

NORTHWOOD TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT  
STUDENT POLICIES

## **CURRICULUM DESIGN**

By the end of the 2-year program, Northwood Tech OTA graduates are prepared to function effectively in various delivery models and contexts while using an occupation-based approach. Students learn by "doing" and being active participants. Observation, role-playing, supervised community practice, and fieldwork facilitate knowledge and technical skills related to occupation-based intervention and entry level practice. Skills are discussed during first semester, role-played during second semester, practiced in the community during third semester, and evaluated fourth semester during Fieldwork II.

The OTA program uses Blackboard to enhance all coursework. The curriculum has one online only course, OT Practice and Management (10-514-185) in fourth semester, during Fieldwork II. All lecture courses are given over the ITV (interactive television) system. All labs are with the instructor in person. While Northwood Tech uses distance education to meet the needs of our geographical locations, the strategies for instruction are consistent throughout the program and "fit" the curriculum design whether the instruction is in person (lab), ITV, or Blackboard enhanced.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Northwood Technical College involves the learner in a collaborative process that emphasizes the **use of technology, development of core abilities, a strength-based approach, and student reflection.**

### **Use of technology**

Students attend lectures using the Interactive Television (ITV) system. All courses have a Blackboard component. Students are expected to become active participants in these environments. Students present over the ITV system and use Blackboard for submission of assignments, online exams, and collaborative discussion boards. Throughout the program students create PowerPoints, brochures, digital images, and handouts by using technology. Students learn how to use technologies like iPads to implement occupation-based treatment.

### **Development of core abilities**

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program has identified seven Core Abilities expected for all program graduates. The core abilities are

- Act Responsibly
- Communicate Clearly
- Learn Effectively
- Think Critically and Creatively
- Value Self Positively
- Work Cooperatively
- Work Productively

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The acquisition of Core Ability skills is central to the curriculum design of the OTA program. Employers state that these skills are crucial to employee success. Core Abilities are defined and discussed during the first month of the program and evaluated by faculty, peers, self, and fieldwork educators at various stages. Core abilities are linked to assignments and projects and assessed throughout the curriculum.

**Strength-based approach**

The OTA program believes in approaching group collaboration and intervention planning from a strength-based approach. Students identify their strengths by using an online assessment, Strengthsfinder 2.0. This assessment provides students with a comprehensive report that identifies the student's top 5 strength themes. These themes describe the student's talents, expertise, skills, and knowledge. Students share their strength themes with peers and supervisors to assist with the development of work relationships and completion of projects. Students are required to identify strengths in case study and treatment-based assignments throughout the curriculum. Students consider the client's strengths as part of the treatment planning process.

**Student reflection**

The OTA Program promotes student reflection throughout the curriculum. Assignments require the completion of *I learned statements*, where students reflect on the learning that occurred during the assignment. Reflective learning helps students to examine assumptions, problems, and solutions. After a task, the student examines learning that occurred and chooses deliberate ways to modify or change. Reflection also allows students to understand the positive aspects of the assignment. Students are encouraged to become reflective about intervention and their future clinical practice.

Students are expected to take an active role in learning and become lifelong learners. Each student is influenced by his or her life experience, roles, and interests. OTA Instructors respect this belief and students are encouraged to ask questions and share experiences. Students are evaluated in multiple ways. OTA Instructors appreciate that students have multiple intelligences and may learn in different ways. It is believed that most jobs require multiple ways of demonstrating competencies. Students are evaluated by multiple-choice exams (online and proctored), practical lab exams, pass/fail check offs, journals, papers, activity analysis, projects, Pinterest, iMovies, case studies, and group work. Students learn to self-assess and to assess peers. Students are involved in creating rubrics for assessments and choosing assignment due dates. In third semester, students are given open-ended assignments which facilitate creativity. For example, project criterion is developed by students to reflect the way they will demonstrate mastery of the course competency. Students adapt the assignment to fit their own strengths. The OTA curriculum is focused on preparing graduates for employment and personal effectiveness by using technology, development of core abilities, a strength-based approach, and student reflection.

OTA program planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum happen by using a three-step process near the end of each semester. First the Dean, Health Sciences initiates the evaluation process. Students complete a comprehensive evaluation of each Instructor and provide valuable feedback.

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Secondly, the Program Director holds Student Forums where students discuss OTA courses they are currently enrolled in and provide feedback about the curriculum. Thirdly, OTA faculty meet with the above-mentioned data to critique, analyze, and modify OTA courses. Faculty discuss content, accreditation standards, and assessment within individual courses and the overall structure of the curriculum. This process is completed each semester and demonstrates collaboration and reflection.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES/GOALS

Employers will expect graduates of the program, to be able to:

1. Practice within the distinct role and responsibility of the occupational therapy assistant.
2. Serve a diverse population in a variety of systems that are consistent with entry-level practice.
3. Value lifelong learning and the need to keep current with best practice.
4. Apply occupational therapy principles and intervention tools to achieve expected outcomes.
5. Demonstrate professional behaviors, ethical standards, values, and attitudes of the occupational therapy profession.
6. Advocate for the profession, services, and consumers.

Curricular content threads addressed in each program outcome goals are:

	<i>Use of Technology</i>	<i>Development of Core Abilities</i>	<i>Strength-Based Approach</i>	<i>Student Reflection</i>
Program Outcome		X	X	X
Program Outcome	X	X	X	X
Program Outcome	X	X	X	X
Program Outcome	X	X	X	X
Program Outcome		X		
Program Outcome		X		X

## SEQUENCING OF COURSEWORK

### FALL

**General Anatomy and Physiology (806-177)** addresses the body systems. This information is needed prior to goniometer measurement, muscle function, and manual muscle testing located in OTA second semester. This course is concurrent with **Medical and Psychosocial Conditions (514-172)** and offers more in-depth physiology so Medical and Psychosocial Conditions can focus on diagnoses prevalent in OT practice. **Medical and Psychosocial Conditions (514-172)** provides background on medical, psychological, and pediatric conditions. Students need an understanding of each disability or condition prior to treatment planning and implementation competencies located in second semester coursework. **English Composition (801-136)** facilitates competency in sentence and paragraph structure, grammar, and different styles of writing. Writing skills are necessary for OTA papers and written assignments early in

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the program, so this course is essential in the first semester of the program to assist with competency in documenting observations and expressing written OT philosophy.

