

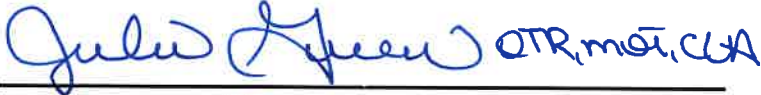
PANOLA COLLEGE



**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

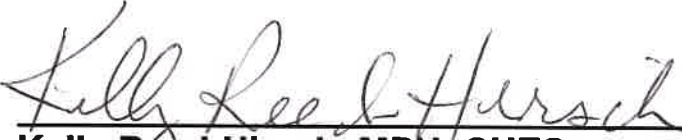
STUDENT POLICY MANUAL

The policies and procedures contained in the OTA Student Policy Manual are approved by the following officials of Panola College:



Julie Green, MOT, OTR, CLA
Chair, Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

1-12-2024
Date




Kelly Reed-Hirsch, MPH, CHES
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1/22/2024
Date



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Vice President of Instruction

1-29-2024
Date



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Section I – GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program at Panola College. You have chosen a very exciting and rewarding profession. Our goal is to provide you with the knowledge and skills required to provide quality occupational therapy (OT) services.

The purpose of this handbook, in addition to offering a word of welcome, is to share information. This information will help you understand the OTA Program goals, mission, policies, the faculty teaching philosophies, and our philosophies of OT. Occupational therapy practitioners adhere to a professional code of ethics. Because of this, some OTA policies differ from those of Panola College, as described in the *Panola College General Catalog* and the online college student handbook, *The Pathfinder*. As an OTA student, you are expected to follow the policies and guidelines from all three resources. Please read this information carefully. You will be required to sign a form indicating that you have read this manual and agree to abide by the policies and procedures. Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures could result in disciplinary actions.

The common goal of learning is achieved through collaboration between faculty and students and through strong peer-to-peer relationships. Competence in the OT profession is developed through diligence and hard work in both classroom and clinical environments. Your experiences in the upcoming months will be both challenging and rewarding.

If you need assistance during your course of study, please contact the OTA department at (903) 694-4000. The office of the occupational therapy assistant department is located in room 1103 in the Health and Natural Sciences building located on the main Panola College campus. In general, office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

We are dedicated to your success and welcome your questions by phone or email. Please refer to the OTA Program website or course syllabi for specific methods for contacting instructors.

We look forward to sharing our knowledge and experiences with you.

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of the OTA Department

OTA Program Faculty and Staff

You will have the opportunity to learn from experienced OTA faculty and guest speakers from diverse backgrounds and specialties of practice. Below are the full-time and part-time staff members that comprise the OTA faculty team.

Julie Green, MOT, OTR, CLA

Julie is a graduate of Carthage High School and the Panola College OTA Program. In 2002, she graduated from Panola College with an Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy and an Associate of Science degree. While working as an adult and geriatric rehabilitation COTA, she co-owned and operated a therapy staffing agency that provided PT, OT, and ST services in East Texas. Julie completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Clinical Services Management from Texas Tech University in 2005. In 2012 she graduated from Texas Woman's University with a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy. In 2022 as a part of the AOTA Academic Leadership Institute, Julie became an AOTA Credentialed Leader in Academia (CLA). Her primary clinical practice settings were home health, skilled nursing facilities, and geriatric care services. Julie is the Program Chair and teaches courses focused on principles of occupational therapy, mental health and wellness, workplace skills, and practicum experiences.

Randy Ford, MOT, OTR, CBIS

Randy graduated from Louisiana State University Health Science Center - Shreveport with a Master of Occupational Therapy degree in 2014. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Health and Kinesiology from the University of Texas at Tyler in 2011, an Associate of Arts degree from Kilgore College in 2012, and an Associate of Science degree from Panola College in 2005. Randy's areas of specialization include adult acute care and physical rehabilitation, and he was instrumental in establishing Longview Regional Medical Center's rehabilitation program for patients affected by COVID-19. Randy teaches courses in functional anatomy, the occupational performance of adults, therapeutic occupations and activities of adults, and adult clinical skills.

Jessica Rittenberry, BAAS, COTA

Jessica is a graduate of the Panola College OTA program, earning an Associate of Applied Science in 2019. While working as a COTA, she earned her Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences at the University of Texas at Tyler in 2021. Since graduating, her primary practice area has been pediatric school-based services, and she has work experience in pediatric outpatient and home health. Jessica has strongly supported fieldwork education, serving as a fieldwork educator for Panola College OTA students entering the profession. Jessica is the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and teaches courses in occupational performance of children and adolescents, therapeutic occupations and activities of children, and pediatric clinical skills.

April Kruger, COTA

April is a graduate of the Panola College OTA program earning her Associate of Applied Science in 2014. Since graduating, her primary practice area has been adult skilled nursing. In 2017, she became a certified LSVT - BIG practitioner, treating patients with movement disorders associated with Parkinson's Disease. In 2018, she earned her Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP), focusing on techniques to provide care and programs to our aging population. April is the OTA program lab assistant and assists in lab courses within the program.

Mickie Cash

Mickie is the Administrative Secretary for the OTA department. Mickie coordinates immunizations, tracks attendance, and is a central point of communication for our program. If you cannot find an OTA instructor to assist you, Mickie can help. Mickie is a vital OTA department team member.

Curriculum Standards

Occupational Therapy Assistant Educational programs across the nation must meet the *2018 Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) Standards* (revised in July 2020) as set forth by The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. The *Standards* serve to assure a measure of consistency among programs nationwide, and they are the guide for assessing minimal content mastery for an entry-level, generalist OTA practitioner.

Accreditation Status

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. AOTA's phone number is (301) 652-6611. In 2002, the OTA Program was accredited for ten years, the longest time span awarded by ACOTE. The OTA program underwent rigorous re-accreditation renewal processes in July of 2013, and again in June of 2023 and earned a ten-year re-accreditation at each renewal evaluation. The program holds current accreditation through 2033.

Credentialing and Licensure

Upon completion of the OTA Program, graduates will be able to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Upon passing the exam, the individual will earn the title of "COTA" or Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. Most states, including Texas, require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. A felony conviction could jeopardize a student's ability to graduate and obtain licensure and/or certification. More information is provided later on by each specific agency. If a student is concerned about their ability to sit to take the board exam or be licensed, please see the OTA Program Chair, who can help you coordinate a pre-determination assessment by the involved parties. Completion of the OTA program does not guarantee a passing score on the NBCOT national board exam or approval for state licensure.

OTA Program Philosophy

Relationship to the Profession

The OTA program philosophy reflects the foundations of occupational therapy practice based on systems theory, human development, and the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model as well as the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, 4th edition (AOTA, 2020). The PEO model proposes that human occupation is determined and influenced by motivation, occupational performance, capacities to adapt to environmental influences, and an exploration of how these elements impact states of human health and wellness (Law et al. 1996).

Nature of Humanity

Humans inherently adapt both physiologically and behaviorally. They are intrinsically motivated to engage in activity that promotes adaptation to or impacts their social and physical environments. Through the developmental process, behavior becomes increasingly complex and effective in this interaction with the environment. As an open system, the individual's interaction with and adaptation to the environment influences occupational performance. This is part of a dynamic, mutually influencing life process-of in which purposeful activity or occupation is a central aspect (AOTA, 2017).

Occupational Therapy Assistant Education

Occupational therapy assistant education at Panola College involves fostering the development of professional behaviors and clinical reasoning skills necessary for competent, ethical practice. (AOTA, 2019) The curriculum is designed so that students have experiences in a variety of traditional and emerging practice settings with populations across the lifespan, including children and adolescents within local independent school districts, adults and elders in senior living facilities, inpatient, outpatient, and rehabilitation facilities, and long term care facilities. To meet changing societal needs, students participate in emerging practice learning experiences such as social-emotional learning experiences within school systems, specialized programming for children with Autism, community mental health programs, low vision, aging in place, specialized interventions with elders with Alzheimer's disease/dementia, and new technologies for rehabilitation.

