, community programs, and private practice. Several of our students and graduates have presented at national and state conferences and many have published in occupational therapy and health-related journals. The OT program is distinctive in its collaborative community alliances that enable faculty and students to meet the needs of society while at the same time developing the professional behaviors and autonomous, critical thinking needed for current practice.

Purpose

This handbook is intended to be a resource for you as you move through the program. It includes information on the curriculum and the courses you will take, as well as the sequence in which you will take them. It provides you with information related to the ethical and professional behaviors we expect of our students. It also provides you with links to information including the policies and procedures which drive many of the actions carried out by staff, faculty, and administration at Utica University.

Students in the occupational therapy program are required to become familiar with the information provided in this handbook, as well as the information provided on the websites referred to in this handbook. You will be asked to sign off on your familiarity and understanding of the information in this handbook in Exxat .

We encourage you to have frequent communication with members of the faculty and particularly with your academic advisor. Your advisor has a role in facilitating your academic success and career preparation. Occupational therapy advisors' office numbers, phone numbers, and email addresses are listed in Appendix D of this handbook. You should also become familiar with the information found on the Utica University Academic Advising webpage at <http://www.utica.edu/academic/advising/>.

The Utica University Occupational Therapy program has been approved by the New York State Education Department. It 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, c/o AOTA, is (301) 652-6611 and its Web site is www.acoteonline.org.

Students are expected to be members of the AOTA. Evidence of membership status will be uploaded to Exxat in the fall of each academic year.

Graduates of this program will be eligible to apply to take the national certification examination for occupational therapists that is administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy ([NBCOT](http://www.nbcot.org/)) (<http://www.nbcot.org/>). Successful performance on this exam is required by most states for licensure.

Utica University Occupational Therapy Mission Statement

We facilitate learners' transformation into autonomous thinkers, competent occupational therapists, and innovative leaders through scholarly, professional, and community-oriented educational experiences.

Utica University Occupational Therapy Vision Statement

To be recognized as a regional center of academic excellence in occupational therapy, providing a graduate education program that exceeds the standards of the profession (ACOTE, 2018) while at the same time establishing local and global community alliances for innovative, collaborative projects and fieldwork that provide opportunities for professional development, scholarship, and addressing issues of justice.

Philosophy of Occupational Therapy

Humans are complex occupational beings who face occupational challenges (Gustafsson et al., 2014). They drive the process for change through individual choice and control.

Human occupation refers to being, doing and becoming: all of the activities that people are regularly engaged in and the contexts and meanings of this engagement. It is a core belief of the profession of occupational therapy that there exists a positive relationship between occupations, health, and well-being (AOTA, 2020).

Occupational therapy is the art and science of maximizing human potential and facilitating health and well-being by enabling participation in goal-directed, meaningful occupations (AOTA, 2017).

Client-centered and humanistic in nature, occupational therapy is directed toward persons, groups, and populations (AOTA, 2020). Occupational therapy is concerned with the client, their contexts and occupations, and the dynamic interaction among and between these factors.

Consistent with global trends in health care as reported by the World Health Organization and with trends in occupational therapy practice, occupational therapy professionals believe in the power of participation in occupation as both the means and goal of occupational therapy with human well-being and occupational justice as the ultimate outcomes (AOTA, 2017).

Philosophy of Education

The Utica University Occupational Therapy faculty offer an occupation-centered curriculum (Hooper, 2006) that employs a transformative learning approach (Mezirow, 1997; 2000). We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our curriculum, teaching practices, and relationships with students, colleagues, and community members. We facilitate a safe but challenging learning environment that honors free expression while fostering mutual respect and cultural humility.

As much as possible, the faculty provides an individualized and facilitative instructional approach that meets students' learning needs while developing their self-efficacy, ethical reasoning, and the assumption of personal responsibility for self-directed and life-long learning (Hiemstra, 2013).

We provide guided engagement with diverse populations, contexts, and perspectives. We promote critical, reflective questioning of preconceptions (Kinsella, 2000; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). We encourage the earnest pursuit of accurate, integrated, theory- and evidence-based understandings of occupation, occupational therapy practice, disability, and human well-being (Baker & Tickle-Degnen, 2013).

We believe that learning occurs best through collaborative experiences (Barkley et al., 2014) and active professional and community-engaged participation (Hammel et al., 2015) in the teaching-learning process.

Curricular Threads and Program Goals

The following depicts the curricular threads and program goals for the Master of Science program. The curricular threads are woven throughout the coursework and the goals state the behaviors that students are expected to achieve during their time in the program.

Curricular Thread #1: Occupation is the integral thread in the fabric of the curriculum for occupational therapy.

Program Goal 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of how engagement in occupation supports participation in context.

At the end of the first year: Articulate a working definition of OT and apply occupation-based concepts to the occupational therapy process within practice settings.

At the end of the second year: Evaluate and facilitate occupation-based practice with people, populations and communities.

Curricular Thread #2: Autonomous, **critical thinking** serves as an essential foundation for the development of the clinical reasoning, reflective thinking, and synthesis of research needed for evidence-based practice.

Program Goal 2: Students will demonstrate critical thinking and analysis for innovative, evidence-based practice.

At the end of the first year: Develop reflective thinking and apply circles of evidence to the occupational therapy process within practice settings.

At the end of the second year: Analyze and synthesize evidence to support innovative, occupation-based practice for people, populations and communities.

Curricular Thread #3: **Professional development** is critical to the continuing competency of an occupational therapist who responds in a professional, effective, and ethical manner.

Program Goal 3: Students will demonstrate ethical and professional behaviors.

At the end of the first year: Develop awareness of ethics and professional behaviors and apply concepts in a variety of practice settings.

At the end of the second year: Identify and navigate ethical and professional dilemmas to support positive outcomes for people, populations and communities.