**Introduction to Psychology (809-198)** is located in fall semester because it discusses concepts beneficial to have prior to Psychosocial Practice (514-175) in second semester. The psychology background from Introduction to Psychology allows the Psychosocial Practice course to focus on occupation-related concepts. **Introduction to Occupational Therapy (514-171)** consists of lecture and lab. Students discuss occupational therapy philosophy, theory, history, models of practice, code of ethics, standards of practice, legislative issues, and assess their desire for a career in occupational therapy. Students engage in off-campus observations to increase exposure to the domain of occupational therapy. During **Activity Analysis and Applications (514-173)** students learn to analyze media via activity analysis and teach and complete media projects. This course includes foundation concepts for occupational therapy and must be located in the first semester of the program, as these concepts are needed prior to the practice (intervention) courses.

### **SPRING**

**Developmental Psychology (809-116)** is sequenced in spring semester. This course introduces developmental stages and models from conception to death. Students need to understand significant aspects of life stages to plan appropriate treatment. Treatment planning assignments begin in spring semester with OTA core courses. **OT Performance Skills (514-174)** introduces assessment techniques and hands-on palpation skills seen in occupational therapy practice. Skills are developed that are needed prior to fall semester practice coursework. **OT Theory and Practice (514-176)** concentrates on the theoretical foundation of occupational therapy intervention and group work. This course provides foundation for leading Well Elder community groups that occur in third semester as well as theoretical frames of reference, documentation skills, and evidence-based practice. These skills are introduced in this course and then further developed in subsequent semesters. **Psychosocial Practice (514-175)** is included in second semester so students have psychosocial concepts of occupational therapy prior to OTA Fieldwork I – psychosocial focus (514-184) in fall semester. This coursework enables the student to interact more therapeutically with a variety of clients. **Geriatric Practice (514-178)** addresses issues of the geriatric population and the role of occupational therapy. This course is included in second semester so students gain an understanding of issues related to the elder population prior to Community Practice (514-179) where Well Elder community groups are led.

### **SUMMER**

**Introduction to Sociology (809-196)** provides information on culture and socialization within the family and society. The summer session is provided to allow students to spread out their credit load to a more manageable number over the 2 years of the program.

### **FALL**

**Oral/Interpersonal Communication (801-196) or Speech (801-198)** develops speaking, listening, and nonverbal communication skills necessary for Fieldwork II. **OT Phys Rehab Practice (514-189)** focuses on occupational therapy practice issues with a physical rehabilitation approach. Students address evaluation and treatment interventions specific to physical disability issues. **OT Pediatric Practice (514-190)** focuses on occupational therapy practice issues in pediatrics. 514-182 and 514-183 are sequenced after OT Performance Skills (514-174) and are an expansion of the interventions and skills learned in this course. **Community Practice (514-179)** is a community-based treatment planning course designed to help students increase their comfort level with

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interventions prior to Fieldwork II. Students apply previous skills of leading groups and their knowledge of working with well elders to a community setting working with "real elders". **Fieldwork I (514-107)** allows students to have clinical experiences in different settings to develop interpersonal and observation skills. Fieldwork I is sequenced in third semester to allow students to practice skills in "real" settings, just prior to level II fieldwork.

**SPRING**

**Fieldwork IIA and IIB (514-186 and 514-187)** are completed at the end of academic training to implement critical thinking skills into practice. **OT Practice and Management (514-185)** is taken concurrent with Fieldwork IIA and IIB and provides practice in resume and cover letter writing, mock interviews, certification and licensure requirements, and skills necessary for entry level OTA practice.

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**Educational Program Outcomes/Goals and Evaluative Measures**

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3. Value lifelong learning and the need to keep current with best practice.
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5. Demonstrate professional behaviors, ethical standards, values, and attitudes of the occupational therapy profession.
6. Advocate for the profession, services, and consumers.

**OTA courses by course number 10-514-xxx**

	171	172	173	174	175	176	178	179	189	190	184	185
		Exams		Exams	Exams		Exams		Exams	Exams		
	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes	Quizzes		Quizzes
<b>Program Outcome 1</b>	Discussion board posts		Pinterest	Lab Practicals		Pediatric FM group in community	Discussion board posts		Case studies	Written paper	Complete OT assessments	
<b>Program Outcome 2</b>		Cross campus presentation	Discussion board posts Written activity analysis			ADM in community		Written proposal for well elder project		iMovie		
<b>Program Outcome 3</b>				Lab Practicals Lab skills check off	Lab skills check off	EBP research PowerPoint presentation			Lab skills check off			Written 5-year plan
<b>Program Outcome 4</b>	Discussion board posts		Written activity analysis		Pinterest	Pinterest Lead psychosocial + sensory group on campus	Create sensory project Written case studies		competencies	Lead pediatric groups in community	Implementation activity with client(s)	

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<b>Program Outcome 5</b>	Community Observations				Community AOFCV + TOGSS assessment				Standardized patients		Level I Fieldwork Student Assessment	Ethical Case Studies
<b>Program Outcome 5</b>												
<b>Program Outcome 6</b>					iMovie			Promote and lead community groups				Advocacy Project
								Backpack Awareness				
								Interview community resource				