

# Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Union College

## Student Handbook and Policy Manual



# OTA Program Student Handbook and Policy Manual

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program at Union College!

Since its founding in 1891, Union College has focused on the whole life of the student. The result is an academic style that includes small classes with high access to instructors, experiential learning and student leadership in spiritual and social activities. This approach draws hundreds of students each year from more than forty states and nearly thirty countries. The college welcomes students whose ethnic and cultural backgrounds broaden campus perspectives.

Through Union College's OTA program, you will have the opportunity to build upon your personal strengths and the knowledge you gain as an OTA student to provide high quality, evidence-based, client-centered occupational therapy services in today's dynamic healthcare environment and in the wider community.

Union's OTA program has developed a unique curriculum to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be competent and caring OTA generalists in the field of occupational therapy (OT). The faculty is committed to upholding the program's mission of Christian values, professional behavior, service-oriented ethical practice, and engaged learning. We are eager to mentor you and to encourage your personal and professional growth. We look forward to getting to know you as you pursue your OTA degree at Union College.

Blessings,

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Faculty

## ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to orient you to the program and the policies governing the course of your education. The handbook is intended to be used, not in place of, but in conjunction with, the Union College Academic Bulletin, Union College Student Handbook, the Union College OTA website, and all other materials distributed during orientation, registration, or by faculty and administrative offices of the college.

It will be helpful to keep the handbook as a reference throughout your educational experience. The handbook is updated prior to the beginning of each academic year and is subject to change with written notice to students during the academic year. A current copy of the OTA Student Handbook is available at [www.ucollege.edu/ota](http://www.ucollege.edu/ota) for all students to access. A new change or policy will be enforced only after it is given to those affected. No policy will be retroactive. A student or applicant to the OTA program has the right to request an exception to any published policy using the petition procedure. The petition needs to state the rationale for requesting a variance to written policy. The student who believes that a policy or its use is unfair, is entitled to use the grievance process as outlined in the official Union College Student Handbook. Where existing policies and procedures do not apply, the OTA Program Director is empowered to make a decision.

## ACCREDITATION

The associate-degree-level occupational therapy assistant program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200  
North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929  
(301) 652-AOTA  
[www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org)

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

For additional information, you may contact:

NBCOT  
One Bank Street, Suite 300  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-990-7979  
[info@nbcot.org](mailto:info@nbcot.org)

DHHS Licensure Unit  
Attn: Occupational Therapy  
P.O. Box 94986  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509  
402-471-2299  
[DHHS.RehabOffice@nebraska.gov](mailto:DHHS.RehabOffice@nebraska.gov)

For more information regarding state qualifications and licensure requirements, please refer to the AOTA State Licensure Website:

<https://www.aota.org/Advocacy-Policy/State-Policy/Licensure/StateRegs.aspx>

## ACRONYM KEY

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>ACOTE</b>    | Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education                |
| <b>AOTA</b>     | American Occupational Therapy Association                               |
| <b>COTA/OTA</b> | Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant/Occupational Therapy Assistant |
| <b>NBCOT</b>    | National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy                |
| <b>NOTA</b>     | Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association                               |
| <b>OT</b>       | Occupational Therapy, Occupational Therapist                            |
| <b>OTPF</b>     | Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain & Process               |
| <b>SOTA</b>     | Student Occupational Therapy Association                                |

## FACULTY

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## ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Refer to the Union College Academic Bulletin or <https://ucollege.edu/academics/schedules/> for a full listing of events.

## UNION COLLEGE MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

### **Mission**

Union College is a Seventh-day Adventist community of higher education, inspired by Jesus Christ and dedicated to empowering students to learn, serve, and lead.

### **Vision**

Union College mentors every student to become a highly-sought graduate who serves joyfully in God's calling.

### **Joyfully Living in God's Calling**

We mentor every student and employee to develop a personal spiritual journey and live God's calling.

### **Student Mentorship**

We make every student's success our top priority through mentors who believe in and champion them.

### **Highly Sought Graduates**

We prepare every student to be a highly sought graduate through development of soft skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, problem solving, creativity, and grit.

### **Empowered Employees**

We develop and support every employee as our most important asset.

### **Values**

Core values are not expressions of who we want to become, but who we are. At Union College, our beliefs serve as the soil from which our vision and mission flower.

We believe...



|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Learning</i>     | Learning is a lifelong process rather than a graduation destination. We model continual learning and active exploration by uniting theory and practice and connecting the new with the familiar.                                    |
| <i>Discipleship</i> | Life is best experienced by serving God, applying a biblical world-view, and sharing God's love with others. We commit time and energy to developing personal relationships with God that are genuine, creative, and intentional.   |
| <i>Service</i>      | Service is our privilege. We foster a culture of volunteerism, gladly reaching out to our local and global communities because we enjoy sharing and honor the example of servant leadership set for us by Jesus Christ.             |
| <i>Mentoring</i>    | Mentoring provides support for development of the whole person. We inspire each other to achieve, believe, and make wise choices.   |
| <i>Diversity</i>    | Diversity enriches campus life. We create cordiality of discourse; encourage respect for differences; promote inclusiveness; and welcome diversity among employees, students, and leaders.  |
| <i>Community</i>    | We best learn and develop in the context of a diverse global community. We seek opportunities to strengthen our network of alumni, employees, families, church, and business friends while welcoming new collaborative connections. |
| <i>Stewardship</i>  | Union College has been entrusted by God with stewardship of His resources. We respect our students and care for our employees while maximizing our financial and physical capital in service of our mission.                        |

## UNION COLLEGE OTA PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, VALUES AND MISSION

Building on the mission and values of Union College, the OTA program's philosophy, values and mission are threaded throughout our program.

### OTA Program Philosophy

Because of its emphasis on the student from a holistic perspective and its conformity with the College mission of “empowering students to learn, serve, and lead,” our curriculum has adopted Engaged Learning as its pedagogical model. Without describing students as occupational in nature explicitly, it does describe engagement as contextual, social and, indirectly, volitional. In addition, in keeping with the values of Christianity, Adventism and Union College, Engaged Learning possesses elements of community service and diversity within the human condition. Union College students possess these qualities as human beings, and occupational therapy encompasses the role of

the practitioner as advocate, life-long learner and intervener with individuals, groups and populations in the greater community. This is in keeping with the 2018 revised *Philosophy of Occupational Education* and the 2017 revised *Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy*, which remind us that we learn through engagement in occupations, in order to adapt and that learning is an active, diverse and never-ending process that builds on prior learning.

### **OTA Program Values**

- Engaged Learning:* We support students in self-directed, life-long learning and service throughout all phases of academic coursework, fieldwork and other related learning experiences.
- Ethical Practice:* We build on the Christian values of moral reasoning as we integrate the *Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics* into coursework and fieldwork preparation, including real-life work-place scenarios.
- Stature in the Community:* We emphasize demonstrated competency, professional behavior, evidenced based practice and occupation-based skills for both traditional and emerging practice settings, in order to make our students highly-sought after.
- Creativity and Versatility:* We enculturate students to use critical thinking, flexibility, problem solving and imagination to become effective, client-centered, holistic occupational therapy practitioners.

### **OTA Program Mission**

The Union College OTA program seeks to engage learners and mentor them as they develop into ethical, professional, effective occupational therapy assistants, called by God to serve their community and highly sought-after by employers.

## **CURRICULUM DESIGN**

Based on its philosophy, values and mission, the Union College OTA program has developed a unique curriculum to prepare our students to be OTAs in both Adventist and secular communities. The threads of this curriculum are as follows:

- Occupation: the basis of God's calling
- Community: culturally sensitive, client-centered practice in traditional and emerging settings
- Ethics: the moral foundation of practice
- Engagement: learning as an occupation
- Evidence and Scholarship: contributing to the evaluation and intervention process for best outcomes
- Holism: intervening for the wellness of mind, body and spirit

- Creativity: dexterity in planning and executing responsibilities

### Occupation

The meaning of occupation and theories/models of occupation are introduced as early as orientation, and the importance of occupation to human beings is reinforced throughout the curriculum, emphasizing occupation-based practice in OTAC 100, 140, 210, 220, 230, 240, 260, 300, 320 and 330.