Curricular Thread #4: *The appreciation of **diversity** is a foundation for cultural responsiveness and respectful engagement with people, populations and communities.*

Program Goal 4: *Students will demonstrate cultural responsiveness and an appreciation of diversity to promote occupational justice and inclusion.*

At the end of the first year: *Demonstrate an appreciation of diverse social and environmental factors impacting health, occupational justice, and participation in occupations across contexts.*

At the end of the second year: *Demonstrate skills in addressing occupational needs of diverse people, populations and communities in a way that considers social and environmental factors.*

Curricular Thread #5: *The program supports **practice competencies** across the occupational therapy process in varied settings.*

Program Goal 5: *Students will demonstrate competent occupational therapy practice in settings across the occupational therapy process for people, populations, and communities and in collaboration with other professionals.*

At the end of the first year: *Demonstrate competency in the roles and activities required of a highly effective, collaborative entry-level occupational therapist practicing in a variety of adult contexts.*

At the end of the second year: *Demonstrate competency in the roles and activities required of a highly effective, collaborative entry-level occupational therapist practicing in a variety of children's contexts.*

Curricular Thread #6: *The program places an emphasis on **research** and evidence to support decision-making inherent to the practice and scholarship of occupational therapy.*

Program Goal 6: *Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to assume the role of beginning research investigator.*

At the end of the first year: *Demonstrate the skills necessary to be an informed consumer of research.*

At the end of the second year: *Demonstrate the skills necessary to be an informed consumer of research, synthesizing existing evidence for decision-making, and life-long scholarship.*

Admission Criteria

Students admitted to the program must have completed all of the pre-professional courses with a grade of C or better and a GPA of 3.2 or higher.

Length of Time to Complete the Occupational Therapy Phase Requirements

The master's program consists of 69 credits completed over a total of five semesters including a summer fieldwork semester that occurs between years one and two. The program is designed to be completed according to the published academic sequence (see below).

Students who are accepted into the program as a first year student will complete three years of undergraduate pre-professional coursework followed by two years of professional coursework (3 plus 2). Their first year of the graduate professional phase overlaps with the fourth year of the Health Science Bachelor's program (HSOT) making it a five-year total program. This would be the same for undergraduate transfers if all prerequisite courses are completed within the first three years.

Students who enter the professional phase of the Master's program with their Bachelor's degree can complete the graduate program in five semesters over a period of two academic years.

Any alteration to the course sequence must be approved by the occupational therapy faculty and will most likely have financial implications.

Retention and Progress through the Program

Once in the graduate professional phase of the program students must meet standards established by the Office of Graduate Studies and the program in order to maintain active academic status. Students must read and understand the attendance, academic performance, and progress requirements referenced on the Graduate Studies webpage (<https://www.utica.edu/ogs/index.cfm>). Requirements for graduation may also be found in the Utica University Graduate Catalog (<https://www.utica.edu/academic/catalog/index.cfm>).

Note that even though you may be an undergraduate student, once admitted into the professional phase of the OT program, you will be held to the standards of graduate education.

Grading Policy:

All students enrolled in the professional phase of the OT program, regardless of undergraduate or graduate status, must meet the regulations applied to graduate students. This policy was written to ensure consistency with program grading and regulations regarding the grading of graduate students. This policy, therefore, applies to all OT courses and all students enrolled in those courses.

Policy

In keeping with regulations adopted by the Utica University Office of Graduate Studies, students in OT courses will be graded using the following standards:

94-100%.....	A
90-93.9%.....	A-
87-89.9%.....	B+
84-86.9%.....	B
80-83.9%.....	B-
74-79.9%.....	C
73.9% and below...	F

Procedure

1. All course instructors will submit a final grade for any OT course using the above policy for grade determination.
2. It is up to the instructor's discretion whether or not rounding of results (e.g., from 93.96% to a 94%) is used in final grade determination.

Dismissal Process and Procedure

To progress through the program students must achieve a grade of “C” or better in all OT courses. If a student earns one “C” in a course they will be given an academic warning. The second “C” will result in being placed on program probation. More than two C’s will place a student at risk of not meeting the program continuance criteria and graduate school graduation requirements. Students placed on warning or probation may be asked to devise an academic plan to be presented to and discussed with the faculty. Students receiving an “F” in any course will be out of sequence and thus, dismissed from the program.

Students may appeal a dismissal decision in the following order; to the 1) Chair of the program, 2) Dean of the School of Health Professions and Education, 3) Academic Standards Committee, and 4) Provost.

- *If a student is dismissed from the Occupational Therapy program, or if their fieldwork or capstone experience is postponed or denied, the student has the right to first appeal to the Chair of the program chair. The appeal must be made in writing and should address why the student should not be held to the same standards as all other students in the Occupational Therapy program and extenuating circumstances that should be considered.*
- *If the outcome of the appeal to the Chair of the program is not satisfactory to the student, they may appeal to the Dean of Health Professions and Education.*
- *If the outcome of the appeal to the Dean of Health Professions and Education is not satisfactory to the student, and the student has additional information for the committee to consider, they may appeal to the University Academic Standards Committee.*
- *If the outcome of the appeal to the University Academic Standards Committee is not satisfactory to the student, and the student has additional information for the Provost to consider, they may appeal to the Office of Academic Affairs. The decision of the Provost is final.*

Re-acceptance into the program may place a student out of sequence and again have financial and length of time to completion implications.

Testing Policy

All material provided within the course, and all class activities, lectures, assigned textbook readings and PowerPoint presentations, are testable on the exams. Examinations are to be taken when scheduled. Make-up exams are generally not permitted, except with prior approval of the course instructor. Students experiencing a medical emergency should contact the course faculty and program director prior to the exam to request permission to reschedule.

Students must arrive on time for the examination. Any student who arrives late for a test after other students have already completed their test, will be denied entry into the testing room (on-ground or virtual) and will receive a zero for that test.