The OTA faculty members believe that the therapeutic relationship between the OT practitioner and the client is critical to treatment effectiveness. To this end, interpersonal skills such as self-awareness, authenticity, and active listening are nurtured throughout the curriculum. Knowledge of human development, function, adaptation, and occupation is central to occupational therapy practice. The OTA program promotes the student's ability to integrate information from biological, behavioral, and social sciences, the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, and OT frames of reference. Students are then challenged to apply this information using clinical reasoning skills to deliver occupation-based, evidence-based, and client-centered interventions.

Approach to Teaching and Learning

In addition to fostering the above essential skills in the educational approach, and in concert with the curriculum design, the underlying instructional theme of this program follows the idea that meaningful occupation enables an individual to positively influence their state of well-being (Reilly, 1962). This concept of meaningful occupation is also

reflected in the OTA instructional process. Based on the philosophy of experiential education (Association for Experiential Education, 2022), each OTA course emphasizes “learning by doing” through the use of hands-on learning activities that require problem-solving and learner reflection. Furthermore, courses in the OTA program are facilitated utilizing a Team-Based Learning™ approach. According to the Team-Based Learning Collaborative, “Team-Based Learning is an evidence-based collaborative learning teaching strategy designed around units of instruction, known as “modules,” that are taught in a three-step cycle: preparation, in-class readiness assurance testing, and application-focused exercise” (Team-Based Learning Collaborative, 2022). As such, faculty members strive to provide meaningful, engaging learning activities (occupations) that facilitate a collaborative and interactive approach to the teaching-learning process (AOTA, 2018).

The hallmark of the OTA program is the student’s ongoing involvement in experiential and service learning projects throughout the curriculum. Such instructional techniques are guided by theories based on the work of John Dewey and Kurt Levine (Kolb 1984) that support the learner’s need for movement, introspection, peer feedback, and novelty for optimum learning. Additionally, student personality traits (Miscin, 2004) and learning styles are assessed and capitalized upon by both students and instructors. Students in the OTA program have opportunities to apply these concepts as they participate in innovative, collaborative learning projects, including initiatives with former OTA program graduates and students from other educational backgrounds such as nursing. (AOTA, 2009)

The average age of the OTA student at Panola College is 23.19 years (2023 data). For this reason, adult learning principles (Knowles et al. 2005) are incorporated into instruction throughout the curriculum. Knowles’s principles are as follows:

1. Adults are internally motivated and self-directed.
2. Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences.
3. Adults are goal oriented.
4. Adults are relevancy oriented.
5. Adult learners are practical.
6. Adult learners like to be respected.

In 2021, 88% of students admitted into the Panola College OTA program were members of Generation Z (Gen Z). Therefore, in addition to adult learning principles, faculty also recognize the unique needs of the Generation Z learner. According to the Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) article Reaching and Retaining the Next Generation: Adapting to the Expectations of Gen Z in the Classroom:

1. Gen Z learners see technology and creativity as important and intersecting aspects of their identities.
2. Gen Z learners learn best by doing and creating
3. Gen Z learners are skill-focused
4. Gen Z learners value connection
5. Gen Z learners have an entrepreneurial, self-educated, and self-sufficient approach to research

These concepts are practically applied as instructors relate to students as the colleagues they will become upon graduation. In addition to treating students with respect, OTA faculty members are also committed to

- Getting to know and address each student on a first-name basis.
- Recognizing, fostering, and building upon the skills and abilities that the students already possess.
- Explaining the critical connections between what is being learned and how it will be used in practice.
- Incorporating meaningful experiences that are relevant and applicable to practice (using labs, case studies, video treatment sessions, clinical simulations, service learning projects, and incorporating direct client interactions when possible).
- Providing instruction in methods and formats that support the unique needs of the adult learner (providing 24 hours a day electronic access to all instructional materials, videos, podcasts, and research databases, and delivering select OTA courses in a web-enhanced and hybrid format).

Based on the requirements for competent occupation-based OT practice (Law, Baum, and Baptiste, 2002), the OT Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020) and The Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (AOTA, 2020) that guide our profession, and professional behaviors as described by Kaser and Clark (2000), we value and foster the following essential skills in the OTA Program at Panola College:

Exceptional professional skills

- Effective work behaviors which include dependability, cooperation, flexibility, effective communication skills, safety of self and others, and organization
- Demonstration of ethical behaviors and concern for the welfare and dignity of others
- Self-initiated lifelong learning to ensure practice competency
- The ability to receive and effectively use constructive feedback
- The ability to give constructive feedback

Service to Others

- Passionate commitment to improving the quality of life of others

Effective therapeutic relationships

- Awareness of self, others and the environment and the interrelationships between each
- Awareness of the impact of culture on their own and others' values, beliefs, and behaviors
- The ability to interpersonally connect with others and establish meaningful relationships
- Understanding the powerful impact of the OTA's planned use of their personality as part of the therapeutic process (therapeutic use of self)

Competent OT practice skills

- The impact of meaningful occupations and their transactive or two-way relationship between the person, the person's performance, and the environments in which the person functions
- The ability to find evidence and use it to support clinical decision-making

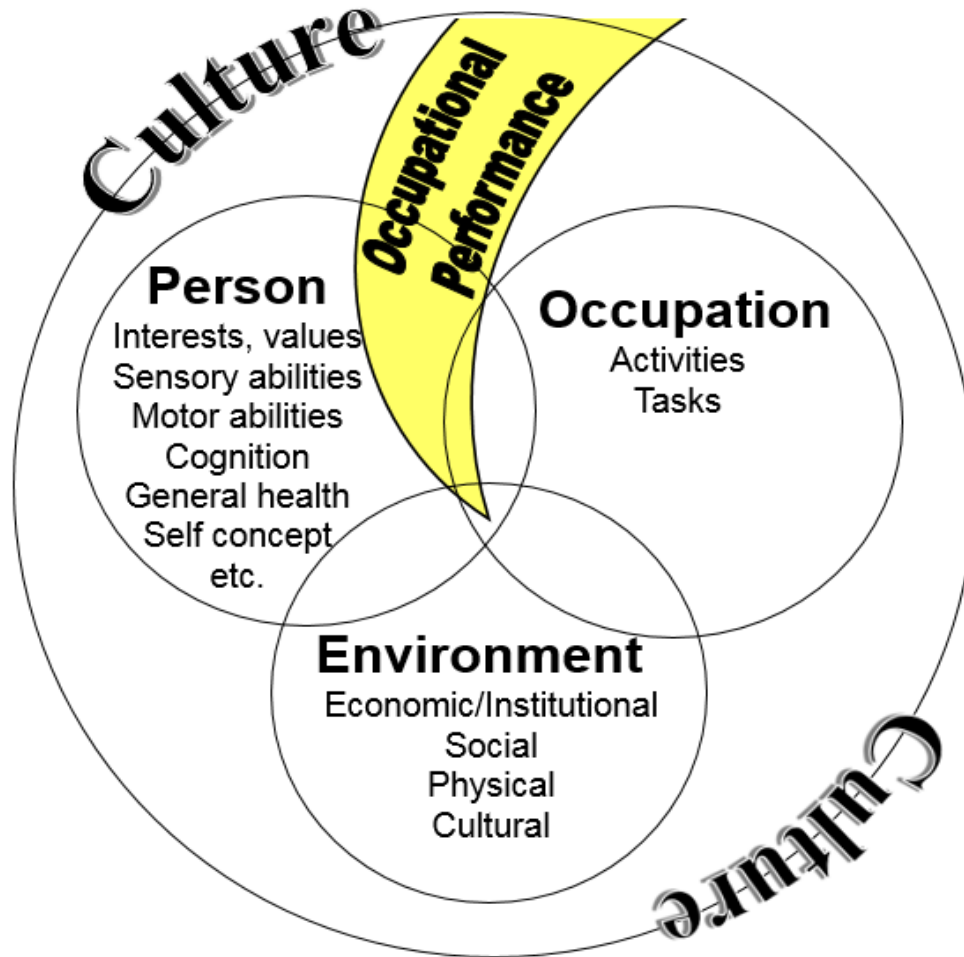
- The ability to clinically reason and problem solve using multiple forms of evidence
- The use of occupations (or interventions that directly support occupations) to help clients achieve their highest level of independence
- Technical competence in the delivery of OT services
- The ability to participate in consensual decision making and collaboration with clients, families and other disciplines
- The importance of the collaborative process between the OTA and OT

These skills are a reflection and natural extension of the OTA Program's mission and can be found throughout the program from the student selection process to graduate assessment.