### Community

Union OTA students come from all over the world, and the curriculum prepares them to be able to work with clients effectively in any geographical location, any setting, with any population. Courses that focus on client-centered practice and this sense of community and diversity of cultures and settings are OTAC 100, 120, 140, 200, 220, 225, 230, 240, 260, 300, 320 and 330.

### Ethics

In keeping with College and program values, ethics is a strong element of the curriculum, and is addressed specifically in several courses: OTAC 100, 140, 270 and 300.

### Engagement

Following the Engaged Learning approach to higher education, students are expected to be responsible for their own self-directed learning and to do service learning in the Lincoln community as part of the College culture. The design of the curriculum not only provides the students with opportunities for such learning, but also builds on their learning through a variety of interprofessional and intraprofessional collaborations and Level 1 fieldwork that is based on concurrent didactic learning in the classroom. Lastly, students will develop a professional development plan to include goals for life-long learning in OTAC 310.

### Evidence and Scholarship

Students learn how to use evidence and engage in scholarship in order to provide meaningful data and implement appropriate interventions through didactic learning as well as experiential assignments.

### Holism

As Union College addresses the “whole” student within its core values, OTA students address the “whole person” in practice. This aspect of practice is emphasized in OTAC 100, 140, 210 and 260.

### Creativity

Our professional history, clinical reasoning and intervention process guide the OT practitioner to creatively meet the needs of those we serve. This can be found in the coursework of OTAC 210, 225, 260, 270 and 300.

| OTA COURSE SEQUENCE  |   |   |           |                      |  |   |           |
|----------------------|---|---|-----------|----------------------|--|---|-----------|
| Semester 1           |   |   |           | Semester 2           |  |   |           |
| CORE 100             | College Success   | 1 |           | RELT 210             | Spirituality and Health Care                     | 3 |           |
| BIOL 111             | Human Anatomy and Physiology I                                  | 4 |           | BIOL 112             | Human Anatomy and Physiology II                  | 4 |           |
| MATH 221/111         | Elementary Statistics and Probability/College Algebra *Choose 1 | 3 |           | PSYC 215             | Developmental Psychology                         | 3 |           |
| ENGL 110             | Writing for General Audiences                                   | 3 |           | COMM                 | Choose one: COMM 105 or 205                      | 2 |           |
| RELT                 | Choose one: RELT 110, 141, or RELB 115                          | 3 |           | OTAC 100             | Intro to OT                                      | 2 |           |
| HHPT 256             | Medical Terminology   | 1 |           | OTAC 120             | Clinical Conditions                              | 2 |           |
| ART                  | Choose one art course   | 2 |           | OTAC 140             | Level IA Fieldwork                               | 1 |           |
| <b>Total Credits</b> |   |   | <b>17</b> | <b>Total Credits</b> |  |   | <b>17</b> |
| Semester 3           |   |   |           | Semester 4           |  |   |           |
| OTAC 200             | Neuroanatomy & Human Movement                                   | 4 |           | OTAC 220             | The OT Process for Rehabilitation and Disability | 4 |           |
| OTAC 210             | Human Occupations   | 3 |           | OTAC 230             | The OT Process for Children and Youth            | 4 |           |
| OTAC 225             | The OT Process for Community-Based Practice                     | 4 |           | OTAC 240             | The OT Process for Productive Aging              | 4 |           |
| OTAC 270             | Ethics, Reasoning and Management                                | 2 |           | OTAC 260             | The OT Process for Mental Health                 | 4 |           |
| OTAC 265             | Level IB Fieldwork  | 1 |           | OTAC 300             | Level IC Fieldwork                               | 1 |           |
| <b>Total Credits</b> |   |   | <b>14</b> | <b>Total Credits</b> |  |   | <b>17</b> |
| Semester 5           |   |   |           |                      |  |   |           |
| OTAC 310             | Professional Seminar  | 2 |           |                      |  |   |           |
| OTAC 320             | Level IIA Fieldwork   | 6 |           |                      |  |   |           |
| OTAC 330             | Level IIB Fieldwork   | 6 |           |                      |  |   |           |
| <b>Total Credits</b> |   |   | <b>14</b> |                      |  |   |           |

## OTA COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**OTAC 100 Introduction to Occupational Therapy**  
Prerequisite: Acceptance into the OTA program

2

This course offers a complete overview of the profession of occupational therapy (OT) and the role of the occupational therapy assistant. At the culmination of this course students will have a foundation in the history, philosophy and theories, models and practice frameworks the profession is built upon, as well as be able to identify practice settings across the lifespan. Learners will also be introduced to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, evidence-based practice, client-centered practice and the OT Code of Ethics. *Spring semester.*

**OTAC 120 Clinical Conditions** 2

*Prerequisite: Acceptance into the OTA program*

This course will introduce learners to conditions commonly treated by occupational therapy practitioners in traditional healthcare settings. Learners will get an overview of condition etiology, incidence, signs and symptoms, medical management, prognosis and the impact of these conditions on occupation. *Spring semester.*

**OTAC 140 Level 1A Fieldwork** 1

*Prerequisite: Acceptance into the OTA program*

This course is designed to apply the learning from OTAC 120 course work by providing opportunities for learners to experience the clinical setting through simulation or in the community under the supervision of a qualified fieldwork educator. This course will require hours outside of class time. *Spring semester.*

**OTAC 200 Neuroanatomy & Human Movement** 4

*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course provides a foundational understanding of neuroanatomy, kinesiology, range of motion and manual muscle testing. *Summer semester.*

**OTAC 210 Human Occupation** 3

*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course introduces activity analysis, evidence based-practice, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication and documentation of occupational therapy services. At the culmination of the course, students will be able to conduct occupation-based intervention planning and implementation. Documentation skills will be developed utilizing the S.O.A.P. note method. *Summer semester.*

**OTAC 220 The OT Process for Rehabilitation & Disability** 4

*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course provides learners with an understanding of the occupational therapy process of contributing to evaluation, intervention planning and implementation, and outcomes in physical disabilities resulting from illness, disabling conditions, or injury and how this impacts occupation across the adult lifespan. *Fall semester.*

**OTAC 225 The OT Process for Community-Based Practice** 4

*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course addresses the role of the OTA in community-based practice including theoretical frameworks and intervention approaches. Students will develop an understanding of the various aspects of community-based practice including health and wellness, work and industry, emerging practice areas and technology, and community-based settings across the lifespan. Learning is applied to the concurrent Level IB Fieldwork experience in a community practice setting. *Summer semester.*

**OTAC 230 The OT Process for Children and Youth** 4

*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course addresses foundational theories, practice models, intervention approaches and practice arenas for occupational therapy practice with children. This may include but is not limited to sensory integration, developmental, and motor learning as well as neurodevelopmental treatment. *Fall semester.*

**OTAC 240 The OT Process for Productive Aging** 4  
*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course addresses theories, standardized assessments, interventions and outcomes for working with older adults. Students will apply the OT process to common clinical conditions impacting older adults, and identify methods to promote wellness, function and quality of life for this population. *Fall Semester.*

**OTAC 260 The OT Process for Mental Health** 4  
*Prerequisite: OTAC 120*

This course outlines the scope of practice in mental health occupational therapy across the developmental continuum. Group process is addressed and learning is applied to the student's concurrent level 1 fieldwork experience. *Fall semester.*

**OTAC 265 Level IB Fieldwork** 1  
*Prerequisite: OTAC 140*

This course is designed to apply the learning from OTAC 225 course work by providing opportunities for learners to experience the nontraditional setting through simulation or in the community under the supervision of a qualified fieldwork educator. This course will require hours outside of class time. *Summer Semester.*

**OTAC 270 Ethics, Reasoning and Management** 2  
*Prerequisite: OTAC 100*

This course addresses ethical practice, leadership, advocacy, clinical reasoning and managerial roles in occupational therapy. *Summer semester.*

**OTAC 300 Level IC Fieldwork** 1  
*Prerequisite: OTAC 265*

This course is designed to apply the learning from OTAC 260 course work by providing opportunities for learners to experience the mental health setting through simulation or in the community under the supervision of a qualified fieldwork educator. This course will require hours outside of class time. *Fall Semester*

**OTAC 310 Professional Seminar** 2  
*Prerequisite: OTAC 270*

This course is designed to facilitate the transition from student to practitioner by preparing students for professional employment and the certification exam. Students will explore licensure processes and state regulations; complete a job search; create a professional development plan; and review test-taking strategies and application of learning to prepare for the certification exam. *Spring semester*

**OTAC 320 Level IIA Fieldwork**

6

*Prerequisite: OTAC 275*

This course is designed to enhance the learning from coursework by providing opportunities for learners to experience a setting under the supervision of a qualified OT professional. (8 weeks). *Spring semester.*

**OTAC 330 Level IIB Fieldwork**

6

*Prerequisite: OTAC 275*

This course is designed to enhance the learning from coursework by providing opportunities for learners to experience a second practice setting under the supervision of a qualified OT professional. (8 weeks); *Spring semester.*

## FIELDWORK OVERVIEW

The OTA curriculum at Union College contains three Level I fieldwork experiences to allow students to apply knowledge and skills from classwork while working with clients in the clinical or community setting. The fieldwork component is designed to integrate didactic knowledge with hands-on, practical experience under the supervision of a qualified OT, OTA, or other appropriate professionals. Practical experience in this discipline of study is considered a principal component of the educational process. In the final semester of the program, students will complete two, eight-week, Level II Fieldwork experiences, as required by ACOTE. These experiences will prepare students to graduate at the level of an entry-level practitioner.