The following Students' HONOR CODE is universal to all exams:

"I affirm that I will not give or receive any unauthorized help on this exam or assignments, and that all work will be my own. I also understand that copying exam questions for later use or to share with others, unless authorized by the instructor, is a violation of academic integrity."

Students are allowed to only bring their identification badge and a writing utensil to the examination room. Certain courses may use computers for examination. In these cases, the instructor will provide specific instruction about the use of personal computers. If a student needs to bring any other items, the student must obtain an explicit permission by the instructor. Students may be asked for their identification prior to entering the examination room and anytime during the exam.

Other electronic devices are banned from the testing area, except those allowed by the instructor. These devices include cell phones, smart phones, digital watches, Fit Bits, etc.

Students may not use any form of communication with any other student for any reason during the testing period. During the exam, if students are seen talking or assisting other students in matters related to the test, they may be asked to leave the room and forfeit their test.

If caught cheating, both students are subject to a grade reduction, failing the exam or the course for academic dishonesty.

Students accessing any websites during an exam other than those allowed by the instructor will be immediately excused from the exam and may earn a grade of F for cheating in the exam or the course.

All papers, including scrap papers, must be submitted to the instructor/proctor before leaving the examination room.

No materials may be removed from the examination room or copied from any computer-based test before, during or after the exam period ends.

Students are required to have reliable access to a laptop computer or similar devices equipped with a camera and secure internet connection to interact with course material, instructors, peers and take in-class or virtual examinations. Courses may use online live synchronous lectures, examinations and quizzes with or without proctoring services, as needed to ensure the most secure test-taking experiences possible. During virtual instructions or examination, students are

expected to turn their camera on when interacting with the instructors and peers. Additional details regarding the use of technology and online exam policy will be shared by the instructor.

Continuous enrollment/leave of absence

Students must maintain continuous enrollment in order to maintain their status as a matriculated student. Students with unfinished work, including fieldwork or research must meet this standard. **There are additional fees associated with this status.** Students should refer to the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Graduate University Catalog (<https://www.utica.edu/academic/catalog/index.cfm>) for further information.

Financial Aid

It is each student's responsibility to maintain an active relationship with the [Office of Student Financial Services](http://www.utica.edu/finance/sfs/index.cfm) (<http://www.utica.edu/finance/sfs/index.cfm>). It is also imperative that students read and understand the financial obligations associated with attending the occupational therapy program. Students must review the terms of their awards and abide by the academic standards and time frames associated with those awards.

Academic Requirements

The occupational therapy professional phase includes 69 hours of didactic, community, and fieldwork courses. The sequence of those courses is detailed below. Course descriptions can be found in the appendix of this handbook and in the Graduate Student Catalog. It is important to note that, while the occupational therapy program follows a specific curricular sequence and design, ongoing program evaluation may result in curricular alterations in order to maintain the highest academic standards. Faculty may enhance or alter specific course content in order to meet the standards established for the curriculum by our accrediting body, ACOTE, and address current trends impacting the profession. Major curricular changes are processed through the formal campus-based curriculum approval process.

Utica University Occupational Therapy Curriculum

The Utica University occupational therapy curriculum is designed to follow a developmental and integrated sequence of courses, community, and fieldwork experiences to facilitate your transformation from student into an entry-level occupational therapist. The program has two cohort options: Day and Weekend. Courses and the sequence of courses are identical in both options with each course meeting the same essential instructional objectives regardless of delivery option. Expectations for student performance are also identical across both options.

- Day classes meet Monday through Friday with some online components.
- Weekend classes generally meet for a total of eight weekends per semester (Friday afternoon/evening and all-day Saturday and Sunday). All courses have some content delivered online while other courses are completely online. Each weekend Occupational Therapy course has an independent work component which may entail content delivered online through asynchronous or synchronous sessions. Each course syllabus will include details regarding the specific course expectations.

Much of our coursework requires students to engage with individuals from the community on campus or off campus. When obtaining your campus ID from campus safety please also request a name badge.

Students must be identified by an official Utica name badge for all community and fieldwork experiences. You can request a badge through campus safety. Replacement badges may be obtained for a \$2.00 fee.

Utica Occupational Therapy Curriculum

Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (69 Hours)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY - PROFESSIONAL PHASE

All courses and fieldwork must be taken in the sequence indicated. Please note that there are 5 separate semesters for which you must register and pay tuition and fees.

Fall Semester First Year	
OCT 505 Theoretical Basis of Occupational Therapy	3
OCT 506 Human Occupations	3
OCT 525 Fundamentals of Transformative Learning	2
OCT 526 Case-Informed Discussion: Adolescents and Young Adults	2
OCT 543 Fieldwork Level IA Preparation	0
OCT 551 Fieldwork Level IC: Impact of Context on Practice (requires 15 service hours)	1
OCT 553 Fieldwork Level IA – with adults (completed during fall semester)	1
OCT 571 Occupational Performance: Adolescents and Young Adults (lecture/lab)	4
OCT 573 Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice I	2
IPE 504 Interprofessional Practice and Leadership	1
Total Credits	19

Spring Semester First Year	
OCT 521 Documentation in Practice	1
OCT 527 Case-Informed Discussion: Adults	2
OCT 549 Research Seminar I	1
OCT 552 Fieldwork Level IC: Psychosocial Factors Influencing Occupation-requires 20 service hours	2
OCT 561 Professional Roles I: Development	3
OCT 567 Fieldwork Level IIA Preparation	0
OCT 568 Occupational Therapy Research Analysis and Integration	2
OCT 572 Occupational Performance: Adults (lecture/lab)	4
OCT 574 Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice II	2
IPE Interprofessional experiences <i>*Completion of IPE experiences is required for graduation. IPE experiences are built into coursework. Students do have the option of an additional course elective IPE 505 Interprofessional Educational Experience. This may be taken in spring year 1 or fall year 2. Taking IPE 505 does not replace your IPE requirements in other coursework.</i>	0
Total Credits	17
<i>Students in the HSOT program will graduate with a Bachelor's degree in May following successful completion of first year courses.</i>	