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Panola College OTA Program Curriculum Model



The Person-Environment-Occupation Model

Law M, Cooper B, Strong S, Stewart D, Rigby P, Letts L. The Person-Environment-Occupation Model: A Transactive Approach to Occupational Performance. Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy. 1996;63(1):9-23. doi:[10.1177/000841749606300103](https://doi.org/10.1177/000841749606300103)

OTA Curriculum


Semester I (Prerequisite Courses)		Hours
BIOL 2401	Anatomy & Physiology I	4
ENGL 1301	Composition & Rhetoric I	3
PSYC 2301	General Psychology	3
HUMA 1301	Introduction to Humanities	<u>3</u>
Total		13
Semester II		
BIOL 2402	Anatomy & Physiology II	4
PSYC 2314	LifeSpan/Growth and Development	3
OTHA 1405	Principles of Occupational Therapy	4
OTHA 1360	Clinical – Occupational Therapy Assistant	<u>3</u>
Total		14
Semester III		
OTHA 1341	Occupational Performance from Birth - Adolescence	3
OTHA 1415	Therapeutic Use of Occupations or Activities I	4
OTHA 2360	Clinical – Occupational Therapy Assistant	<u>3</u>
Total		10
Semester IV (Summer)		
OTHA 1409	Human Structure and Function in Occupational Therapy	4
OTHA 2335	Health Care Management in Occupational Therapy	<u>3</u>
Total		7
Semester V		
OTHA 1349	Occupational Performance of Adulthood	3
OTHA 2402	Therapeutic Use of Occupations or Activities II	4
OTHA 2361	Clinical – Occupational Therapy Assistant	<u>3</u>
Total		10
Semester VI		
OTHA 2266*	Practicum (Field Experience) 8 weeks – OTA	2
OTHA 2267*	Practicum (Field Experience) 8 weeks – OTA	2
OTHA 2230	Workplace Skills for the OTA	<u>2</u>
Total		6
TOTAL HOURS		60

*Capstone learning experience

Revised 9/2022

OTA Program Mission

The mission of the Panola College OTA program is to prepare **skilled, introspective professionals** who are committed to providing **effective** OT services in **traditional and emerging practice settings**.



The Mission of the Panola College OTA Program is to prepare **skilled, introspective professionals** who are committed to providing **effective** OT services in **traditional and emerging practice** settings.

Panola College OTA Program graduates are **skilled, introspective professionals** who are committed to providing **effective** OT services in **traditional and emerging practice settings**.

- **Skilled** – Our graduates implement best practice interventions by understanding the clinical reasoning process.
- **Introspective** – Our graduates have strong social emotional skills and understand their own psychosocial needs. With this awareness, they can develop therapeutic relationships that are foundational for the occupational therapy process.
- **Professionals** – Our graduates are successful 21st century workers due to their ability to be creative problem solvers, critical thinkers and competent communicators.
- **Effective** – Our graduates use evidence-based research to guide client centered, occupation-based interventions to support meaningful occupational engagement.
- **Traditional and Emerging** – Our graduates can identify barriers and implement strategies to support effective occupational engagement within diverse settings.

OTA Program Goals and Objectives

Upon completion of the Occupational Therapy Assisting Program and under the supervision of the occupational therapist, our graduates are:

Skilled - Our graduates implement best practice interventions by understanding the clinical reasoning process. So that our graduates are able to:

- Articulate the values, beliefs, and distinct perspectives of the occupational therapy profession through the understanding of OT theories, frames of reference, and/or practice models.
- Accurately complete screenings and administer selected assessments to identify and collect data relating to occupational performance, including psychosocial factors.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize and document the results of the evaluation process clearly, accurately, and concisely, to assist in the development of an occupational profile and interventions.
- Assist in the formulation of goals and objectives with psychosocial factors considered using terminology consistent with The OT Practice Framework and OT Standards of Practice.

Introspective - Our graduates have strong social-emotional skills and understand their own psychosocial needs. With this awareness, they can develop therapeutic relationships that are foundational for the occupational therapy process. So that our graduates are able to:

- Evaluate and integrate strategies to enhance self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal and communication skills when interacting with patients, families, and co-workers.
- Develop therapeutic relationships with patients (includes establishing rapport, building trust, working in partnership, etc.) and employ therapeutic use of self as an intervention strategy.
- Collaborate and establish alliances with families, caregivers, colleagues, service providers, administration, and the public by effectively communicating the unique value and role of occupation as a vital role in health and wellness.

Professional - Our graduates are successful 21st-century workers due to their ability to be creative problem solvers, critical thinkers, and competent communicators. So that our graduates are able to:

- Provide occupational therapy services consistent with The Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and the laws, rules, and regulations governing occupational therapy practice.
- Demonstrate the awareness of professional responsibilities and the collaborative relationship between the OT and OTA, including participation in ongoing

educational experiences, active involvement in local and national service and professional organizations, and serving as a mentor and/or fieldwork educator for future OTA students.

- Demonstrate excellent professional work behaviors such as dependability, time and resource management, showing empathy towards co-workers and individuals, constructively responding to feedback, initiation, organization, cooperation with others, and adherence to safety requirements.

Effective - Our graduates use evidence-based research to guide client-centered, occupation-based interventions to support meaningful occupational engagement. So that our graduates are able to:

- Uses evidence from research and relevant resources to make informed intervention decisions.
- Design, select, set up, grade, and implement occupations, activities, and interventions to support occupations that are meaningful to the individual and consistent with the established treatment plan.
- Effectively and efficiently document occupational therapy services in accordance with state and federal laws.

Traditional and emerging practice settings - Our graduates can identify barriers and implement strategies to support effective occupational engagement within diverse settings. So that our graduates are able to:

- Consider the sociocultural context in which the individual engages in occupations and how it guides the therapeutic process.
- Consider the individual's roles, values, interests, habits, and psychosocial factors, and performance skills to enhance safety, health, and wellness.
- Design and/or participate in service-learning opportunities which support community members' participation and engagement in healthy occupations within diverse populations.

OTA Program Information

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. AOTA's phone number is (301) 652-6611. Graduates of this program will earn an Associate of Applied Sciences degree. Additionally, graduates are able to take the national certification examination, which upon successful completion, the graduate will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). Most states, including Texas, require licensure in order to practice. Of note, initial state licensure is usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination.

Program Length

After prerequisite courses are completed, the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program can be completed in five academic semesters, including two, eight-week Level II fieldwork experiences. The curriculum ensures a balance of theoretical and technical courses as well as supervised application of skills in area fieldwork sites.

Program Application Process

Prior to applying to the OTA program, students must:

1. Apply and be fully admitted to Panola College.
2. Fulfill all Texas Success Initiative reporting requirements.
3. Complete prerequisite courses (per the degree plan) with a minimum grade of “C” in each course.
4. Have a minimum 2.5 overall GPA all prerequisite courses associated with the OTA degree plan (core course grades).

Transfer Students from Other OTA Programs

In order to be eligible for transfer consideration, students must first meet the transfer criteria required by the College. Additionally, OTHA courses must have been completed within the past two years with a minimum grade of “C” in each. Students must meet immunization and background requirements and provide a letter of good standing from a Dean/Director of a fully accredited OTA program in Texas. A returning Panola College OTA student can be considered a transfer student if the OTA AAS degree plan has changed since the student was actively attending OTHA courses. If space is available, the OTA Program Chair will review course syllabi and determine eligibility for re-admission on a case-by-case basis. (See also Re-admission policy in this handbook.)