Please see the fieldwork manual for a detailed description of fieldwork and how it is integrated into the total curriculum.

## FACULTY OFFICE HOURS/APPOINTMENTS

Refer to the personnel directory on the Union College website, faculty information in this handbook, or course syllabi for contact information of OTA Department faculty members.

Faculty members will inform students of their schedules, including open office time and time available for appointments. Meeting requests can be made via email, and faculty will coordinate with the student to schedule meetings based on their availability. If a student needs to talk with a faculty member for more than a minute or two, the student is strongly encouraged to make an appointment to meet with the faculty member. This appointment is to ensure the faculty member has allocated sufficient time for the student and the meeting is not rushed or hurried. It is expected that routine academic questions are addressed during weekdays and official school hours. However, faculty may be available for emergencies only after hours.

## ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Upon enrollment into the Union College OTA program, each student is assigned an OTA academic advisor who provides academic planning and guidance in personal situations that impact academic progress. The advisor assists with intellectual curiosity, critical analysis, self-reliance, trust, and awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses.

Graduation plans will be completed during the first semester of the program. These will serve as an academic plan to assist students in meeting all degree requirements detailed in the Union College Academic Bulletin and OTA Program Handbook. It is the student's responsibility to make appointments with their advisor to develop an academic plan. This plan reflects the student's course selections for each term of enrollment. Ideally the student and advisor should meet each semester to discuss academic progress. Any changes in the academic plan should be discussed with the advisor beforehand. Situations may arise that might impact or change the academic plan; those situations will be dealt with between the student and academic advisor. Changes to the academic plan may jeopardize the student's graduation date. Course schedules will be submitted every semester and must be approved by the advisor before registration is complete. Listed below are student and advisor responsibilities to ensure the student's success in educational achievements.

### *Student Responsibilities:*

- Initiate meetings with the advisor at the beginning of each semester, before pre-registration, and when needed throughout the semester.
- Set-up a meeting with the advisor in case of any academic difficulty, interruption, or change in academic status.
- Draw on the advisor in combination with the other college resources to meet academic requirements and personal needs while enrolled in the program.
- Contact the advisor regarding courses and program plans.
- Retain a copy of current academic curriculum plan and register each semester keeping in mind these are the courses needed for graduation.
- Register as indicated on a timely basis, not doing so could result in the student not getting in the courses he/she needs to progress throughout the program in a timely manner.
- **Accountability for meeting graduation requirements is a personal responsibility of the student.**

### *Advisor Responsibilities:*

- Collaborate in partnership with the advisee to facilitate an academic plan.
- Retain accurate documentation of the advisee's progress.
- Review and approve course selections for registration.
- Understand the curriculum and graduation-related college policies and requirements.
- Provide feedback regarding academic performance and progress.
- Review mid-term and final grades.
- Meet with advisee as needed.
- Assist the advisee to meet educational, personal, and professional goals.



- Refer the advisee to resources as appropriate.

A request for a change of advisor requires a meeting with the OTA program director prior to approval for the change. The program director will communicate any changes with the Union College records office.

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Students are required to become members of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) either before or during their first semester of OTA classes. This membership will allow students to have access to resources, professional journals, and advocacy materials for the profession. Many of these resources will be required in order to complete assignments for the program.

Students are encouraged to become members of the Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association (NOTA). Both the AOTA and NOTA have student memberships with an associated reduced cost. These associations offer access to journals, information on continuing education opportunities, employment opportunities, professional networking opportunities, and many other benefits.

Additionally, Union College has a Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). A faculty club advisor oversees the club and elected student officers will be in charge of the management of club activities. The club is designed to be a link between the professional organizations, a service club with a community health and well-being focus, and a social group for all pre-OTA and OTA students.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### ADMISSIONS

Students will complete an application to the OTA program, as well as submit supplementary documents specified in the application. Only complete and verified applications are reviewed by the OTA admissions committee and are considered for admission. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and all supplemental documents have been received by the published deadline.

The admission process gives full consideration to the applicant's qualifications and potential, based on evidence provided in the application process. Students are selected for acceptance into the program based on rankings of application material and an interview. Students will be conditionally accepted until able to provide a transcript of GPA and grades in prerequisite courses. All students must complete prerequisite courses at Union College or through approved transfer equivalent courses. Anatomy & Physiology transfer courses must be completed within five years prior to their

admission to the OTA program. Students may be required to re-take general education or prerequisite courses that do not meet transfer equivalency requirements.

## GUARANTEED ADMISSION PROGRAM

The OTA program offers a guaranteed admission opportunity for students to secure a spot in the OTA program at the time of enrollment to Union College. The goal of the guaranteed admission offerings would be to promote recruitment, retention between pre-OTA and OTA semesters, and to reach program capacity with qualified, competitive applicants.

### Eligibility\*:

High school students enrolling in college for the first time who meet the following criteria:

- Cumulative high school GPA of 3.5 or above on a 4.00 scale
- Minimum score of 24 on the ACT or 1190 on the SAT 1600 scale

\*Guaranteed admission is conditional, based on academic performance during the pre-OTA semester. Eligible students must also meet minimum GPA and prerequisite requirements in the pre-OTA semester in order to retain their initial guaranteed admission designation.

### Process:

Enrollment and academic advisors will collaborate to identify students who meet criteria to be granted guaranteed admission at the time of entrance to Union College and/or the beginning of the pre-OTA semester. The OTA Program reserves the right to limit total number of guaranteed admission spots for each cohort and make final determinations about student admission.

Students offered guaranteed admission will complete requirements and participate in all aspects of the OTA program application process, including the application, observation hours, resume, essay, and interview. The OTA program application process takes place during the students "pre-OTA" semester. Students must also demonstrate program eligibility requirements for academic rigor at the end of the pre-OTA semester. Students who were initially offered guaranteed admission, but do not meet academic criteria at this time, may have their guaranteed admission status revoked.

## PROGRESSION THROUGH THE PROGRAM

*Students must achieve the following each semester to matriculate to the next semester:*

1. A cumulative GPA of 2.50 or higher.
2. Students must progress through OTA courses as outlined in the Union College Academic Bulletin and this Handbook. A student may petition the sequence based upon the College petition policy. See Website or Bulletin for Academic Petition and corresponding form.
3. All courses must be passed with a letter grade of "C" (76%) or higher.
4. When an OTA course grade falls below the minimum requirement, it may be retaken the next available semester if fieldwork/class space is available.
5. No one OTA course can be attempted more than twice to achieve a grade of "C" (76%).
6. Students are allowed a maximum of two course failures or unsuccessful attempts and then must exit the OTA program and must reapply for admission consideration.

7. If withdrawing from any one OTAC course, students must withdraw from all OTAC courses they are enrolled in.
8. Health policy requirements (immunizations, annual TST, etc.) must be met and appropriate documentation to verify must be uploaded into CastleBranch. See Immunizations.
9. When an OTA faculty member or OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee refer a student to the Student Success Center for consultation, it is expected that the student will meet with an academic coach to determine an academic plan. This plan may include ongoing coaching, meeting with the director of disability information, or referral to additional resources.
10. Once a student is admitted to the Union College OTA program, all OTA courses must be completed at Union College.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COURSE COMPLETION**

In order to successfully complete all OTA program courses, students must complete all required assignments, assessments [including practicals, competencies, and exams], and course, fieldwork, or service learning activities. All coursework and assessments are designed to comply with ACOTE standards. Students who do not complete coursework cannot demonstrate competency with all required ACOTE standards, and therefore will not successfully complete the associated course. In addition to completing all course requirements, students must earn a letter grade of “C” (76%) or higher in each course. See Progression through the Program policy for further details.