Summer Semester – Between First and Second Year	
OCT 654 Fieldwork Level IIA (May – August - 12-week full-time internship in practice setting with adults)	6
Fall Semester Second Year	
OCT 601 Occupational Performance: Children	4
OCT 604 Case-Informed Discussion: Children	2
OCT 605 Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice III	2
OCT 622 Writing for the Profession	2
OCT 623 Fieldwork Level IB Preparation	0
OCT 633 Fieldwork Level IB – with children (completed during the fall semester)	1
OCT 637 Occupational Therapy Manager	3
OCT 649 Research Seminar II	1
OCT 668 Occupational Therapy Research Dissemination **	2
IPE Interprofessional experiences <i>*Completion of IPE experiences is required for graduation. IPE experiences are built into coursework. Students do have the option of an additional course elective IPE 505 Interprofessional Educational Experience. This may be taken in spring year 1 or fall year 2. Taking IPE 505 does not replace your IPE requirements in other coursework.</i>	0

Total Credits	17
<p><i>**A culminating research/project presentation will occur at the end of the second-year fall semester. Attendance is mandatory and required for degree completion.</i></p>	

Spring Semester Second Year	
OCT 602 Synthesis: Occupation-based Practice with Children	2
OCT 615 Synthesis: Theory into Practice	2
OCT 651 Fieldwork Level IIB Preparation	0
OCT 656 Fieldwork Level IIB (March-May – 12-week full-time internship in a practice setting with children)	6
Total Credits	10
<p><i>Students will graduate with a Master’s degree in May following successful completion of second-year courses. An exam prep course will be offered in May.</i></p>	

**The above course sequence depicts all requirements for graduation and to be eligible to sit for the certification exam.*

Overview of Fieldwork Experiences

In addition to completing all academic courses, students have three Fieldwork Level I experiences and two Fieldwork Level II experiences for 12 weeks each totaling 24 weeks. These experiences are designed to finalize students' preparation for entry-level practice as an occupational therapist.

Level IA and IB Fieldwork are orchestrated so students can experience the OT process for individuals, groups and populations. This serves as a focused experience in occupational therapy practice during which students assist with the evaluation and intervention processes and documentation of those services under the supervision of a qualified individual.

Level IC Fieldwork is an experience focused on the psychological and social components of human occupational performance. It takes place across community-based settings and is therefore supervised collaboratively by a supervisor on-site and an OT faculty mentor. Besides providing students with opportunities to reflect on OT practice in non-traditional and role-emerging practice settings, this Level IC experience also contributes to the community focus of the curriculum.

These Level I Fieldwork experiences are intended to reinforce previous course work and enrich the subsequent courses and Fieldwork Level II experiences.

The main goal for Fieldwork Level II is to facilitate students' development and transformation into competent, entry-level generalist occupational therapists (ACOTE, 2018). For the program at Utica University, students are required to have one Fieldwork Level II in a setting that provides services to adults and a second setting that provides services to children. The majority of students are expected to complete these on a full-time basis although the option exists for students (who receive permission from the occupational therapy faculty) to complete them part-time for a longer period of time. The part-time basis must be at least 20 hrs. per week. These experiences and timelines meet the requirements stated in the ACOTE Standards.

One of the strengths of the program is our student-centered approach to fieldwork choice. Another strength is the number and variety of field sites with which we have contracts. The program is, however, constrained by a number of factors that limit the availability of fieldwork sites. One of those constraints is the shortage of sites and the competition for those sites with students from other programs. Another constraint is the need to comply with state authorization requirements. Utica University has established contracts with clinical facilities outside of New York State. Recent changes to federal and state regulations require educational institutions to seek clearance from host states for clinical placements. Each state may have additional

requirements that must be satisfied prior to the placement of a student in an out-of-state host facility. **Although we attempt, as much as possible, to place you in a fieldwork site of your choice, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.**

International fieldwork experiences are encouraged for Utica University students, but only one fieldwork experience can be in an international setting. Please NOTE that students desiring international placement may need to fulfill additional requirements to meet all legal requirements for such placement. See the fieldwork coordinator as soon as possible to discuss the possibility of an international placement.

Please note that although the COVID vaccination is not required to be on the Utica campus, many of our fieldwork placements do require the vaccination. If you are not fully vaccinated this may pose a challenge to finding a fieldwork placement for you.

Occupational therapy prerequisite coursework must be successfully completed (grade of “C” or better) prior to the beginning of Fieldwork Level II experiences.

Occupational therapy faculty members have the responsibility to review all students to determine readiness for Fieldwork Level I and Level II experiences and approve the student’s placement.

Faculty decisions regarding fieldwork readiness are based on student’s demonstrated ability to meet the fieldwork goals and objectives and their professional behaviors. The program uses a measurement scale (Professional Behaviors for the 21st Century) to assess and have students self-assess their professional behaviors. This assessment will be shared with you annually and reviewed by the program coordinator and the academic fieldwork coordinator.

If a student is not deemed ready for a fieldwork experience, he or she will be notified of the faculty decision, and a plan of action will be developed and monitored through its completion. After this remediation, the faculty members will again review the student's readiness for fieldwork placement and make a final decision regarding the student's readiness for fieldwork or the need for dismissal from the program.

Students may fail one fieldwork experience. Failure of a second fieldwork experience will result in dismissal.

Pass/fail of fieldwork performance is a collaborative decision of Program faculty and clinical supervisors. Students and fieldwork supervisors are encouraged to contact the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator as soon as possible should issues occur during the fieldwork placement that will impact successful performance. The option to extend a fieldwork placement by up to two weeks (maximum) is available to provide for additional time to meet expectations should that time be needed.