Admission Point System

Program selection is based on cumulative weighted points for the following criteria: core curriculum GPA, residency, narrative, core points, and interview. Each criterion is weighted as listed below.

Core Curriculum GPA -	15%
Residency -	5%
Narrative -	15%
Core Points -	35%
Interview -	30%
Total	100%

Core Curriculum GPA

The applicant's Core Curriculum grade point average (GPA) will be calculated based upon grades earned in all non-OTHA courses required as part of the OTA degree plan. These courses include the required/provisional pre-requisite courses - BIOL 2401, ENGL 1301, PSYC 2301, HUMA 1301 and may also include BIOL 2402, PSYC 2314. *The core curriculum GPA is divided by 4.0 and multiplied by .15.*

Residency

The applicant earns a 1, 2, or 3 based on residency. The applicant earns 1 point for residency outside of Texas, 2 points for residency within Texas, and 3 points for residency with the College's service area (Panola, Harrison, Shelby and Marion counties). Also indicated by the chart below:

- 3 points = in service area (Panola, Harrison, Shelby, or Marion counties)
- 2 points = in Texas
- 1 point = out of state

The raw score is divided by 3 and then multiplied by .05

Application Narrative

OTA faculty grade application narratives using a 20 point scale rubric which equally considers the writer's introduction and conclusion, organization, content, structural quality, and neatness.

The raw score is divided by 20 multiplied by .15.

CORE Points

Applicants are able to earn points by completing core courses required in the OTA program. Point values are based on the number of core courses completed AND the quality of the grade earned in each course. **If space is available**, the OTA Program Chair can review the applicant's pre-requisite course completion/enrollment status and determine eligibility for provisional application and acceptance on a case-by-case basis.

Degree Awarded

- 2 points = applicant has completed a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- 1 point = applicant has completed an Associate's degree.

Prerequisite Courses (Must be completed prior to application)

BIOL 2401	Anatomy and Physiology I	5 points
ENGL 1301	Composition & Rhetoric I	2 points
PSYC 2301	General Psychology	3 points

Prerequisite Course (May apply without completion, but must be completed by the end of first Fall Semester 1 after acceptance into the OTA Program)

HUMA 1301	Introduction to Humanities	2 points
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Non-prerequisite Courses (Do not have to be completed prior to application, but must be completed by the end of first Fall Semester 1 after acceptance into the OTA Program)

BIOL 2402	Anatomy and Physiology II	10 points
PSYC 2314	Lifespan Growth and Development	6 points

The points associated with each course are multiplied by the value of the letter grade earned in that course, for example, an “A” has a value of 4, a “B” a value of 3, and so on.

The applicant’s total raw score from the above is divided by 112, then multiplied by .35.

Selection Process Summary

Each completed application will be considered, and applicants will be ranked according to the criteria above (Core curriculum GPA, residency, narrative, and CORE points). The top 50 applicants will be selected to continue the process and will be scheduled for an interview. The remaining students will be notified of non-selection via email.

Interview

The importance of the therapist-patient relationship is an essential element of the mission and philosophy of the OTA program. The OTA faculty members know that an effective therapist-patient relationship is key to establishing and reaching successful patient outcomes in OT. Live interviews provide insight into the applicant’s ability to relate to and communicate effectively with others.

The raw interview score is divided by the maximum possible score and multiplied by .30.

Final Applicant Selections

After the interview process is completed and interview points are added, students are ranked according to their overall application process score. The top 24 applicants are offered a position in the program. The Program Chair will finalize the OTA applicant selection process based on responses to the acceptance notifications.

Once admitted to the OTA Program, students must earn a grade of “C” or above in all required curriculum courses. Students must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 2.0 in order to graduate from the OTA Program.

The OTA program requires a grade of 75% to earn a “C” in any OTA course. If a student earns a grade of D, W, or F in any required curriculum course (OTA or non-OTA), the student will be dropped from the program and must reapply for admittance (See Program Readmission Requirements). A student may be readmitted once with the next cohort on a space-available basis. If readmitted, the student will be required to repeat the course in which the unsatisfactory grade was earned, develop a student success plan with approval from their OTA faculty advisor and course instructor, and pass that course with a “C” or better in order to continue. The student may also be required to repeat any co-requisite OTA courses stipulated

in the College Catalog. The OTA Program Chair can review the student's course status and determine eligibility for exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Program Admission Requirements

Panola College is an Equal Opportunity Institution that provides educational and employment opportunities to all on the basis of merit and without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, age, gender, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, disability, or genetic information. Admission to Panola College does not guarantee admission to the OTA program. Students must affirm their ability to perform the essential job functions via signature on the *Panola College OTA Program - Essential Functions Requirements for OT Service Delivery* form provided in the application prior to the first class day. For more information on OTA Admission requirements, refer to the College Catalog or OTA Program Webpages.

Program Readmission Requirements

Note: Occupational Therapy Assistant courses are offered only once per year and must be taken in the order indicated in the OTA AAS degree plan in the Panola College catalog. Withdrawal or failure from an OTHA course will delay graduation, fieldwork placement, and can result in removal from the OTA Program. Readmission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant program always occurs on a space-available basis as determined by the Program Director. A student's status at the time of withdrawal or failure from the program affects re-admission qualification as indicated below.

Withdrawal

Withdrawing from any course at Panola College requires adherence to policies and procedures indicated in the Panola College catalog. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from the program course(s) according to Panola College policy and withdrawal procedures. Non-compliance can result in a course grade of an "F" if the student does not follow withdrawal deadlines set by the College.

Readmission Policy

Students who withdraw from the OTA Program for **nonacademic reasons** may be readmitted with the next cohort under the following conditions:

1. The student left the OTA program in good standing with the program and the college.
2. The student completes a student success meeting with the Program Director following the withdrawal.

Students who withdraw and have a failing grade in an OTHA course or courses at the time of the withdrawal **or** did not progress in the program due to **academic reasons** (student earns a grade of D, W, or F in any required curriculum course OTHA or non-OTHA), can only be re-admitted once with the next cohort. The following conditions must also be met to qualify for readmission:

1. The student withdrew in good standing with the College and remains in good standing.
2. The withdrawal or failure was not due to academic dishonesty.
3. The withdrawal or failure was not due to the student achieving 3 strikes (9 fouls) according to the Panola College OTA Program Disciplinary Actions policy.

4. The withdrawal or failure was not due to the student being dropped from a class or from all classes for a breach of conduct (See Panola College Policies and Regulations in the current Panola College Catalog).

Following readmission, if a student does not progress due to academic reasons in any subsequent OTHA course(s), the student will be dismissed from the OTA program with no option for readmission.

If Panola College policies regarding student conduct or qualification to enroll are more stringent than or are in conflict with, program policies, institutional policies shall take precedence.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Support Services (DSS) Office at Panola College provides and facilitates support services and accommodations for students with disabilities. The DSS office works under the federal guidelines in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Panola College and the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are committed to providing a barrier-free educational environment to the extent possible. To this end, every effort is made to ensure our program and facilities are accessible to students with disabilities.

Support Services are available to students to provide them with an equal opportunity to benefit from the educational offerings and to participate in the life of the college. A disability, as defined by federal guidelines, is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Activities such as walking, hearing, or seeing. A student must self-identify, complete an application for disability accommodations, and provide recent documentation of their disability to the DSS office. Disability Support Services will facilitate accommodation for students with documented disabilities. New students are encouraged to read the Handbook for Students with Disabilities and to contact the DSS office following admission to ensure that needed accommodations are available at the time of enrollment.

Professional Organizations

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)

6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200
North Bethesda, Maryland 20852-4929
(301) 652-AOTA (2682)
www.aota.org

The American Occupational Therapy Association is the largest and most influential professional organization for occupational therapists in the world. Founded in 1917, it has grown in size and stature since that time, as evidenced by its current membership of over 230,000 occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and students.