### **TIMEFRAME FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION**

Once students have been accepted into the OTA program, they will have a maximum of 4 years, to complete the requirements for an Associates of Science degree in OTA including all didactic courses and fieldwork requirements. Students must complete 16 weeks of Level II fieldwork within twelve months following the completion of the didactic portion of the program. Requests for extensions from the standard program sequence must be approved by the OTA Department. See additional policy for “Stop-Out” procedures.

### **STOP-OUT**

Occasionally extenuating circumstances cause a student to have to take a break from OTA courses. A “stop-out” from OTA occurs when the student is unable to continue his/her program for a specified period of time. Examples of a stop-out might include medical complications, curriculum sequencing, or extenuating family circumstances. Each student’s situation is unique and will be handled on an individualized basis. Approval of a students’ request for stop-out must be granted by the OTA Department. A student may request only one stop-out period during their completion of the OTA program.

*If a student is requesting a stop-out, they must adhere to the following procedure:*

1. The student must complete the stop-out form obtained from the program director.

2. Stop-out paperwork must have the advisor and program director's signatures.
3. Stop-out paperwork must be finalized during the semester prior to the stop-out.
4. An expected return date must be specified on the stop-out form.
5. A student must inform the OTA program director of their intent to return for the fall semester by March 1 and by October 1 for the spring semester.
6. If stop-out time exceeds the agreed upon amount of time, reapplication to the OTA program may be necessary. The stop-out cannot be longer than one year.
7. If a student stops-out from all OTA courses after the add/drop date in the Union College calendar, the semester will count as one course attempt.
8. A student must complete the OTA program within the 4-year limit (see time frame for completion).
9. Following the stop-out, validation of clinical skills and knowledge content mastery may be required through remediation and competency check activities at the discretion of the OTA program faculty.
10. Return to the OTA program is contingent on availability of class and fieldwork space.

## ACADEMIC PETITION

*Petitions must comply with the following procedures:*

- The academic petition form must be completed by the student and include all appropriate signatures as indicated below.
- Petitions related to academic issues in the OTA program will require the academic advisor's signature and a *recommended* or *not recommended* statement. These petitions will be given to the OTA program director.
- Petitions related to academic issues or a course outside of the OTA program require signatures along with *recommended* or *not recommended* comments from each of the following:
  - The faculty advisor
  - The OTA program director
  - The program director of the program that offers the course.
- The OTA program director may refer some petitions to the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee for a decision.
- Expediency of action on a petition will be indicated by the time-sensitivity nature of the petition request. Some petitions will require an immediate action, others can wait until a scheduled meeting time. The student will be notified of an expected time frame for a decision.

## GRADUATION

*The candidate for graduation from the OTA program at Union College must meet the following minimum requirements:*

- All policies for graduation listed in the Union College Bulletin.
- OTA program academic requirements specified in the Union College Bulletin.

- A cumulative GPA of 2.50 or higher.
- All progression requirements as specified in the Union College Bulletin.
- Graduates must complete all OTAC courses as well as all required general education requirements per Union College's policy for graduating with an associate's degree.

## LATE WORK

Assignments need to be submitted on the due date indicated in the syllabus or as assigned by the instructor. It is your responsibility to keep track of assignment due dates. Out of fairness to those students who manage to meet deadlines, your instructor **WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS**. Exceptions may be granted if you have requested an extension to submit a late assignment **before** missing the deadline, or you experience a personal emergency such as acute illness or a death in the family, and your instructor approves the reason for it. Late assignments accepted by the instructor will have a 20% deduction and will only be accepted up to one week after the due date. The same policy holds true for missed exams, quizzes and practical exams.

## EXAMINATIONS

- Students are expected to follow all expectations for Academic Integrity while completing all OTA program examinations.
- Faculty may implement specific exam policies at their discretion. These policies may include, but are not limited to, seating arrangements, set up of the classroom, use of LockDown Browser, etc.
- Academic Integrity violations during completion of examinations will be addressed via the OTA Program Disciplinary Policy.

## PRACTICAL EXAM & COMPETENCY POLICY

This fall semester of the OTA program emphasizes intervention and treatment techniques to prepare students for Level II Fieldwork. Students will be assessed using a variety of skills checks, competencies, and practical exams in each class, in order to demonstrate their competence in patient interactions, safety, and intervention techniques. Students must earn a minimum of a C+ grade on each of these assessments. Students who do not achieve this minimum grade, or who demonstrate significant safety or professional behavior concerns, may be asked to participate in remediation activities at the discretion of faculty. Students must complete any assigned remediation and demonstrate competence prior to proceeding to Level II Fieldwork in the spring.

## GRADING AND EXTRA CREDIT

| Points | Percentage | Letter Grade |
|--------|------------|--------------|
| 4.0    | 94-100%    | A            |
| 3.67   | 91-93%     | A-           |
| 3.33   | 88-90%     | B+           |
| 3.0    | 85-87%     | B            |
| 2.67   | 82-84%     | B-           |
| 2.33   | 79-81%     | C+           |
| 2.0    | 76-78%     | C            |

There may be extra credit opportunities available within a course. The professor will inform students about these opportunities when they are available. DO NOT depend on extra credit to redeem your grade in any OTA course, as extra credit opportunities are generally minimal and are offered only at the discretion of the course instructor.

## STUDIO FOR WRITING AND SPEAKING

The Studio for Writing and Speaking located in the library (room 243) is staffed by peer consultants who can assist you with any part of the writing and speaking process—from brainstorming to final drafts to presentation. The consultants' goal is to empower you, so they will help you compose and revise your work rather than simply correct it for you. You can schedule an appointment through Moodle or just walk in for a session. For hours and scheduling information, go to [www.ucollege.edu/humanities/thestudio](http://www.ucollege.edu/humanities/thestudio).

## THE STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER AND REFERRAL POLICY

Student Success has offices located in the library and a multitude of services to help you succeed. These include: Academic Advising, a Career Center, Life Coaching, Testing, Tutoring and Disability Services. Visit <https://ucollege.edu/success> for more information.

You are welcome to seek services on your own. Faculty may also recommend that you do so if you are failing exams, assignments or if there has been a change in your academic standing.

If a student fails an exam or other assignment in a course, the faculty member may require the student to:

1. attend any review sessions offered
2. complete the formal referral process to the Union College Student Success Center based on academic performance, and/or
3. additional learning opportunities may also be encouraged or required.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**Disability Information and Access (DIA) – Your access is our focus** Teaching, Learning, Collaborating (TLC) is an initiative through DIA to create partnerships for an accessible college environment. One important step in this partnership includes providing access for students with disabilities through accommodations or strategies. If you would like to inquire more about establishing accommodations for a disability please call 402.486.2600, ext. 2080 or Email: [debbie.forsheesweeney@ucollege.edu](mailto:debbie.forsheesweeney@ucollege.edu).

## PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Professional behavior is at the center of student success. As members of a health profession, occupational therapy assistants have a responsibility to many individuals including, but not limited to, the consumer, employer, community, coworkers, and society. For success in the profession, OTAs must demonstrate professional behavior at all times. Additionally, you must take responsibility for your own actions and your own learning.

Accordingly, you will receive a professional behavior grade for 5-10% of each class grade, which will be based upon the following behaviors:

- Shows respect for others
- Takes initiative
- Is cooperative with others
- Is adaptable
- Demonstrates good communication skills
- Functions successfully in stressful situations
- Demonstrates assertiveness
- Has good work habits; e.g., neatness, organization and attention to detail
- Demonstrates punctuality
- Demonstrates dependability
- Demonstrates responsibility for own actions
- Demonstrates responsibility for own learning

Students are required to participate in professional behavior conferences each semester, which includes completion of a self-assessment and meeting with faculty to discuss professional behavior grades.



