

Occupational Therapy Assistant Student Handbook

SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



2024-2025 Academic Year
SLCC | OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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Introduction

Overview of the Student Handbook

Welcome to the Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program. The Student Handbook provides guidelines for students within our program. These guidelines are aimed to help students succeed by clearly establishing our expectations. Broader information about the department and school is in the SLCC Program Handbook. Students in the SLCC OTA program are responsible for the information in the Student Handbook and Program Handbook. Please reach out to any of the faculty in the OTA program with any questions.

Our Expectations of Students

The expectations listed below are broad expectations that we have for students in the OTA program. These expectations can be thought of as the necessary first steps to be successful in the program and are explained in detail throughout the document.

Students will:

- Attend all classes, appointments, and clinics.
- Arrive on time for the start of classes and when returning from breaks.
- Read class syllabi, schedules, and assignments.
- Complete all reading and preparatory work before classes.
- Complete and submit assignments on time.
- Plan ahead.
- Check your SLCC email daily.
- Be open to feedback.
- Be flexible.
- Communicate with faculty and ask questions.

Your Expectations of Faculty

Just as we have expectations of students, students should have expectations of the OTA faculty.

Faculty will:

- Start and end class on time.
- Provide a break approximately every hour.
- Provide a clear syllabus, schedule, and assignments.
- Grade assignments and provide useful feedback promptly.
- Respond to emails within one business day.
- Be open to feedback.
- Be flexible.
- Communicate with students and ask questions.

OTA Program Student Policies

These policies are here to better define our expectations. The goal of following policies is to ensure everyone is meeting expectations and being treated fairly.

Attendance

Students are expected to be on time and to attend all classes. Every class session of the OTA program covers a great deal of information. Being late or absent means that students miss this information, and this can quickly impact students' ability to succeed in the program.

That said, life happens, and students will occasionally need to be absent. Guidelines around absences:

- **Students can be absent for up to three (3) days each semester.**
- Being late to class, leaving early, or being gone from the middle of class by more than 15 minutes will count as an absence.
- Some days have multiple classes. Missing multiple classes in one day counts as a single absence. Missing one class but attending other classes that day also counts as a single absence.
- More than three (3) absences in a semester can result in a student being placed on probation.

Students who are absent are still responsible for any material and assignments. Students who will be absent may request to attend class virtually. Instructors will decide if this is feasible on a case-by-case basis. **Attending virtually will still count as an absence.**

Absences will impact the grade of a course. Each course within the OTA program has a Participation Grade that accounts for about 10% of the grade. Being absent will result in a loss of part of the Participation Grade for the course as defined in the syllabus. If a student is absent for a day where an in-class assignment, presentation, or quiz is scheduled, they will earn a zero (0) on it.

Assignments

Completion

Every assignment in the program has a purpose. Each assignment is linked to learning outcomes within the program and accreditation standards. As a result, **students are expected to complete and submit all assignments.** If the due date is passed, instructors will work with the student to set a new deadline for assignment submission. All assignments must be submitted by the end of the semester. If assignments are not submitted, a student may be given an incomplete grade in the course or be placed on probation.

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit assignments on time. The deadline for each assignment can be found in the course schedule, assignment description, and/or Canvas. If a student is uncertain about a deadline, they should ask the instructor. **Late assignments that are submitted within 24 hours of the deadline will receive 50% credit.** For example, if an assignment is submitted 3 hours after the deadline and earned 40 out of 50 points, the late assignment would only receive 20 points. Late assignments that are submitted more than 24 hours after the deadline will receive no credit (0%). It is required that these assignments be submitted to successfully complete the course.

Grading Policy

The following grade scale will be used for all courses in the OTA program.

A	95-100%	C+	78-79.9%
A-	90-94.9%	C	75-77.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C-	71-74.9%
B	83-86.7%	D+	67-70.9%
B-	80-82.9%		

To pass a course, students need to earn a C or better grade. A student who earns a grade lower than a 75% in a class will be placed on probation and need to retake the course and any co-requisites.