The mission of AOTA is to advance occupational therapy practice, education, and research through standard setting and advocacy on behalf of its members, the profession, and the public. Since AOTA is a voluntary organization, its bylaws and policies are determined by those occupational therapy practitioners who comprise its membership. In addition to an

Executive Board of elected and appointed officers, various committees and commissions meet and deliberate throughout the year to determine strategies for achieving the association's goals. For example, AOTA's Vision for 2025 states that "as an inclusive profession, occupational therapy maximizes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living.." Members of AOTA are encouraged to participate in organizational activities so that national goals and initiatives can include the efforts and reflect the viewpoints of a broad constituency of occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and students.

At the national level, a student presence is heard by the AOTA via the Assembly of Student Delegates (ASD).

"The ASD provides a mechanism for the expression of student concerns, and offers a means whereby students can have effective input into AOTA affairs". The ASD meets multiple times per year. In addition, annually, an ASD Representative from each OT and OTA educational program represents their peers at AOTA's annual conference.

As a standing committee of the Board of Directors, the ASD Steering Committee serves the ASD membership by synthesizing student concerns to represent the student point of view to the Representative Assembly, the Commission on Practice, the Commission on Education, and all other bodies of AOTA as needed." (AOTA-ASD, 2020)

The cost of AOTA basic student membership is \$75.00 and includes access to *the American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *OT Practice Magazine*, *SIS Quarterly Practice Connections*, AOTA's job board, OTJobLink, virtual career fairs, and Commun OT. Student members also receive discounts on conference registration and AOTA publications. More information about AOTA can be found on their website.

Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA)

1106 Clayton Lane
Suite 516W
Austin, TX 78723
Phone: 512-454-8682
<http://www.tota.org/>

The Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA) is a professional association established for the benefit of professionals and students of occupational therapy. Membership services include public relations, legislative information, practice forums, educational meetings, and student services.

One of the oldest and most established state occupational therapy organizations, TOTA is organized into six geographical areas or districts, including Alamo South, Capital Centex, Great Plains West, Gulf Coast East, Rio Grande, and Trinity North. This association and its districts also have an executive board and elected officers. An annual conference is conducted yearly in a major city in Texas, and a newsletter, *Revista OT*, is published bimonthly. Membership in TOTA is independent of AOTA membership. The cost for an OTA student membership is \$30.00.

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)

One Bank Street

Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
(301) 990-7979
Fax (301) 869-8492
<http://www.nbcot.org>

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) strives to serve the public interest in its diversity by advancing just, equitable, and inclusive client care and professional practice through evidence-based certification practices and the validation of knowledge essential for effective and safe practice in occupational therapy. NBCOT is the independent national credentialing agency that certifies eligible persons as occupational therapists, registered (OTRs), and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA's). Certification by NBCOT is independent of state licensing requirements. All state regulatory agencies have recognized the use of NBCOT's occupational therapy certification examination as the regulatory standard. The acronyms "OTR" and "COTA" are registered trademarks and may only be used by practitioners certified and in good standing with NBCOT.

The NBCOT offers a certification examination leading to certification of both OTR and COTA candidates. To be certified, an individual must: graduate from an accredited occupational therapy program; successfully complete all occupational therapy fieldwork requirements; and pass the NBCOT certification examination. Students can expect to pay \$515-\$600 to register for the NBCOT certification exam.

If you are concerned about an issue in your background that might prevent you from being eligible to sit for the certification exam, NBCOT provides an early determination & character review process. More information can be found on the NBCOT website: <https://www.nbcot.org>.

Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners (TBOTE)

(A subdivision of the Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners)

1801 N Congress Avenue, Suite 10.900
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 305-6900
<http://www.ptot.texas.gov/page/home>

The Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners is the state licensing agency for OT practitioners in the state of Texas. Maintenance of a current state license is required in the state of Texas to provide Occupational Therapy services. Renewal is required every two (2) years with the approval of a designated number of contact hours of continuing education and payment of a renewal fee. The current cost to apply for a regular OTA license is \$100.00.

If you are concerned about an issue in your background that might prevent you from being eligible to obtain an OTA license in Texas, you may request a criminal history evaluation from TBOTE. More information can be found on the TBOTE website.

Panola College Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)

The Student Occupational Therapy Association is an active club sanctioned by Panola College. Membership in SOTA is open to students enrolled in the OTA program, all students declaring OTA as their major, and all OTA Program alumni. The purpose of

this club is to unite the OTA students, future students, alumni, and faculty and broaden their intellectual and professional skills through community service initiatives. Membership fees are \$5.00 due at the beginning of the spring and fall semesters.

Credentialing

Credentialing consists of various forms of recognition that an individual has met prescribed standards to engage in professional practice. Two types of credentialing apply to occupational therapy assistants: certification and licensure. Information on these types of credentialing is provided below.

Certification (see NBCOT)

It is important to remember that completion of the program requirements at Panola College will not in itself authorize an individual to practice OT in the United States. In order to practice in the State of Texas, you must be initially certified and hold a current license. In order to become initially certified, an individual must successfully complete an accredited occupational therapy assistant program of study. This entitles one to complete the certification examination for occupational therapy assistant. If the certification examination is successfully passed, the individual becomes certified by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, thus putting the "C" in COTA. However, before you can practice OT in Texas, you must obtain a license (see below).

Licensure (See TBOTE)

Licensure is the governmental (state) regulation of practice, designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of a state against unscrupulous or incompetent practice by persons who have not met prescribed qualifications. In Texas, occupational therapy assistants are required to obtain a license to practice from the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners prior to practicing. Failure to do so renders both the individual as well as his/her employer (if applicable) liable for misdemeanor charges and fines. The Board maintains certain rules and regulations that govern eligibility for a license, as well as requirements for licensure renewal. Upon successful completion of the NBCOT certification exam you are eligible to apply for licensure. If you have met all requirements *except* the certification examination, you are eligible to apply for a temporary license. You may practice during this period **only if you are in possession of a temporary license and work under the supervision of a licensed therapist.**

Application for Certification and Licensure

During your course of study you will receive the most current information available regarding certification and licensure. It is your responsibility to provide each agency with the appropriate information within the specified time frames. Neither TBOTE nor NBCOT is forgiving or understanding of students who miss deadlines or fail to accurately complete forms.

As of 2022, you can expect to pay approximately \$515-\$600 when applying for the NBCOT certification exam and \$100 for the initial COTA Texas licensure.

Both NBCOT and TBOTE ask character questions that must be answered honestly. Failure to accurately and honestly answer these questions could jeopardize your ability to practice OT.

Student Resources

Academic Advising

Academic advising is available through Panola College Student Services. The primary function of the Panola College advising program is to help students adjust to the college environment as well as to provide academic, career, and technical advising. OTA program declared majors, applicants, and students enrolled in the OTA program are also advised by OTA faculty. For more information on student advising specifically related to the OTA program, refer to the Student Advising Policy in this manual.

Library Facilities

The M.P. Baker Library is an academic Learning Resources Center (LRC). The LRC includes the library collection and a host of online books and research databases. The evolving collection of books, journals, and audiovisuals supports all programs at Panola College. Additionally, the library hosts services such as interlibrary loans, access to study rooms, conference rooms, a computer classroom, and study tables. OTA students will complete assignments that require the use of the LRC. To ensure success with such assignments, all OTA students are required to complete coursework in online information literacy as a part of the OTA program.

The M.P. Baker Library offers copying, printing, scanning, and a host of other services for students. Fax services are available at the College Store.

Student Financial Aid Services

There are numerous financial aid opportunities available through the Panola College Financial Aid office (refer to the Panola College Catalog). Occasionally grants become available specifically for OTA students. Students are encouraged to have a financial aid application on file so that grant opportunities can be efficiently processed.

Computers, Printing, and Copying

The Health and Natural Sciences building houses a well-equipped computer lab and laptop computer banks for classroom use. Individually, students may access computer labs located in the M.P. Baker Library. Students may be given course assignments that require the use of a computer lab or bank. In these cases, the use of personal computers is permissible. No drink containers are allowed on the same surface as a computer owned by the college. Students should respect other students by not talking in computer lab/bank areas. A printer kiosk is available on the first floor of the Health and Natural Sciences building. This printer allows students to direct connect or wirelessly print and copy. Printing instructions are located adjacent to the printer. Document copies cannot be made for students by the department secretaries – please do not make such requests.