A requirement of the Utica University Occupational Therapy Program is that all Fieldwork Level II requirements be satisfied within twenty-four months of the completion of academic courses.

Students will be provided with a Fieldwork Manual that details all policies and procedures related to the fieldwork component of the program. Link to Fieldwork Manual [Utica OT Fieldwork Handbook 2025-2026.docx](#)

Graduate Research

All students are expected to complete a sequence of research courses which span three semesters within the professional phase of the occupational therapy program. These courses are designed to provide students with information critical for competence as a consumer of research in the practice of occupational therapy.

During the fall semester of the second year, students will complete a systematic review of the literature in an area of interest. This systematic review will be conducted in a small group under the mentorship of a faculty member and presented at the end of the semester during a culminating experience required of all students. This systematic review meets the requirements of New York State for graduate education and must conform to all policies and procedures of the Office of Graduate Study.

Policies and Procedures of the Occupational Therapy Program

The OT program has several policies and procedures of particular concern to students and is therefore included here. Students are responsible for being aware of and adhering to these policies.

Policy and Procedure: Advising

Policy: All students will be assigned an adviser who is an OT faculty member

Procedure:

- 1) Upon admission students will be assigned an adviser from the OT faculty.
- 2) Students must meet with their advisor a minimum of once each semester to address continuous criteria and plan for sequencing of courses.
- 3) Students are encouraged to meet with their advisors at any other point throughout the program for guidance and support as needed.

Policy and Procedure:

Health and Safety during Educational Experiences

This policy applies to students, faculty, and clients during educational activities planned and implemented as part of the occupational therapy curriculum. This policy/procedure is intended to ensure the health and safety of all individuals engaged in these educational experiences.

The occupational therapy program at Utica University offers its students the opportunity to practice, review, or refine their clinical skills in the classroom and clinical setting. This practice may involve equipment and/or activities that have the potential to negatively impact the health and safety of individuals involved.

Policy

Students must adhere to all health and safety protocols and practices during all educational activities and experiences.

Because practice is required for gaining competency in clinical skills, the occupational therapy program encourages students to practice frequently and consistently. This practice must be

carried out at all times with full consideration for safe performance. To ensure that all students have equal opportunity to utilize the classroom, classroom equipment, and materials and to ascertain that the environment remains safe and conducive to learning, the following rules and regulations regarding classroom/equipment use should be followed:

Procedure

- 1) Students may use classrooms to practice clinical skills during class times and/or during times arranged by faculty members. Students are also encouraged to use the classroom for practice when it is available.
- 2) During scheduled classroom times, an occupational therapy faculty member will be responsible for supervising practice to ensure safe performance. During such times, the faculty member will engage in educating students on safe procedures and role-modeling those procedures.
- 3) During times when a faculty member is not in attendance, students are responsible for monitoring their behaviors as demonstrated during the supervised educational experiences. Students will assume full responsibility for engaging in safe performance.
- 4) Students are not to engage in practice activities with a client unless supervised by a faculty member.
- 5) Students are not to practice potentially dangerous activities when alone in the classroom.
- 6) Non-occupational therapy students may be present in the laboratory only with permission from an instructor in advance.
- 7) No equipment/supplies may be removed from the classroom without faculty approval. All equipment supplies that are removed from the classroom are to be returned the next class day.
- 8) Students will be taught appropriate infection control procedures during fieldwork I meetings, in the fall semester first year. These procedures will also be written and posted in each classroom. Supplies will be available in the classrooms so that students can engage in appropriate infection control procedures should the need arise.
- 9) Evacuation procedures will be posted in an obvious location in each classroom. During orientation for each course, these procedures will be indicated to students in the classroom.
- 10) Students will contribute to maintaining the classroom so that it is a safe environment.
- 11) Students assume responsibility for following instructions during an emergency.
- 12) On the first day of any laboratory course, students will be shown the location of safety equipment/written procedures.

13) Students should notify safety personnel immediately after any injury. They should then contact their instructor and/or the chair of the department.

14) If a piece of equipment fails while being used, report it immediately to your instructor. Students should not try to fix a problem themselves.

Policy and Procedure: Transporting of students

Policy

Due to legal and financial implications for the university, program, and faculty, **students will not be transported by faculty** in their personal vehicles.

Procedure

Faculty may apply to become an authorized driver through facilities management. If necessary, approved faculty members may request and drive students using the university van.

Policy and Procedure: Ethical violations

Policy

Any student can file a complaint regarding an ethical violation against the program director and/or program faculty.

Procedure

A complaint regarding an ethical violation against the program director can be filed in writing with the Dean of the School of Health Professions and Education.

A complaint regarding an ethical violation against program faculty can be filed in writing with the program director.

The Dean or program director will be responsible for investigating the complaint and deciding appropriate action based on the nature of the violation which may include a referral to the university's Human Resources Office.

Policy and Procedure: Attendance

Much of what students learn is not directly or indirectly tested but is still critical to professional practice. For this reason, **attendance at all classes is an expectation of the OT faculty**. We are aware, however, that illnesses and other impediments to attendance are not always within the student's control. For that reason, the following policy has been written, and the minimum criteria for attendance have been set. Instructors may choose to be more stringent.

Policy

Students are expected to attend all OT classes as scheduled

Procedure:

Instructors will take attendance at each class session and factor attendance into the students' course grades. If an instructor deems more stringent policies are necessary to enforce, these must be specified in their course syllabus.

- In all instances, instructors must be informed before the start of class if a student will be absent. Failure to inform the instructor will be noted on the student's evaluation of professional behaviors.

- Students will not be penalized for missing up to 5% of a course. The student must discuss with the instructor the means of making up the course content.

- For classes that meet only one time a week, this means no more than one class session. For classes that meet two times a week, this means no more than two class sessions. For classes that meet three times a week, this means no more than three class sessions.