This is based on the 75% passing score of the National Board for the Credentialing of Occupational Therapists (NBCOT) OTA certification exam that students will take after graduation. Passing a class with a C or higher indicates that the student has a basic competency with the material necessary to take the NBCOT exam. Instructors may require that assignments or quizzes need to be passed with a score greater than a C or need to be retaken. This will be stated in the course syllabus.

Professionalism

In addition to teaching the knowledge of the profession, the OTA program teaches the professional and ethical behaviors necessary to succeed as an OTA. Students are expected to uphold the [SLCC Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [AOTA Code of Ethics](#).

Student Conduct

All students at SLCC, including students in the OTA program, are governed by the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). This document details the rights of students and the college's expectations for students. The Code establishes violations of academic integrity and professional behavior as including, but not limited to:

- Aiding Cheating or Other Acts of Academic Dishonesty,
- Cheating,
- Data Misrepresentation,
- Plagiarism,
- Unauthorized Access to Computerized Academic or Administrative Records or Systems,
- Unprofessional or Inappropriate Behavior within a Clinical, Fieldwork, or Internship Experience.

Students within the OTA program are expected to read and understand the Code and can ask any faculty for clarification.

Ethical Conduct

In addition to being a student, you are joining the profession of occupational therapy. The [American Occupational Therapy Association 2020 Code of Ethics](#) establishes the Core Values and Principles of Conduct of the occupational therapy profession. The Core Values are altruism, equity, freedom, justice, dignity, truth, and prudence. The Principles of Conduct are beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, veracity, and fidelity.

These values and principles will provide direction to your decision making as a professional. Students will receive further education and application of the Code of Ethics throughout the OTA coursework.

Specific Areas of Professional Conduct

Academic Integrity

In the OTA program, we expect students to submit their own, original work. Acting with academic integrity relates to our Code of Ethics and follows the principles of justice and veracity. Submitting someone else's work in your name is considered plagiarism and is a violation of veracity. Cheating on a test or asking another student about the questions is considered cheating and is a violation of justice. If

you have a question about if a behavior violates academic integrity, please check with a faculty member before participating in the behavior.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot) is a rapidly emerging and powerful tool. The OTA program does not prohibit use of AI; however, we encourage students to use AI responsibly and wisely. First, our expectation is that students submit their own original work. Using AI to generate ideas and re-writing it in your own words is an example of responsible use. Any use of AI in an assignment should be cited in APA format, [more information](#). Submitting work generated by AI without making it your own and/or citing it would be a violation of academic integrity. Sometimes AI can produce results that are not factual. Students need to fact check anything from AI. This is an example of using AI responsibly. Individual instructors within the OTA program may prohibit or have other restrictions about use of AI within their courses.

Confidentiality

The SLCC OTA program runs free Occupational Therapy clinics. Students have the opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom with real clients. This privilege comes with responsibilities. Students are expected to maintain and respect client confidentiality. This means not talking or writing about any identifying information, like the client's name. Students will receive further training on confidentiality within the program.

Professional Appearance

Students are expected to maintain an appearance conducive to learning and clinical practice. Activities in the OTA program vary day to day. Some days students will be mostly in the classroom. On other days, students will be in labs and will be practicing moving clients or swinging on sensory equipment. On other days still, students will be treating clients in clinics or presenting at a community event. Each class has a detailed schedule with information about the day's activities. Students should dress appropriately for the day's activities. Fieldwork sites may have requirements about dress and appearance.

Guidelines for Professional Appearance.

- Be clean and groomed,
- Wear clean clothing,
- Wear clothing that is comfortable,
- Wear clothing that is functional for picking items up off the floor and/or reaching overhead,
- Wear closed-toed shoes for labs, and
- Be considerate of those around you:
 - Use minimal fragrances, like colognes or perfumes,
 - Keep fingernails well-trimmed and short.