Fieldwork Affiliations

The OTA Program has established a valuable network of fieldwork sites and talented fieldwork educators throughout East Texas and the country to provide students with quality learning experiences. We are grateful to these agencies for opening their doors to OTA students. **OTA Fieldwork Educators (FWEs) are volunteers** and should be recognized and respected as such. Panola College enters into a legally binding

affiliation agreement with each fieldwork site (or individual) stipulating that participating faculty and students will abide by the rules and regulations governing the experience.

Canvas

Canvas is the learning management system that is used college-wide to support student learning. All OTA courses are enhanced by the use of Canvas. Students are expected to comply with all course requirements involving the use of Canvas. Online instructional materials will be provided in Microsoft Word or PDF format and students are required to submit materials in both formats. Students are required to convert images and documents into a PDF format. A mobile app or other similar resource is recommended for PDF conversions. MS Word and other MS applications are available in all computer labs. Technology training and orientation are provided in the student's first semester in the OTA program to ensure success in the use of technology used in the OTA Program.

Student Mail Boxes

Each OTA student is responsible for checking their mailbox routinely. Mailboxes are located inside the ADL lab (room 1120).

Section II – INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES

Classroom and Lab Policies

Physical Facilities

OTA classes are held in rooms 1120, 1121, and 1122 in the Health and Natural Sciences building (HNS). Occasionally, classes are held in the outdoor classroom located just outside of the HNSB or in the Sid Baker Turner Memorial Chapel. The normal operating hours for the Health and Natural Sciences building are 8:00 to 5:00, M-Th, and 7:30 to 12:30 on Fridays. The OTA secretary's office is located in room 1103, and the phone number is (903) 694-4000. Any questions or concerns should be directed to staff in this office.

Student Ethics

Students enrolled in the OTA program are expected to behave in ways that reflect high ethical standards. The OTA program expects students to adhere to the basic guidelines regarding ethical behavior in the classroom as defined in *The Pathfinder*. In addition to those guidelines, the OTA program has further clarified ethical expectations as described below.

Students in the OTA program are expected to:

1. Follow the policies described in this manual, *The Pathfinder*, and any additional requirements included in OTA course syllabi. "Acting in a manner counter to the principles detailed in any ethical code or student code of conduct that applies to you is unethical behavior." (Sladyk & Ryan, 2015, p. 609)
2. Use their own knowledge and skill to complete examinations without referring to others' answers, class notes, or other references **unless specifically permitted by the instructor**. Students who fail to comply with this standard can expect to receive a zero on the exam and may be subject to further disciplinary actions.
3. Use their own knowledge to complete assignments **unless specifically permitted by the instructor**. Individual assignments shall not plagiarize, quote, or copy another student's work. Students who fail to comply with this standard can expect to receive a zero on the assignment and may be subject to further disciplinary actions.
4. Assume that each assignment completed in or outside of class is to be done without consultation of another current or former class member **unless specifically permitted by the instructor**. If a student is unsure if an assignment is to be completed with a partner, group, or team, it is the student's responsibility to clarify this with the instructor **PRIOR** to starting the assignment.
5. Respect instructors and other learners, which includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Students may not insult, slur, raise their voice to, or be disrespectful to Panola College faculty, staff, instructors, other health professionals, or students. This expectation does not infringe upon a student's right to raise questions and request clarification but does define parameters in which the question or clarification is expressed.

- Students will refrain from engaging in side conversations during class (Sladyk & Ryan, 2015, p. 609). Students may not allow their cell phone to adversely affect the learning environment (Sladyk & Ryan, 2015, p. 609).
 - Students shall not use tobacco products or vapor products on Panola College campuses.
 - Students will honor commitments by being on time for classes, field trips, and fieldwork duties. When students are not on time or absent, they will follow the appropriate procedures. (Refer to attendance and absence notification procedures in this manual and course syllabi).
 - Fieldwork Educators are considered an extension of the Panola College faculty.
6. Respect the limited resources of furniture, fixtures, textbooks, computers, instructional technology, supplies, library books, and journals. Students shall not mutilate, deface, damage, or withhold resources for their own use.
 7. Conserve limited resources by using only supplies needed to complete assignments and maintain equipment in good working order. They shall not waste supplies or misuse equipment. It is the student's responsibility to report any damaged resources to the course instructor or OTA Program Chair.
 8. Assist in maintaining class and laboratory rooms in good order. They shall not leave these rooms dirty, cluttered, littered, or in disarray or disorder upon completion of their assignment in each room.
 9. Complete all assignments by the scheduled date and time or request alternative arrangements **prior to the due date** with the course instructor. Regardless of the weight of an assignment, students may not opt out of assignment submission. All assignments are essential to demonstrate competency in practice and must be completed and submitted according to the course instructions.
 10. Comply with and effectively execute safety procedures when working with peers, clients, and equipment, whether in class, lab, clinic, or the client's home. Under no circumstance shall a student endanger the safety and welfare of clients, caregivers, other students, faculty, or staff.
 11. Comply with all policies and procedures established by the Occupational Therapy Assistant Department and all fieldwork facilities. Students shall not exempt themselves without explicit permission from a faculty member or fieldwork educator.
 12. Promptly and accurately comply with requests from the Program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC), meeting or exceeding deadlines and time-specific action items. Failure to comply will result in grade penalties and/or disciplinary action.
 13. Respect the confidentiality of patient information regardless of source (client, therapist, records, charts, etc.). Students shall not repeat or maintain a personal record of information outside of the classroom, clinic, or facility where any part of the client's name appears except initials. Students will fully adhere to HIPAA Guidelines for Fieldwork as published by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

14. Respect the confidentiality of ALL information shared in the classroom. All discussions held in the classroom, lab, or fieldwork are to be considered confidential in nature. "Due to the nature of OT education, sometimes students and instructors have personal examples that are relevant to class discussions. This information should be respected and not used for gossip." (Sladyk & Ryan, 2015, p. 611)
15. Work in cooperation with and respect for peers and other healthcare team members. Students will substantively contribute to all group or team projects.
16. Respect the property and property rights of the OTA department and other allied health faculty and staff, all allied health students, fieldwork facility and staff, and clients. They shall not remove or borrow property without permission nor damage or misuse Panola College property or any fieldwork-related properties.
17. Respect other student's projects. Students shall not handle, steal, alter, deface, or otherwise harm another student's project, especially in a manner which might cause the student to earn a lower grade.
18. Monitor and maintain current CPR and immunization status as required by the OTA program.
19. Honor commitments, agreements, and contracts made with peers, College faculty, staff, and fieldwork educators. This includes timely notification in advance when unable to keep a commitment. Fieldwork site or learning site abandonment (leaving without notice and/or permission) is grounds for dismissal from the Program.
20. Function within your role as a student. If you are unsure if certain actions are outside of the role and scope of a student, ask a faculty member before acting.
21. Canvas notifications should be enabled to ensure students receive administrative notifications from all OTHA courses, the OTA Student Group and the OTA Fieldwork Program. Otherwise, students are expected to check OTA Student Group Canvas mail at least bi-weekly during the semester and during the semester breaks for administrative announcements. Failure to respond appropriately to time-sensitive requests made by faculty or staff will result in disciplinary action.

Students are expected to be aware of and comply with these ethics standards. Acting in a manner counter to these standards will result in consequences that reflect the severity of the infraction. Students who fail a class or are withdrawn from the OTA program due to one or more ethics violations will not be allowed to reapply. Refer to the Disciplinary Action and Readmission sections of this policy manual for more information.

Sladyk, K., & Ryan, S. E. (2015). *Ryan's occupational therapy assistant: Principles, practice issues and techniques* (5th ed.). Thorofare, NJ: Slack.