- Weekend students: For classes that meet only on scheduled weekends, missing even one weekend of scheduled class time (on campus or virtual) far exceeds 5% of a course. Missing more than 5% of a course will put you at risk of failing the course.

- Absences over the 5% limit will be penalized ½ grade. For example, if a student earns a "B", the student who misses more than the time listed above will receive a "B-".

Policy and Procedure: Submission of Assignments

This policy was written to ensure consistency between instructors regarding procedures for the submission of assignments. This policy, therefore applies to all OT courses and all students enrolled in those courses.

Policy

In keeping with the timeliness required by all practice settings for submission of documentation, **students will be expected to submit assignments on time.** The form of submission (electronic, hard copy) is up to the instructor's discretion.

Procedure

1. Students are responsible for knowing when assignments are due, as stated on the syllabus, and for frequently checking the gradebook.
2. All assignments are due on the date and at the time noted on the course syllabus and/or course management system.
3. Assignments may always be submitted before the due date.
4. For electronic submissions, if a specific time is not noted, the assignment is due no later than 11:59 (Eastern time) on the due date.
5. For hard copy submissions, all assignments are due on the date noted on the course syllabus in a manner determined by the course instructor e.g., in person, in the instructor's mailbox.
6. Students must notify the course instructor of any circumstance that may impact submitting an assignment on time **as early as possible**, so the faculty may work with the student to discuss the expectations and consequences for late submissions.
7. Assignments submitted after the designated date/time are considered late.
8. Late assignments will result in a penalty of a 3% grade reduction for each day past the due date.
9. Assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the due date and will result in a grade of zero (F).
10. Faculty will submit an academic alert for any student earning a grade of zero.

Policy and Procedure: Confidentially

Policy

Due to legal (FERPA) and ethical issues regarding sharing of personal, identifying information, unless students sign the photo-release (see last page of this handbook), **the sharing of photographs and/or any other personally identifying information of other individuals is prohibited by any means including social media platforms such as Snapchat or Facebook.** This policy is in effect for all environments in which educational experiences occur including the classroom, community and fieldwork sites.

In addition, due to the legal constraints of practice by occupational therapists (HIPAA), the sharing of personally identifying information including photographs of clients, is prohibited by any means, including social media platforms such as Snapchat or Facebook. This policy is in effect for all environments in which educational experiences occur, including the classroom, community and fieldwork sites.

Procedure

- 1) The university will take responsibility for sharing with the student all legal and ethical concerns related to the sharing of personally identifying information.
- 2) In addition, students may be required by their community and/or fieldwork sites to obtain additional training in this area.
- 3) Should sharing of personally identifying information come to the attention of the faculty of the university, the student will be immediately informed of the violation and the punitive steps to be taken which may include:
 - a. Withdrawal from a community and/or fieldwork site;
 - b. Dismissal from the program; and
 - c. Dismissal from the university.

Social Media Policy

Policy: Occupational therapy students may not video or audio record, without permission, at any time in the classroom, laboratory or clinical settings. Students may not post any material that could potentially violate faculty, other students or patient confidentiality on social media sites.

Procedure: Students may be subject to disciplinary action by the university and the clinical site for comments that are either unprofessional or violate the privacy of others including faculty, peers or patients. HIPAA regulations apply to comments made on social media sites, and violators are subject to the same prosecution as with other HIPAA violations.

The increase in the use of electronic communication and social media methods within businesses and the healthcare environments as well as academic learning institutions has resulted in the importance of being mindful of consequences when using these types of communication methods. The following are the social media guidelines:

- recognize obligation to maintain privacy and confidentiality,
- do not transmit patient related information,
- do not post or refer to faculty, peers or patients in a disparaging manner,
- maintain professional boundaries,
- report breaches of confidentiality of privacy, and
- be aware of policies on the use of computers, cameras, and other electronic devices.

Professional Behaviors

Policy: Students will adhere to professional behavior throughout all aspects of the program

Procedure:

In addition to the required knowledge and skills, educators and practicing professionals expect that a repertoire of behaviors must be demonstrated for success in any given profession.

Professional behaviors are assessed throughout the program by using The Professional Behaviors Assessment. The development of professional attributes in occupational therapy students can be facilitated by using this instruments.

Recognizing that students enter the professional program with varying levels of ability in the area of professional behaviors, progressive levels of expectations have been identified by the program. Each level builds on the previous level, representing growth over time. Formal opportunities to reflect and discuss the learner's development are critical to the expected outcome of this process. Expectations are delineated in designated courses and are discussed regularly with faculty advisors.

Depending on circumstances, a confirmed violation of professional behavior standards such as improper, unethical, or unprofessional conduct may result in (a) remediation prior to progressing further in the program, (b) receiving a failing grade in a course, or (c) dismissal from the program. In all cases, students will receive written notice regarding the nature of the professional behavior violation, its consequences, and any stipulated conditions for continuation in the program. All documentation related to professional behavior and/or conduct violations will become part of the student's permanent record.

Code of Conduct

Policy: Students will adhere to the university's code of conduct throughout the program

Procedure:

Utica University is a community committed to the principles of civility and fairness in pursuit of a purposeful academic experience. Students, staff, and faculty can expect that every interaction will be governed by the Utica University values and OT Code of Ethics. The Code of Student Conduct articulates the connection between student behavior and these norms and expectations of the university community. Each student is responsible for his/her conduct from admission to Utica University to graduation. Students are expected to know and uphold the Code of Student Conduct, as well as abide by local, state, and federal laws. When the Code is not upheld, students will face action through the conduct process. The complete Code of Student Conduct is available at: www.utica.edu/directory/student-affairs/student-conduct.

Appearance

Policy: Students will adhere to the dress code as appropriate to lab, community or clinical experiences.