OTA Program Uniform

- OTA program uniforms should be worn for clinics, field trips, and community events.
- Uniform consists of:
 - SLCC OTA polo shirt
 - Purchased through the Student Occupational Therapy Association
 - SLCC OTA Name Badge

- You will receive instructions on how to obtain a name badge during the first week of class.
- Professional pants (i.e., Dress pants; dark jeans with no holes, scrub bottoms)
- Closed-toed shoes.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy

The SLCC Occupational Therapy Assistant Program recognizes that technology is an important tool for all health care professionals as well as students. Within the program, students will be required to take classes online and within a hybrid format. Many courses also use electronic resources. Electronic devices are encouraged to be used in a way that supplements and supports learning. However, they are not to be used in a way that distracts from the learning of the student or used in a way that distracts their classmates.

The following policies are in effect in all courses of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.

- If you have an emergency and must use your cell phone, please exit the classroom to take the call. If you are discovered reading and /or sending text messages during class, you could be asked to leave the class and will be counted absent for the class period.
- You are expected to engage in discussion for the class. You may use your computer to access the textbook, take notes, and research the discussion topic. You are discouraged from engaging in activities not directly related to the class, including emailing instructors or working on other coursework. If you are discovered engaging in these activities, you will be asked to leave the classroom and will be recorded absent for the class.
- You may not record or publish information from any Occupational Therapy Assistant course without written authorization from the course instructor. This includes video recordings, audio recordings, and photographs. Cell phones must be on silent mode during class time.
- Cell phones are not to be used as calculators on exams and texting is not allowed during class lectures and/or discussion time.

Social Media Policy

Students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Salt Lake Community College are invited to join/follow the official college and program Facebook, Instagram pages at:

- https://www.instagram.com/slcc_hs/
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/slccoccupationaltherapyassistant/>

Students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Salt Lake Community College have the right to develop social media accounts. If a page is created by an individual student, it shall not include the name Salt Lake Community College or Occupational Therapy Assistant anywhere on the page. Students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program shall understand that the page is not an extension of the program, the classroom, or the college.

At no time may confidential or personal information about classmates, faculty, or information of a private nature be discussed in class or posted on social media. Any student violating this policy will be placed on immediate probation and/or dismissed from the program. Confidential or personal information includes but is not limited to:

- Personal information of a classmate, faculty, and clinical preceptor.

- Academic information of classmates.
- Derogatory comments of a classmate, faculty, and clinical preceptor.
- Classroom discussion/pictures or videos of procedures performed during clinical education.
- Information of the clinical site, patient information, and any other information that may be obtained through the student practicum.

Substance Use: Alcohol, Drugs, and Medications

The SLCC OTA program is an alcohol and drug free environment. Students may not possess or use controlled substances on SLCC campus or clinical sites, or attend classes, clinics, events, or fieldwork while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Students may take medications as prescribed and directed by a doctor. However, students may not attend classes, clinics, events, or fieldwork if a prescribed medication adversely impacts their performance, safety, or the safety of others. Students with a prescription to use controlled substances should request the Controlled Substances Acknowledgment form from the Program Coordinator. Students suspected to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medications will need to undergo an immediate drug screen, as detailed in the Program Handbook.

OTA Program Corrective Policies

Students do sometimes struggle with aspects of the OTA Program Student Policies. The purpose of the policies in this section are to help steer students back in towards success. Corrective actions are not meant as punitive but intentional strategies to help students succeed in the long run.

Emergency Appeal

In the event of absences or other life events from unavoidable, extenuating circumstances which jeopardize continuation of the program, students may submit an emergency appeal. To submit an emergency appeal, students should send an email explaining the circumstances to the involved instructor(s) and the OTA Program Coordinator. This email must be sent either prior to or within 48 hours after the absence, as appropriate. Faculty will evaluate the appeal and respond within two business days. Students are encouraged to take advantage of other SLCC services and support. For example, Accessibility and Disability Services (<https://www.slcc.edu/ads>), Bruin Support Hub (<https://www.slcc.edu/deanofstudents/bruin-support-network.aspx>).