Attendance - Class and Lab

1. If a student is tardy or absent, he or she must notify (directly via telephone or voice message) the OTA Department Secretary prior to the start of class. Failure to do so will result in a 5-point deduction from the overall course grade per occurrence.

2. A student is considered **tardy** if they come to class late (by any increment) or leave class prior to the published end time. For example, in a class that meets once a week from 8:00 to 12:00, a student who arrives one minute late is tardy, as well as a student who leaves any time before 12:00. **Two tardies are considered one absence.**
3. OTA classes and labs are interactive, experiential, and hands-on, so attendance is vital for achieving course objectives. Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required of all students. When an instructor determines a student has been absent to such a degree as to invalidate the learning experience, the instructor may recommend to the Program Chair that the student be withdrawn from the course. If the OTA Program Chair agrees, the student will need to withdraw from the course, resulting in a W or F, depending on the date. Instructors may seek to withdraw students for non-attendance after they have accumulated the following number of absences:
 - a. Fall or spring semesters:
 - i. 5 absences in 3 days a week classes
 - ii. 3 absences in 2 days a week classes
 - iii. 2 absences in 1 day a week classes
 - b. Long Summer Sessions:
 - i. 3 absences in 3 days a week classes
 - ii. 2 absences in 2 days a week classes
4. When a student is tardy to class (either initially or when class resumes after a timed break), he or she is expected to quietly enter the classroom **and address the tardiness issue with the instructor at the first available break.** For tardiness to fieldwork, refer to the Fieldwork Section of this manual.
5. In the event of special circumstances and at the discretion of the OTA Program Chair, students may be allowed to attend classroom time virtually in real-time with a written action plan agreed upon by the instructor to ensure student success.
6. Make-up assignments and skills testing may be required for absences of any time span to ensure the student acquires the information and skills presented during their absence.
7. Extended absences due to special circumstances will be handled at the discretion of the OTA Program Chair. However, as stated above, withdrawal procedures may be necessary based on the circumstances. Students who are unable to attend class because of extenuating circumstances such as illness, accident, hospitalization, or COVID-19-related reasons should notify the instructor as listed above, and be prepared to supply the instructor and others with any written verifications of the absence request. Absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis as related to extenuating circumstances as listed above within the policies listed in this manual and the Panola Pathfinder. The Chair of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, in coordination with the course instructor and student, will develop an individualized plan in response to specific needs.
8. There is no such thing as an excused absence or tardy. All absences and tardies will be considered as described above. If a student is absent due to illness, a physician's excuse may be requested by the instructor.

9. In the event of an absence (under normal circumstances), for any reason, grades taken on daily work, such as quizzes and lab exercises, **may not** be made up.
10. Elective absences, such as missing class for a pre-planned event, must be discussed with and approved at least 24 hours in advance with the course instructor. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

Personal Appearance and Dress Code

The Personal Appearance and Dress Code Policy, established by OTA faculty, is designed to optimize student learning experiences. While we respect and appreciate the rights of students to reflect their personalities through their appearance and dress, these policies are based on current employer standards in the Panola College service area, as well as safety precautions in lab, classroom, and clinical environments. Requests can be made for accommodations of dress code requirements for religious or other purposes directly to the OTA Program Chair and may be considered if a student is able to provide appropriate documentation to validate the exception request.

Students are expected to follow these requirements **anytime they are on campus** representing the OTA program, including but not limited to class, lab, fieldwork, OTA program meetings, attending required events, and when participating in Program-related events.

1. Uniforms will consist of solid black scrubs during class, labs, or fieldwork unless instructed otherwise.
2. Crew neck undershirts of a solid color must be worn under scrub tops.
3. Scrub uniforms must be of appropriate size and type so that if a student bends, squats, raises the arms overhead or assumes a quadruped position, no skin is visible.
4. For clinical sites that prohibit scrubs, students must wear black scrub pants and a green Panola College OTA Program monogrammed polo shirt (sold at the College store) or an approved OTA T-shirt.
5. Clean tennis shoes and socks are required.
6. Level II fieldwork sites may require a different scrub set color and/or a lab jacket, and students must adhere to their site's personal appearance and dress code requirements. Students are responsible for purchasing fieldwork site attire as indicated in the sites' policy.
7. Students are required to wear their Panola College ID badge at all times in class, in the lab, or when representing or participating in Program activities.
8. Jewelry must be minimal and may not interfere with any aspect of learning activities or client care.

9. Students may wear one stud earring in each ear lobe. Body piercings of other types and in other areas are not permitted. Gauges or spacers are not permitted. Students may be required to remove all jewelry for certain learning activities for their safety and the safety of others.
10. A digital watch with a timer feature is required, however, if the watch also can be used as a cell phone or to receive text messages, the student must not attend to the watch for personal use during learning activities or other Program-related events.
11. Tattoos must not be visible. Students must conceal visible tattoos in a professional, non-distracting manner.
12. Hair must be securely held off the uniform collar and away from the face during all class lab activities and when at fieldwork. Ponytails must be secured so that they do not hang forward into the face area. Hair styles should be appropriately secured away from the face, moderate, and clean. Large barrettes, bands, ribbons, bows, ties, or similar adornments are not permitted. Hair color must be natural to humans.
13. Facial hair must be neat and shortly trimmed. If facial hair impedes the effective application of medical PPE, it must be completely removed.
14. Caps or hats may not be worn during any clinical or learning activities unless permitted by the instructor.
15. Make-up should be worn in moderation and should not be distracting.
16. No perfumes, colognes, aftershaves, scented lotions, or similar substances may be worn during client care or learning activities; they may be offensive or could cause adverse reactions to others.
17. Personal hygiene is required at all times, and students should be free from body odor and tobacco odors.
18. Clothing should be free of odors such as those associated with smoking.
19. Fingernails must be clean and filed smoothly. The fingernails should not exceed beyond the fingertips. Fake nails and nail polish are not allowed.
20. When explicitly permitted in writing by faculty, students may deviate from the above-listed dress code, however, the following guidelines are mandatory when not in dress code:
 - a. Shorts or skirts must be no more than 2 inches from the top of the knee
 - b. Clothing cannot have holes, cuts, be revealing, or form-fitting
 - c. Leggings may be worn under clothing to support privacy
 - d. T-shirts should not have logos other than a Panola College logo

21. Sunglasses are not permitted during educational activities unless specifically approved by the course instructor.
22. During a pandemic, in order to participate in OTA class activities and fieldwork, students may be required to wear personal protection equipment (PPE), maintain specified social distancing, maintain assigned seating and/or standing positions, sanitize hands and surfaces frequently to prevent the spread of disease.

Students in non-compliance with the Personal Appearance and Dress Code Policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Additionally, students may be required to leave class, lab or fieldwork to correct the non-compliance. In such cases, the student may be considered tardy or absent.

Professional Skill Expectations and Assessment

Throughout the OTA program, learning is assessed via student demonstration of job-relevant skills that are critical for the safe and effective delivery of OT services. Skills such as patient transfers, manual muscle testing, dressing retraining, reflex testing, feeding retraining, group facilitation, professionalism, and other skills must be performed to proficiency in order to successfully complete certain courses.

Professionalism is one of the most important skill sets required to secure employment and ensure the successful delivery of OT services within an intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary team.

Each Fall and Spring semester, unless otherwise assigned, students will complete and submit a midterm and final professional skill self-assessment using the Professional Skills Assessment form below as described in each course syllabus. Assigned OTA Faculty advisors will also evaluate students' raw scores, with an additional scoring of the student's reflective narrative, and will meet face to face with each student to discuss student performance and collaborate on a plan for professional development. The advisor-evaluated assessment score is calculated according to the following method.