Procedure:

Although the program requires no uniform, students must observe the dress code of host facilities. The appropriate dress code required by each facility is gained through communication with the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education before starting the scheduled experience. Professional attire is required if a facility does not have a specific dress code policy. As a representative of Utica University, students are expected to dress appropriately, using discretion and respect for the role of a professional.

Other Policies

Note that several policies and procedures relevant to graduate students can be found in the Graduate School Catalog (<https://www.utica.edu/academic/catalog/index.cfm>). Of particular concern are those policies related to retention and progression, and procedures related to complaints against the school and/or program.

Certification for Occupational Therapists

Graduates of the Utica University Occupational Therapy Program are eligible to apply for the National Certification Examination for Occupational Therapists, administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy ([NBCOT](#)). NBCOT is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to serve the public interest and protect the health and welfare of the public while enhancing the profession of occupational therapy. This is done, in part, through their certification process which has been designed to provide reliable indicators of competence for occupational therapy practitioners.

Note: It is important that all students know that NBCOT oversees a character review program to screen out individuals who may exhibit or have a history of illegal, unethical, and/or incompetent behaviors.

Students with a history of criminal misconduct may be denied licensure or registration to practice the profession of Occupational Therapy. Students should contact the state or country's regulatory board for the state in which they plan to practice in order to determine whether or not their criminal misconduct would restrict their ability to practice in that specific state. The same may be true for practice in another country. The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) has an "Early Determination Review" (for a fee) that will determine potential eligibility to take the exam. Contact NBCOT or visit their website for further directions if interested in this early review.

Upon successful completion of the NBCOT certification examination for occupational therapists, successful candidates may use the title, Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). More information can be obtained from: [NBCOT](#) located at 1 Bank Street Suite 300 Gaithersburg, MD 20878, by phone at (301) 990-7979, or via their web page.

Licensure for Occupational Therapists

Most states require licensure to practice as an occupational therapist. NBCOT works with state regulatory agencies across the United States and all of these agencies recognize the NBCOT certification examination for occupational therapists. Information on specific state regulatory requirements for occupational therapists may be obtained from the specific state regulatory agency or from the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 510E Bethesda, MD 20814-6519 The AOTA's phone number is 1-800-SAY AOTA (729-2682) or (301) 652- 6611 and their web page may be accessed at www.aota.org.

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Course Descriptions

IPE 504 - Interprofessional Practice and Leadership (1) This course is delivered as either an on ground or distance learning environment to provide the student with a foundation for success in patient care related fields. Emphasis is on interprofessional communication and collaboration, ethical decision-making, team building, teamwork and leadership.

IPE 505 - Interprofessional Experience (optional 0-1) Interprofessional practice experience dedicated to prepare students of health professions at Utica university for interprofessional, collaborative practice of patient care through innovative (nationally and internationally recognized) practice experience. This is a zero to one credit hour experience that is composed of 15 hours of interaction in interprofessional practice setting with peers of different health professions to achieve appropriate patient/client care. Pass/Fail Prerequisite(s); IPE 102 or IPE 504

OCT 505 - Theoretical Basis of Occupational Therapy (3) Theory and foundations of practice from historical and current perspectives; importance and role of occupation.

OCT 506 – Human Occupations (3) Exploration into the relationship between participation in human occupation and quality of life throughout the lifespan. Includes activity analysis, assessment of occupational performance, and the use of occupation to facilitate participation in life contexts.

OCT 521 – Documentation in Practice (1) The focus of this course will be on terminology, format, and guidelines for documentation of occupational therapy services

OCT 525 – Fundamentals of Transformative Learning (2) Students will learn the principles of transformative learning in order to apply them to their educational experiences within the occupational therapy program. Students will be provided with an overview of evidence-based practice and research traditions within occupational therapy so that such evidence can be integrated into those transformative learning experiences.

OCT 526 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adolescents and Young Adults (2)

Case-informed discussion related to the role of occupational therapy with adolescents and adults. Open only to students in the professional phase of the occupational therapy major.

OCT 527 - Case-informed Discussion: Adults (2)

Case-informed discussion related to the role of occupational therapy with adults. Cases address content being simultaneously addressed in OCT572.

OCT 549 - Research Seminar I (2) Students will gain proficiency in basic research skills including proposal development and data

OCT 543 – Fieldwork Level IA Preparation (0) Students will gain knowledge and skills in preparation for their first level I experience

OCT 551 – Fieldwork Level IC: Impact of Context on Practice (1) Experiential learning in community agencies; development and application of foundational skills; observation, interpersonal communication, advocacy, cultural competency, reflective practice, ethics. Includes community service hours.

OCT 552 – Fieldwork Level IC: Psychosocial Factors Impacting Occupations (1) Experiential learning in community setting with focus on psychological and social components impacting occupational performance. Application of teaching-learning process, identification of community resources, and professional communication. Includes community service hours. Prerequisite: OCT 551.

OCT 553 – Fieldwork Level IA (1) Clinical application of course material through supervised involvement in a setting where therapeutic intervention is provided. Graded on a pass/fail basis. This fieldwork experience takes place between the first and second semester of the first year. Note that students will also take OCT543 in preparation for this fieldwork.

OCT 561 – Professional Roles: Development (3) Introduction and development of professional roles in practice settings with adults; emphasis on educator, researcher, and administrator roles

OCT 567 – Fieldwork Level IIA Preparation (0) Students will gain knowledge and skills in preparation for their first level II experience

OCT 568 - Occupational Therapy Research Analysis and Integration (2)

Methods associated with analysis and organization of data for evidence-based practice, publication and/or presentation.

OCT 571 - Occupational Performance: Adolescents and Young Adults (4) Role of occupational therapy with adolescents and young adults ages 13 - 40; evaluation and intervention.

OCT 572 – Occupational Performance: Adults (4) Role of occupational therapy with adults; evaluation and intervention.