## ATTENDANCE

### Class

Attendance during class is a component of professional behavior and will be monitored. Students are responsible for notifying the instructor prior to an absence and self-initiating review of all material, announcements, or class activities missed. Excused absences must be approved by the instructor prior to the absence. Students may receive a maximum of two excused absences per semester. Work will not be considered an approved excused absence. An excused absence beyond this maximum, or any unexcused absences, will result in enforcement of the disciplinary policy. Requests for virtual class attendance will not be approved. ZOOM will not be offered as an alternative to in-person attendance. Regular and timely class attendance is also a required component assessed through professional behavior grades for each course.

### Examinations

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with course instructors if they will not be present for an exam. In order to make up an exam at a later time, students must communicate with the instructor prior to missing the exam and obtain approval of an excused absence. Make-up exams must be scheduled in collaboration with the instructor and must be completed within one week of the originally scheduled exam. Make-up exams may not be offered for absences that are considered “unexcused”.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CODE OF ETHICS

As an OTA student, you are a representative of the OT profession and are expected to demonstrate the highest level of ethical behavior at all times. This includes interactions not only with clients and other health care professionals, but also with other co-workers, supervisors, students, educators, and administrators both in and out of the school setting. The AOTA has outlined the following six principles to be adhered to by all professionals and pre-professionals. OTA students at Union College are accountable to The Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics as authored by the AOTA Ethics Commission at all times throughout the program (AOTA, 2020).

**Principle 1 – Beneficence:** Occupational therapy personnel shall demonstrate a concern for the well-being and safety of the recipients of their services.

**Principle 2 – Non-maleficence:** Occupational therapy personnel shall refrain from actions that cause harm.

**Principle 3 – Autonomy:** Occupational therapy personnel shall respect the right of the individual to self-determination, privacy, confidentiality, and consent.

**Principle 4 – Justice:** Occupational therapy personnel shall promote fairness and objectivity in the provision of occupational therapy services.



**Principle 5 – Veracity:** Occupational therapy personnel shall provide comprehensive, accurate, and objective information when representing the profession.

**Principle 6 – Fidelity:** Occupational therapy personnel shall treat clients, colleagues, and other professionals with respect, fairness, and integrity.

The complete AOTA Code of Ethics can be accessed at:

<https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Ethics.aspx>

Ethics are developed in our OTA program by way of the program expectations regarding personal and professional behavior. These principles permeate the program in all aspects of being a student and are explored throughout the entire curriculum. Mentoring and developing these qualities during the program will produce practitioners that carry these principles into the workforce.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**When using social media, students are expected to act with courtesy and respect.** The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) applies to the use of social media too. HIPAA is a law that mandates patient confidentiality. This law is strictly enforced, and penalties are attached for non-adherence. Compliance and adherence by Union College OTA students is mandatory. Regardless of where or when students make use of these media, students are responsible for the content they post or promote. No student shall abuse or violate confidentiality of any member of the faculty, staff, student body, or off campus activity (fieldwork). Use of social media is prevalent among students. **Students should be aware that unwise or inappropriate use of social media can negatively impact educational and career opportunities.** Using social media to discuss any information regarding patients or testing content will not be tolerated in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Union College. Your program involves confidential information, do not disclose this information. Any student, acting individually or in concert with others, who violates any part of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary procedures including suspension or expulsion from the OTA Program. Any and all personal client information with which the student is entrusted must be maintained in a confidential manner at all times.

To avoid these negative impacts, students should consider the following:

- Post content that reflects positively on you and the College. Be aware not only of the content that you post, but of any content that you host (e.g., comments posted by others on your site). Content you host can have the same effect as content you post.
- Though you may only intend a small group to see what you post, a much larger group may actually see your post. Be aware that your statements may be offensive to others, including classmates or faculty members who may read what you post.
- Employers and others may use social media to evaluate applicants. Choosing to post distasteful, immature, or offensive content may eliminate job or other opportunities.
- Once you have posted something via social media, it is out of your control. Others may see it, repost it, save it, forward it to others, etc. Retracting content after you have posted it is practically impossible.

- If you post content concerning the College, make it clear that you do not represent the College and that the content you are posting does not represent the views of the College.
- Make sure the content you post is in harmony with the ethical or other codes of the OTA program.
- A cohort closed group page may be established by the program director or academic fieldwork coordinator. You are encouraged to use this page for program related postings.

## PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE/DRESS CODE

The personal appearance of individuals reflects the standards and level of professionalism of both Union College and the profession of occupational therapy. It is important for students to dress professionally when in settings where clients, colleagues, and the general public form an impression of OT based upon the student's appearance and/or conduct. Professional dress also conveys confidence and competence. Students should maintain a professional appearance in all OTA program classes. Additional professional dress and dress code expectations may be required for events, presentations, and fieldwork during the program.

Fieldwork sites may require a specific dress code, and students will be expected to comply with the policies of that site. Inappropriate dress is unacceptable and may result in being sent home from fieldwork. It may also impact final grade. See fieldwork manual for additional information.

With the goal of ensuring the professional image of the Union College OTA Program, Union College, and the OT profession, Union College OTA students are required to wear the following uniform in fieldwork, practical exams, presentations, field trips and other activities at the discretion of faculty. The OTA program reserves the right to determine what is appropriate and may require students to make changes as necessary to ensure compliance with Union College OTA Program expectations.

### **Approved Professional Uniform for the Union College OTA Program:**

The approved uniform for Union College OTA students consists of the following:

- Approved scrub uniform top with Union College logo and Occupational Therapy Assistant embroidered on the left chest
- Approved scrub pants
- Union College OTA program picture identification name badge.
- Shoes must be predominately black, low-heel, non-skid, closed-toe and clean.
  
- Approved polo shirt with Union College logo and Occupational Therapy Assistant embroidered on the left chest
- Khaki or black slacks (cannot be leggings, jeggings, jeans or similar type of pants)
- If students choose to wear a shirt underneath the approved scrub top or polo, it must be all black with no logos or print.

### **Purchase Requirements for Professional Uniform:**

Each student is required to purchase:

- One approved scrub top\*
- One pair of approved scrub pants\*
- One polo shirt\*

*\*These uniforms must be purchased through the OTA program approved vendor.*

### **Other Expectations Regarding Dress Code:**

Other expectations required of Union College OTA students and consistent with the professional image of OT include the following:

- Clothing should fit appropriately.
- Clothing must be clean, ironed, and in good condition (free of tears, holes, stains, dirt, and patches).
- Undergarments and skin must not be visible when reaching, bending, squatting or stooping.
- Good personal hygiene is required at all times, including use of antiperspirants, however products which generate allergens such as deodorants, colognes and perfumes must be avoided.
- Nails should be clean and well-trimmed. Neutral nail polish without chips is acceptable at the discretion of the fieldwork/lab instructor. Acrylic nails, gel dip, and shellac are not acceptable in fieldwork/lab facilities as mandated by Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- Jewelry worn must be acceptable in regard to safety, infection control, and professional appearances.
- Tattoos deemed as inappropriate, vulgar, or obscene must be covered.
- Professional uniform or business attire should be worn when attending meetings, making presentations, or otherwise representing the Union College OTA Program.
- The Union College OTA Program uniform should be worn for Union College fieldwork learning activities and OTA program-sponsored events only. You must obtain permission from the OTA Program Director prior to wearing the uniform for another cause.

## **INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP**

Union College adheres to high academic and ethical standards. Inspired by the values of both the Christian and the scholar, its faculty, staff, and students commit to exhibit integrity and truth in all academic endeavors. Thus, scholarly endeavors carry the broad expectation that they have been accomplished with honesty, whether by professors in research and developing coursework or by students preparing assignments and taking examinations.

Among other examples, dishonest conduct by students includes cheating on examinations and the submission of assignments that violate expected standards of integrity. Unauthorized multiple submissions, excessive revision by someone else, unauthorized collaboration, forged signatures, plagiarism, misrepresented sources, misused copyrighted material, and the fabrication or

Unauthorized use of data all constitute violations of academic integrity. In addition to honesty in creating their own work, students should refrain from suspicious behavior themselves and deny others the opportunity to use their works in an unethical manner. Similarly, Union College expects professors to exhibit trustworthiness in their work, both in and out of the classroom, and to commit to working in redemptive ways with students regarding academic honesty.