Warning

Generally, the first step in corrective action is a warning. The warning may be verbal or in writing. The goal of a warning is to ensure students understand program expectations. Warnings should include a plan for the student to be successful. Faculty will document student warnings and success plans and communicate those to the Program Coordinator. Some violations of policy may be serious enough to go directly to probation or dismissal.

Probation

The next step of corrective action would be to place a student on probation. Students being placed on probation will meet with the Program Coordinator and at least one other SLCC faculty or administrator. The goal of the meeting will be to clearly communicate the departmental policy, the student's behaviors violating that policy, and a plan for the student to succeed moving forward. The student, Program Coordinator, and Associate Dean or Dean will review and sign the School of Health Sciences Program Probation form.

Probation can result from violations of the student and or Program Handbooks, including but not limited to:

- More than 3 absences within a semester,
- Loss of all participation points in any course,
- Violation of SLCC [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#),
- Violation of the AOTA Code of Ethics,
- Receiving a grade below a C in a course within the OTA Program,
 - A student receiving below a C in a course will need to retake the course and any corequisite courses or withdraw from the program.
- Allowing immunization or re-certification of fieldwork requirements to lapse,
- Behaviors that negatively impact a student's fieldwork placement including but not limited to unprofessional or unsafe behaviors, removing oneself prior to communicating with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, and not completing a placement within a predetermined time period.

Dismissal

The final step of corrective action would be to dismiss a student from the OTA program. Being dismissed means that students are not able to attend any more classes, finish the semester, or complete the program. Students who are dismissed from the program will receive a zero on all future assignments and will receive a grade for the courses following SLCC Policy.

Dismissal will result from:

- Two (2) letters of probation
- Two (2) OTA course grades below a C.
- Withdrawal from an OTA program course without going through the deferral process.
- Not retaking an OTA course within one calendar year.
- Testing positive for alcohol, drugs, or medications which impair safety by a drug-testing agency.
- Unsafe behavior in the classroom, clinic, or fieldwork as determined by licensed occupational therapy professionals.
- Severe unprofessional behavior:
 - Severe violation of Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities or Code of Ethics.
 - Failure to follow policies and procedures of fieldwork sites.
 - Failure to report a change in criminal background.

Students being dismissed from the OTA program will meet with the Program Coordinator and at least one other faculty or administrator. The student will be issued a formal letter explaining the reason for dismissal. A School of Health Sciences Drop Form will be signed by the Program Coordinator, Associate Dean, and Dean. Students interested in appealing the decision can complete the Health Sciences Appeal process, as detailed in the Program Handbook.

Students who are dismissed from the program can apply for competitive admission to a future cohort of the OTA program. Students will need to meet with the OTA faculty to develop a success plan prior to applying to the program. Students who are reapplying will have the same prerequisite and other application requirements as other applicants. Students who are readmitted will need to retake all courses completed with the new cohort. Students can only apply for readmission after the first dismissal.

Program Deferral

In the case of significant life events that make it difficult for students to continue in the program students can request to defer enrollment in the OTA program. This allows students to reenter a future cohort. Students reentering within one year will need to retake any incomplete courses. Students reentering more than one year after deferral will need to retake all courses in the OTA program. In order to defer enrollment, a student needs to be in good standing, not on probation or facing dismissal.

Students wishing to defer enrollment need to submit the request to the OTA Program Coordinator by email. The request should explain the reason why the student is requesting a deferral and the expected reentry date. The Program Coordinator will inform the student whether the request for deferral was approved within five (5) business days. Students requesting reentry following a deferral need to email the OTA Program Coordinator by May 1st for reentry in the following academic year.