OCT 573 – Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice I (2)

Principles and procedures related to the practice of occupational therapy within a variety of settings. Topics include but are not limited to standardized administration of assessments, patient handling and transfer techniques, and documentation.

OCT 574 – Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice II (2) This course builds on the foundational skills learned in prerequisite coursework to further prepare students to work with a variety of clients within different contexts. Topics include handling and positioning, assistive technology, documentation, and exposure to advanced intervention approaches. Competency in basic skills is assured in preparation for subsequent fieldwork.

OCT 601 - Occupational Performance Children (4) Occupational therapy practice with children (aged 0-13): evaluation, intervention and outcomes.

OCT 602 – Synthesis: Occupation-based Practice with Children (2) Emphasis on constructing best practice statements that reflect evidence-based practice, family centered care, and occupation-based practice within systems serving children. Critical analysis of literature and creation of personal perspective on practice with children.

OCT 604 - Case-Informed Discussion: Children (2) Case-informed discussion related to the role of occupational therapy with children between the ages of 0 to 13. Cases address content being simultaneously addressed in OCT601.

OCT 605 – Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice III (2) This course builds on the foundational skills learned in prerequisite coursework to further prepare students to work with children, their families, and other involved professionals within different contexts. Topics include but are not limited to standardized administration of assessments, handling techniques, education of family and other professionals, and documentation

OCT 615 – Synthesis: Theory to Practice (2) Synthesis and evaluation of theoretical approaches of occupation into a personal perspective of occupation and practice of occupational therapy.

OCT 622 - Writing for the Profession (2) Students will engage in writing for various venues and purposes, understanding the role of the audience when selecting the style and format of their writing.

OCT 623 – Level IB Preparation (0) Students will gain knowledge and skills in preparation for their first level I experience with children.

OCT 633 – Fieldwork Level I B (1) Practical application of course material through a second experience of supervised involvement in a setting where therapeutic intervention is provided. Graded on a pass/fail basis. This fieldwork experience takes place between the first and second semester of the second year. Note that students will also enroll in OCT623 in preparation.

OCT 637– Occupational Therapy Manager (3) Synthesis and integration of principles of management and impact of systems on provision of occupational therapy services to individuals in various populations and communities.

OCT 649 – Research Seminar II (1) Students will gain proficiency in advanced literature searching and critical reading with the goal of producing a systematic review that will address a practice/research question..

OCT 651 – Level IIB Preparation (0) Students will gain knowledge and skills in preparation for their first level II experience with children

OCT 654 – Fieldwork Level II A (6) First Level II fieldwork experience of twelve weeks in an approved fieldwork setting. Graded on pass/fail basis. Note that students will also enroll in OCT 567 in preparation.

OCT 656 – Fieldwork Level II B (6) Second Level II fieldwork experience of twelve weeks in an approved fieldwork setting. Graded on pass/fail basis. Note that students will also enroll in OCT651

OCT 657 – Fieldwork Level II C (0-4) Optional Fieldwork in an approved specialty area. Graded on a pass/fail basis. May not be used to meet credit hour requirements for MS degree in Occupational Therapy.

OCT668 – OT Research Dissemination (2) Students will gain proficiency in the skills necessary for both the oral and written dissemination of research findings

Link to graduate catalog course sequence and descriptions

https://catalog.utica.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=64&poid=6410

Appendix C

The American Occupational Therapy Association

AOTA Student Membership Application

It is a requirement of the OT program that all students be AOTA members.

3 easy ways to join:

1. **Mail** completed payment and membership application found at <https://www.aota.org/membership>
(see the “Join AOTA” button on the left)
to AOTA, P.O. Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220
2. **Fax** to (credit card payments only) 301-652-7711
3. **Online** at <https://www.aota.org/membership>
(see the “Join AOTA” button on the left)

New York State Occupational Therapy Association

Students are also encouraged to join their state association. The NYSOTA Student Membership Application can be found below

Found at: http://www.nysota.org/?q=join_us

Appendix D

Occupational Therapy Faculty and Staff Contact Information

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Appendix E

Confirmation of Receipt of Handbook

Please sign attestation for receipt of student handbook and photo release **in Exxat**

Occupational Therapy Program

School of Health Professions and Education

I, _____, have received a copy of the Occupational Therapy Student Handbook, including specific policies and procedures related to progression and graduation. I am aware that as a graduate student, I must abide by all rules and regulations of the Graduate Office. I acknowledge that I have an on-going opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification of the contents of the handbook.

I have reviewed this handbook and accept the student expectations explained in the handbook.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PHOTO RELEASE

Utica University periodically features images of current and former students, as well as members of the community, through various communication mediums, including but not limited to written publications, the university's Website, and television commercials.

Utica University uses these images to communicate its programs as well as the accomplishments of its students and alumni.

By signing below you are granting Utica university permission to use your image as described above. (Individuals under the age of 18 must have their parent's or guardian's signature.)

Please note that your willingness to be photographed is NOT a requirement of the program. You may decline this invitation now or at any time in the future.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F

Important links:

Academic Policies and Procedures

<https://catalog.utica.edu/content.php?catoid=64&navoid=4487>

Course Descriptions and Sequence

https://catalog.utica.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=64&poid=6445&returnto=4489

Fieldwork Manual

[Utica OT Fieldwork Handbook 2025-2026.docx](#)

Intellectual Honesty

<https://catalog.utica.edu/content.php?catoid=64&navoid=4487#academic-dishonesty->

Student Complaint Process

https://catalog.utica.edu/content.php?catoid=64&navoid=4487#Complaint_Procedure

Graduation Requirements & Applying for degree

<https://catalog.utica.edu/content.php?catoid=64&navoid=4487#graduating-and-walking-in-commencement-rules>

https://www.utica.edu/academic/registrar/apply_graduation.cfm

Utica Email Communication

<https://catalog.utica.edu/content.php?catoid=64&navoid=4487#E-mail>

www.utica.edu/helpsheets