Academic integrity violations range from incidental to significant to egregious. Descriptions of each level of violation, the processes and the corresponding consequences are explained in greater detail in the Academic Integrity Policy on the Academic Administration section of the Union College website (<https://ucollege.edu/consumer-information>).

The consequences of violating integrity can range from remediation to receipt of a failing grade for an assignment to dismissal from the course and even expulsion from the college.

A student who feels unjustly charged with misconduct after the appropriate process should appeal to the Vice President for Academic Administration, and if still not satisfied then to the president. Reports of academic integrity violations and their consequences are maintained by the office of Academic Administration, and serious violations may be noted in a student's permanent academic record as explained in the Academic Integrity Policy on the website.

## COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES

Refer to the Union College Library Copyright resources available on the Union College Library website.

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Although our goal is to not implement disciplinary actions, discipline is necessary at times to ensure safe practice and to promote a positive learning environment. The disciplinary process is designed to be a feedback mechanism for students to help them identify and correct behaviors and promote a greater level of professionalism in the student.

The disciplinary process includes four levels. Generally, levels are administered sequentially, however the process can begin at any level depending on the infraction. The four levels are:

### Level I Documentation

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Level II  | Warning   |
| Level III | Probation |
| Level IV  | Dismissal |

The disciplinary process is initiated when a student demonstrates unacceptable behavior that violates the policies of Union College and/or the OTA program. Documentation from the disciplinary process is cumulative and will remain in the student's file throughout the program. **Documentation in the disciplinary process includes:**

- A thorough description of the incident and/or behavior.
- Action steps taken (what level of discipline).
- Future actions if the behavior is exhibited again in the future.
- Goals for the student to demonstrate improvement.
- The student's response to the behavior and discipline process.
- Signatures of the student, director, and the date.

### **Level I – Documentation**

Behaviors included, but not limited to are:

- Late assignments
- Failure to prepare adequately for lab or fieldwork experiences
- Neglecting an appointment
- Any unexcused tardiness (including lack of arranging for an excused tardy)
- Any unexcused absence (including lack of arranging for an excused absence)\*
- An excused absence beyond the maximum 2 per semester allowed
- Poor attitude related to learning (including being on phone, computer, or engaged in non-class related activities during class)
- Disruptive behavior
- Violation of dress code

*\*This behavior may place the student immediately at a Level II on the disciplinary process.*

### **Level II – Warning**

Behaviors included, but not limited to are:

- Amassing three separate incidents of Level I documentation.
- Any unexcused absence from class or fieldwork – or a lack of arranging for an excused absence.
- An excused absence for a student who has already reached a Level I infraction of this policy
- Breaching confidentiality\*
- Dishonesty of any kind\*
- Unsafe practices in class, lab, or fieldwork\*

*\*These behaviors may result in immediate placement in Level III or IV with resultant dismissal from the program.*

### **Level III – Probation**

Behaviors included, but not limited to are:

- Amassing two separate incidents of Level I documentation after a Level II warning.
- Any unexcused absence from class or fieldwork – or a lack of arranging for an excused absence after a Level II warning
- An excused absence for a student who has already reached a Level II infraction of this policy
- Breaching confidentiality\*
- Dishonesty of any kind\*

- Unsafe practices in class, lab, or fieldwork\*

*\*These behaviors may result in immediate placement at a Level IV.*

#### **Level IV – Dismissal**

Behaviors included, but not limited to are:

- Any documentation for any Level I or II violation after Level III discipline
- Breaching confidentiality
- Dishonesty of any kind
- Unsafe practices in class, lab, or fieldwork

Faculty will determine appropriate discipline in conjunction with the program director. After a decision has been made, the student will be notified of the decision via written communication and a conference with the faculty member, student, and program director, if needed. If a student receives a Level III or IV discipline, the student will be notified via written communication and a meeting with the program director.

### **SUSPENSION**

Students may be suspended from the OTA program only or in conjunction with a suspension from Union College. Suspensions are utilized if the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee determines that additional time is necessary to facilitate the student's long-term success in the OTA program. Following completion of the remedial requirements during suspension as determined by the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee and Union College, the college and committee will determine if re-entry into the college and/or OTA program is allowed.

### **TERMINATION**

Students may be terminated from the OTA program only or in conjunction with an expulsion from Union College. A student may be terminated from the OTA program for a variety of academic and non-academic reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Academic probation for a maximum of one school semester without progress toward resolution of the problem.
- Non-academic probation for a maximum of one school semester without significant improvement or resolution of the problem.
- Exhibition of unsafe behavior unchanged by remedial activities. There are circumstances in which an immediate decision must be made by the involved faculty member and/or the OTA Program Director and/or the Academic Dean to suspend the student from attending fieldwork experiences or the course. Based on the discretion of the OTA Program Director and/or Academic Dean, the student may also be suspended or terminated from the OTA program.

- Failure to matriculate in the OTA program curriculum according to the progression and graduation policies of the OTA Student Handbook.

#### **Process for Determination of Termination**

- The student will be notified when termination is being considered for his/her status in the OTA program.
- The student has the right to present his/her perspective in writing and/or in person to the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee. The student also has the right to bring a support person (not legal counsel) when presenting his/her perspective.
- A decision regarding continuation or termination shall be communicated to the student verbally and in writing as soon as possible after the decision is made.
- When a student is terminated or withdraws voluntarily from the OTA program, the OTA academic advisor or OTA Program Director will complete an Exit Form.
- All students have the right to due process following the Guidelines for Resolving Problems referenced in the OTA Student Handbook. The grievance policy of Union College is published in the official college bulletin.

#### **Process for Determination of Potential for Readmission**

- Students who are dismissed from the OTA program may apply for readmission to the program within the next available admission cycle in the fall semester, or any subsequent admission cycles. Students who apply for re-admission will complete requirements and participate in all aspects of the OTA program application process including the application, observation hours, resume, essay, and interview. Students may be offered an alternative essay prompt to describe their plans for success if admitted to the program a second time.
- The OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee will review the application as well as performance in previous OTA courses to make decisions based on the applicant's potential for success in the OTA program and the OTA profession. Readmission is **not** guaranteed. Students granted readmission after being terminated from the program may be placed on academic and/or nonacademic probation at the discretion of the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee.
- Students readmitted on probation are allowed a total of one semester of academic probation or one semester of non-academic probation. Any disciplinary action resulting in the additional need for academic or non-academic probation following the first readmission semester will result in final termination from the program.
- Students who have been dismissed from the program a second time are not eligible for further readmission. The OTA Program reserves the right to make final determinations about student admission based on student's academic and professional performance.

### **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

*Criteria for Academic Probation in the OTA program includes any or all of the following:*

- Cumulative GPA below 2.50
- OTA GPA below 2.50
- Failed OTA course



*Process:*

- a) Following an end of semester review by the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee, the student will be notified in writing by the chair of the committee if he/she is being placed on, continued on, or taken off of academic probation. To support potential for academic success, students on probation may be required to complete additional remediation or restrict the number of course credit hours taken during the semester. A recommendation may also be made for students on probation to reduce work hours and/or involvement in extracurricular activities.
- b) After final grades are issued each semester, the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee will review the student's academic file to determine if the student should be removed from probation, given additional remedial measures, remain on probation, and/or be terminated from the OTA program.
- c) After the first probationary semester, the student must either be eligible to return to good and regular standing (cumulative GPA is 2.50 or higher), or must demonstrate strong potential as determined by the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee, and/or show evidence of significant progress to continue on probation.
- d) If a student is placed on academic probation before mid-term, that semester will be counted as the first semester of academic probation. If a student is placed on academic probation after mid-term, the next semester will be counted as the first semester of academic probation.

## **NON-ACADEMIC PROBATION**

The decision of whether to place a student on non-academic probation or to ask the student to withdraw from the program for non-academic reasons requires the exercise of wisdom and judgment of the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee.

- A student may be placed on non-academic probation for a wide variety of unprofessional behaviors or behaviors that do not align with the Christian/Professional Values of the OTA program and Union College.
- Criteria for non-academic probation includes any of the following:
  - a. Behavior that places the patient, student, faculty, peers, or staff in either physical or emotional jeopardy. Physical jeopardy is the risk of causing harm. Emotional jeopardy means that the student creates an environment of anxiety or distress which puts themselves and/or others at risk for emotional or physiological harm. These behaviors may be an occurrence or pattern of behavior involving unacceptable risk.
  - b. Conviction of a misdemeanor or felony while enrolled in the OTA program.
  - c. Failure to follow the policies of the OTA Student Handbook.
- Process:
  - a. The student will be notified in writing by the chair of the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee if he/she is being placed on or taken off of non-academic probation.
  - b. After final grades are issued each semester, the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee will review the student's academic file to determine if the



student should be removed from probation, given additional remedial measures, remain on probation, and/or be terminated from the OTA program.

- c. OTA students may be on non-academic probation for a total of one semester. If a student is placed on non-academic probation before mid-term, that semester will be counted as the first semester of nonacademic probation. If a student is placed on non-academic probation after mid-term, the next semester will be counted as the first semester of non-academic probation.
- d. If a student is placed on non-academic probation prior to the final, fieldwork semester of the program, they may be required to complete remedial activities at the discretion of the faculty. Review of the student's remedial performance will be reviewed by the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee to determine approval for advancement to fieldwork. If a student's remedial performance is not deemed satisfactory, the committee will develop an action plan for next steps with the student. Students may be required to delay participation in Level II fieldwork until the action plan is completed.

## **GUIDELINES FOR RESOLVING PROBLEMS/CHAIN OF COMMAND**

*The academic chain of command is in this order:*

1. Fieldwork Educator (if a fieldwork issue)
2. Course Instructor
3. OTA Program Director
4. Academic Dean
5. Vice President for Academic Administration
6. President
7. Board of Trustees

## **GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

Students who believe that unfair or unjust action has been taken are expected to utilize the following grievance procedure:

1. The student will discuss the problem with the course instructor and attempt to solve the issue.
2. If the outcome from the course instructor is unsatisfactory, the OTA Program Director will discuss the problem with those involved (within three working days) to facilitate resolution of the problem.
3. If the outcome is still considered to be unsatisfactory, the Academic Dean will discuss the problem with those involved (within three working days) to facilitate resolution of the problem.
4. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student and instructor will present a description of the problem in writing to the appropriate Vice-President (academic or student

life) for consideration and mediation.

5. If resolution of the problem is not made, a hearing by the College Grievance Committee may be requested through the president's office.

### Grievance Process for Union College

The OTA program follows the Union College Grievance Process as outlined in the official Union College Bulletin.

## TRANSPORTATION

Students must have reliable transportation. The OTA program utilizes field trips, community projects, and fieldwork experiences which the student must reliably be able to get to. You may be able to travel with another student who has transportation, however, we cannot guarantee this. Students who transport other students are responsible for maintaining their own adequate insurance coverage and meeting the policies of Union College regarding student drivers detailed on the college website. If required to carpool, each student must sign the *Education and Service Trip Consent* form available on the Union College website.

During the last semester of the program, students are completing full-time fieldwork for two eight-week sessions. Students will be expected to follow the schedule of the fieldwork educator and will not be able to rely on other students for transportation. Students should expect to be required to commute up to one hour for local fieldwork placements and are responsible for arranging adequate transportation to meet this requirement.

Students and faculty are **NEVER** allowed to transport clients in their car.

## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

It is recognized that students often need to be employed. However, because of the academic rigor of the OTA program, students must balance their academic, work and personal responsibilities. In addition, educational requirements must take priority. Students are responsible for adjusting their work hours and otherwise modifying their workload to ensure that work does not negatively impact their academic standing. Work will not be an approved absence for any OTA program courses, fieldwork, or other required activities.

## PERSONAL COMPUTER REQUIREMENT

The OTA Program utilizes computerized testing to prepare students for the NBCOT licensure examination. Students may also choose to utilize textbooks in an online format both in class, lab,

and fieldwork, and will need to utilize Microsoft Office and online resources for many assignments. Students are required to own a personal laptop computer and the OTA department recommends a Windows-based computer. Macs are acceptable, but may be less compatible with some campus technology.

The OTA Program also includes one course provided through a primarily online format in the final semester. Students will be responsible for accessing course information through the Course Management System and their Union College email.

Microsoft Office will be required in order to submit assignments in approved formats [Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.]

Microsoft offers up to five free licenses (Mac or PC) for faculty, staff, and students. Because Union College has "purchased Office organization-wide for all faculty/staff via the Microsoft Volume Licensing program," we qualify. To get the five free copies of Microsoft Office, first you will have to request a Union College email address in the Union College portal. Once you have been issued a Union College email address, go to the following link and click the green button that says "Find out if you're eligible". You will need to enter your full "xxxxxx@ucollege.edu" email address on the next page: <https://products.office.com/en-us/student/office-ineducation?tab=teachers>

## STUDENT E-MAIL

The Union College issued email address of `firstname.lastname@ucollege.edu` will be the primary email address used by the OTA program for academic purposes. A student may choose to forward the email from that account into a personal account of the student's choice. However, the student is responsible for all communication sent to the Union College issued email account. All OTA students are required to check email daily for communication.

## COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Canvas, the Union College Course Management System, is utilized as the primary form of communication in the OTA program. All students are required to have access to Canvas and are required to check it daily for updates and resources. Contact Information Services (IS) for assistance as needed.

## STUDENT RECORDS

Records are maintained in the OTA department on applicants, current students, former students who did not graduate, and graduates.

**The purposes for maintaining these records are the following:**

- Monitor progress through the OTA program.
- Serve as a source of data for program evaluation.

- Supply information for recommendations to prospective employers or other educational institutions.
- Provide a source of information for advising the student.
- Maintain a record of communications and transactions between the OTA department and the student.
- Serve the legal purpose of supporting decisions made regarding the student.

**Records are governed by the following policies:**

- Continuous and unrestricted access to records is limited to OTA faculty and administrative staff having official business concerning the individual names in the record.
- The subject of the record, once admitted to the program, may review the record upon written request to the OTA Program Director.
- The subject of the record may not deface, destroy, or remove any materials from the record but may place documents or statements in the record.
- The subject of the record may obtain copies of material(s) in the record upon payment of the photocopying fee.
- Records of students currently enrolled or those who have been enrolled in OTA courses may contain information such as application materials, transcripts of grades (unofficial), correspondence between the OTA program and the student, incident forms, petitions to the OTA program and actions taken on the petitions, proficiency examination results, and fieldwork evaluations.
- A paper and/or electronic copy of each graduate's academic file will be kept for fifteen years to be used as a reference on request of the graduate to a potential employer or an educational institution.

The Union College OTA Program adheres to standards set by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students' written consent will be required to release any educational information or student records.

## **CHILDREN IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

As an institution of higher education, the Union College OTA program is committed to developing student excellence and promoting an educational environment conducive to learning. The faculty understands that balancing school, work, and family can present challenges to parents particularly when it comes to childcare. However, the presence of children in class, lab, and fieldwork activities can create dilemmas in confidentiality, disruption, appropriateness, and safety. To preserve a proper learning environment, the division prohibits the presence of children in class, lab, and fieldwork activities, unless otherwise indicated or approved by course faculty. It is the responsibility of the student to make proper childcare arrangements that will enable him/her to meet the obligations of the OTA program.

## **USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices are not to be utilized during class or fieldwork times in order to ensure professionalism and adequate participation from the student. Electronic devices should be kept off or silenced during class unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor, or they are utilized for approved in-class activities. Electronic devices should not be utilized during exams, simulations, or fieldwork and additional consequences may apply if students do not comply with this policy.

## OFF HOURS OTA SPACE POLICY

The Union College OTA program space includes 4 faculty offices, 1 classroom, 1 lab and a common area for individual and group study use. The classroom, lab and common area are open from 9-5:00 M-F for student use with exceptions of class time and other special events. After hours, the Margaret Hyde OTA Commons area is available for student study and skill practice; classroom and lab are not available unless arrangements are made with or initiated by faculty. Whenever using any part of OTA program space, students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and putting things away.

## HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Labor describes the following skills and abilities necessary to fulfill the job requirements of an occupational therapy assistant. Students must be able to demonstrate:

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- **Time Management** — Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- **Writing** — Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- **Service Orientation** — Actively looking for ways to help people.
- **Judgment and Decision Making** — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- **Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

- **Instructing** — Teaching others how to do something.
- **Active Learning** — Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
- **Complex Problem Solving** — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- **Persuasion** — Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
- **Systems Analysis** — Determining how a system should work and how changes in conditions, operations, and the environment will affect outcomes.
- **Problem Sensitivity** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
- **Near Vision** — The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
- **Information Ordering** — The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
- **Deductive Reasoning** — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- **Inductive Reasoning** — The ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
- **Selective Attention** — The ability to concentrate on a task over a period of time without being distracted.
- **Category Flexibility** — The ability to generate or use different sets of rules for combining or grouping things in different ways.
- **Finger Dexterity** — The ability to make precisely coordinated movements of the fingers of one or both hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble very small objects.
- **Fluency of Ideas** — The ability to come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).
- **Originality** — The ability to come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.
- **Static Strength** — The ability to exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.
- **Time Sharing** — The ability to shift back and forth between two or more activities or sources of information (such as speech, sounds, touch, or other sources).
- **Dynamic strength** — The ability to use lower back and abdominal muscles repeatedly or continuously; and to make fast, repeated movement of the fingers, hand and wrist with precision. OTAs are expected to manage up to 50 lbs. for up to 33% of the workday, up to 25 lbs. for up to 66% of the workday and up to 10 lb. for up to 100% of the workday.

## SAFE AND UNSAFE PRACTICE DEFINITIONS

### Safe Clinical Practice

Students are expected to

- demonstrate growth in clinical practice through application of knowledge and skills from previous and concurrent courses;
- develop growth in clinical practice as they progress through courses;
- meet clinical expectations outlined in the final clinical evaluation tools; and
- prepare for clinical practice in order to provide safe, competent care.

### Unsafe Clinical Practice

This is defined as any behavior that places the patient or staff in either physical or emotional jeopardy. Physical jeopardy is the risk of causing harm. Emotional jeopardy means that the student creates an environment of anxiety or distress which puts the patient, family, or staff at risk for emotional or physiological harm. Unsafe clinical practice is an occurrence or pattern of behavior involving unacceptable risk.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

All students in the OTA Program must carry a personal health insurance policy. Student health insurance and temporary health insurance are available through multiple insurance companies. Some fieldwork sites may also specify personal health insurance as a requirement for students completing a fieldwork there. Students who complete fieldwork at a site that requires student health insurance must provide proof of health insurance to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and the site.

## MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

Students are responsible for their own actions within the framework of their education and experience. Professional liability insurance is carried by Union College for OTA students while they are engaged in OTA fieldwork activities required by the college. OTA students may also carry their own professional coverage if they so choose. Students are responsible for their own professional liability insurance if they perform any non-Union College affiliated OTA activities.

## CASTLEBRANCH

Students are required to be current with all immunization requirements and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification throughout the duration of the OTA program. Detailed information about these requirements can be found in the Immunizations and CPR policies in the OTA Handbook, as well as in the Fieldwork Manual. Students are expected to maintain current records of immunizations and CPR certification through an OTA program contracted agency, CastleBranch. Students are expected to review and update their profile prior to the beginning of classes each semester. Failure to comply with requirements prior to fieldwork will result in an unexcused



fieldwork absence with referral to the OTA Admissions and Academic Advisement Committee for continuation in the course. Likewise, if any of these expire during the semester, the student is responsible for completing the requirements prior to the expiration date and providing documentation through [www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com).

## BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN

All students are required to undergo a criminal background check and drug screen prior to participation in fieldwork components of the OTA program. The initial criminal background check and drug screen are paid by the student as a component of the confirmation fee. All costs associated with background checks or drug screens required by the OTA program throughout the student's duration in the program will be the responsibility of the student. The student must further agree that all health and background results are available to the program and the clinical sites associated with the program as requested.

Both the criminal background check and drug screen must be completed satisfactorily as determined by the Union College OTA program in order to participate in fieldwork. Students with unsatisfactory results on a background check and/or drug screen may be prohibited from participating in fieldwork. Students unable to complete fieldwork requirements will be terminated from the program. **See Fieldwork Manual for complete details regarding background check and drug screen policies.**

## IMMUNIZATIONS

OTA students are expected to comply with the minimum immunization guidelines established by the Union College OTA program in collaboration with local healthcare facilities. Immunization requirements are mandatory for participation in fieldwork. Students are responsible for obtaining required immunizations and for maintaining current immunization records within Castlebranch. **See Fieldwork Manual for details of immunization requirements.**

*Request for exemptions:*

- **Medical Exemption** – A student may request an exemption from an immunization requirement for medical reasons when applicable. The student should prepare a letter describing the reasons for their request for an exemption, including a letter from the primary healthcare provider with appropriate documentation regarding the medical reasons for delaying a diagnostic health test or immunization. The student's letter, the provider's letter, and appropriate documentation should be submitted to the OTA Program Director.
- Depending on verbal and written communications with a fieldwork agency, the student may or may not be able to participate at a fieldwork site. Patients, families, and healthcare personnel have greater risk for exposure to disease when students have not been vaccinated or screened for disease, and many healthcare facilities have strict immunization requirements in order to protect the vulnerable populations they serve. An agency may permit a student to participate in clinical, but the agency may require additional personal



protective equipment, such as wearing a facemask when the student is present in patient-care areas. An agency may also restrict a student from participating in a fieldwork at their site if they do not meet immunization requirements. If a student is unable to meet the requirements specified by a fieldwork site, the student may be unable to successfully complete the requirements of the course, resulting in a course failure and inability to complete the OTA curriculum.

## **CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR) CERTIFICATION**

All students are required to maintain current American Heart Association HeartCode BLS Provider CPR certification as required by partner fieldwork facilities. Students are responsible for documentation of this requirement on Castlebranch.

## **CHEMICALLY IMPAIRED STUDENT**

All students are expected to comply with Union College drug and alcohol policies. OTA students involved in fieldwork activities must uphold the standards of the occupational therapy profession to ensure safe and effective care to their patients. Because an impaired OTA student may have altered judgment and skills, appropriate management of abuse and addiction is critical for OTA education and practice. Fieldwork agencies affiliated with Union College also have drug and alcohol policies and require that OTA students comply with their drug testing policies in a similar manner as their employees. This policy is in addition to any drug and alcohol testing policies and procedures at the fieldwork sites, and while students are engaging in fieldwork activities, the drug and alcohol testing policies and procedures of the fieldwork site will govern.

The testing of OTA students will be based on “reasonable suspicion” of drug or alcohol use. Reasonably suspicious behavior includes conduct that prevents the student from performing essential functions of the student role that could pose a direct threat to the safety of others. The instructor, supervisor, or designee bases reasonable suspicion of the use of alcohol or drugs on the behavior, speech, body odor, or appearance of a student. Validation of reasonable suspicion from another instructor or co-assigned therapist is encouraged. If drug or alcohol use is suspected, the student will be removed from the fieldwork activity and contact will be made with the OTA Program Director or Academic Dean, as well as the Union College Vice President for Student Services and appropriate Head Dean if the student is a dorm resident. If a drug and alcohol test is required according to the Union College policy, it is conducted at the student’s expense. The student will be suspended from fieldwork activities until results of drug and alcohol testing are available and pending recommendations have been made by Union College and the Division of OTA Admissions and Academic Evaluation Committee.

## **UNION COLLEGE CAMPUS SECURITY ALERTS AND EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS**

In the case of an emergency, participating faculty and students will receive a text message and/or email from Information Systems (IS) notifying them of correct procedures. Students and faculty are expected to follow Union College guidelines to maintain safety.

**Union College Safety and Security Reference Numbers:**

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Security, Fire, Medical Emergency          | 911                 |
| On-Campus Emergency                        | 911 or 402.486.2911 |
| Non-Emergency                              | 402.486.2911        |
| Campus Safety Office during business hours | 402.486.2528        |

**Note:** Dialing 911 from any campus phone connects the caller with the Lincoln Police Department.

Students who would like a security escort while on campus can call 402.486.2911.

**ADVERSE WEATHER**

During adverse weather, students are notified by the college via text, email, website, social media and TV regarding weather related cancellations and delays. The OTA Program classes and other required activities will follow the college determinations of cancellations related to weather.

Students who are completing Level II Fieldwork are responsible for following their site's policies related to adverse weather. Students should not expect a cancellation and should work with their site to determine the appropriate attendance expectations. Fieldwork experiences will not follow the college's academic calendar for schedule or weather-related cancellations.