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{Total possible raw score} = \underline{\hspace{1cm}}/48 \text{ (Meets expectations threshold score: 36)} \\
 + &\text{ Narrative reflection score } \underline{\hspace{1cm}}/60 \\
 &= \text{ Total Raw Score } \underline{\hspace{1cm}}/96 \text{ (Maximum score 96)}
 \end{aligned}$$

The advisor-evaluated assessment score will be entered into the course grade book per the syllabus guidelines. Across the students' participation in the program, the student will submit a semester-end Professional Skills Assessment three times. Students scoring less than "3" on any criterion must develop, track, and execute a measurable student success plan for the criterion that is approved by their assigned faculty advisor. In order to progress to the next semester of the program, students are expected to meet score minimums, failure to do so will result in an overall grade of zero for the Professional Skills Assessment, resulting in failure of the course or courses in which the skills are assessed.

Score minimums

Freshman student minimum passing scores - You must have a minimum score of 3 or higher on items # 1 Ethics and # 2 Safety on the final submission in the Spring and

Fall semester to pass this assessment and progress to the next semester of the program.

Sophomore students minimum passing scores - By the Sophomore Fall Semester final submission, you must score at least a 3 or greater on each item. Scores of 1 or 2 on any of the items will result in a no-pass on the Professional Skills Assessment. Details of the form are included on the following pages:

Professional Skills Assessment

Student Name: _____

Rating Scale:

4- Exemplary performance - Demonstrates satisfactory competence in specific skills consistently; demonstrates substantial breadth and depth in understanding and/or skillful application of fundamental knowledge and skills. **(Rarely Earned)**

3- Proficient performance - Demonstrates satisfactory competence in specific skills; demonstrates adequate understanding and/or application of fundamental knowledge and skills.

2- Emerging performance - Demonstrates limited competence in specific skills (inconsistencies may be evident); demonstrates limited understanding and/or application of fundamental knowledge and skills (displays some gaps and/or inaccuracies).

1- Unsatisfactory performance - Fails to demonstrate competence in specific skills; performs in an inappropriate manner; demonstrates inadequate understanding and/or application of fundamental knowledge and skills; (demonstrates significant gaps and/or inaccuracies).

Instructions: Professional development is a **reflective** process. The performance areas listed below are similar to how you will be evaluated during your Practicum courses. To support your professional skills development and readiness to become an OTA practitioner, consider your overall professional performance patterns since the beginning of the program and rate your current skill level based on the Rating Scale above. Provide a numerical score *and add comments in each section that include specific **examples of experiences, accomplishments, areas of strengths, and areas of growth*** that support/justify the numerical rating. Submit the form per the assignment deadline and instructions. Following the submission, you will sign up to meet with your Advisor to discuss your professional development progress.

Grading: Student ratings and comments are considered, but final scores are derived from instructor ratings. Students must pass this assessment with 75% or better in order to pass the course. The advisor-evaluated assessment score is calculated according to the following method.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Total possible raw score} = \underline{\quad\quad} / 48 \text{ (Meets expectations threshold score: 36)} \\ + \text{ Narrative reflection score } \underline{\quad\quad} / 60 \\ = \text{ Total Raw Score } \underline{\quad\quad} / 96 \text{ (Maximum score 96)} \end{array}$$

Score minimums for students in OTA Program

Freshman student minimum passing scores - You must have a minimum score of 3 or higher on items # 1 Ethics and # 2 Safety on the final submission in the Spring and Fall semester to pass this assessment and progress to the next semester of the program.

Sophomore students minimum passing scores - By the Sophomore Fall Semester final submission, you must score at least a 3 or greater on each item. Scores of 1 or 2 on any of the items will result in a no-pass on the Professional Skills Assessment.

I. Fundamentals of Practice

Score	1. Ethics – to rate this section you will need to review the document
	Consistently adheres to the Panola College OTA Program Code of Ethics. (FWPE 1)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	2. Safety
	Consistently adheres to safety regulations. (FWPE 2) Anticipates potentially hazardous situations and takes steps to prevent accidents through the use of <u>problem-solving and critical thinking skills</u> . (FWPE 3)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	3. Self-Responsibility
	Takes responsibility for attaining professional competence by seeking out learning opportunities and seeking out interactions with mentors, instructors, and FWEs. Actively engages in the classroom and virtual discussions. (FWPE 26, 30)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	4. Responds to feedback – consider information gained in the peer review process
	Responds constructively to feedback in a timely manner. (FWPE 27) Reflects on outcomes and generates a plan of action.
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	5. Basic Work Behaviors
	Consistently demonstrates effective work behaviors including punctuality, initiative, preparedness, flexibility, dependability, professional appearance, and worksite maintenance. (FWPE 28)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	6. Advanced Work Behaviors
	Collaborates with instructors to maximize the learning experience. Initiates communication, asks for feedback about performance, and identifies own strengths and challenges. (FWPE 25) Critical thinking and creative problem solving - Uses resources to generate solutions prior to making decisions or asking for help.

	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	7. Time Management
	Demonstrates effective time management (punctuality: plans ahead, adheres to schedules, completes work in the expected timeframe, etc.). (FWPE 29)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	8. Interpersonal Skills
	The student demonstrates positive interpersonal skills including but not limited to eye contact, body posture, empathy, cooperation, tact, and flexibility. The introspective student manages relationships effectively during course work and at clinical sites participations including self-awareness and therapeutic use of self and adjusts approach to meet the needs of others. (FWPE 30)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	9. Cultural Competence
	Demonstrates respect for diversity factors of others including but not limited to sociocultural, socioeconomic, spiritual, and lifestyle choices. (FWPE 31)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Score	10. Advocacy
	Participates or supports events, organizations, or causes that positively impact at-risk populations. (FWPE 2, 3, 4)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

II. Communication

Score	11. Verbal and Nonverbal Communication
	Clearly, effectively, and respectfully communicates verbally and nonverbally with peers, instructors, the public, clients, families, and significant others. (FWPE 23)
	Comments:

	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5
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Score	12. Written Communication
	Produces clear and accurate documentation according to assignment requirements. All writing is legible, and spelled correctly, using accurate punctuation and grammar in written and electronic documentation. (FWPE 24)
	Comments:
	Faculty Only Narrative Score /5

Student self identified personal goals for professional development:

- 1)
- 2)

Additional Comments:

Faculty Only Grading Summary:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{Total possible raw score} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}/48 \text{ (Minimum required passing raw score} = 36) \\
 + &\text{ Narrative reflection score } \underline{\hspace{2cm}}/60 \text{ (5 points for each section x12 items =60)} \\
 &= \text{ Total Raw Score } \underline{\hspace{2cm}}/96
 \end{aligned}$$

Instructional Class/Lab Delivery Methods

Course material will be presented in a face-to-face lecture, demonstration, lab, and/or hybrid online format with the performance of specific techniques in the laboratory during or following the lecture. Much of the OTA curriculum instruction is delivered through team-based learning (TBL). Team-based learning is an evidence-based, effective form of small-group learning that facilitates student preparation and engagement. Students may also experience hands-on patient skill labs, guest lecturers, service learning opportunities, and field trips. A variety of technology will be used, including, live video, video playback, instructional videos, MS PowerPoint presentations, and streaming video presentations. All OTA course materials with the exception of assigned textbook readings (syllabi, course schedule, reading assignments, handouts, etc.) will be provided via Canvas in MS Word or PDF format. Students are expected to access Canvas frequently in order to obtain necessary course materials. Students are expected to obtain the textbooks required for each course. Pre-class assignments are created to prepare students for class and lab learning activities. Students are expected to complete all pre-class assignments prior to class. Electronically submitted assignments must be submitted in the format specified by the instructor.

In unexpected circumstances created by a natural disaster, pandemic, or other major adverse event, OTA program class delivery will be altered to optimize student success. Students will be given as much advance notice as possible about the changes. When possible, class content will be delivered electronically. Laboratory content that must be delivered in a face-to-face format may be offered at different times and in smaller faculty/student ratios.

Exam Policies and Procedures

Make-up exams

Students must notify the instructor in advance if unable to take a scheduled examination. If not, the student will receive a zero for the exam. A make-up exam will not be given in this circumstance.

Written or practical make-up exams will not be given in the event of an elective student absence. Make-up exams may be given upon extenuating emergent circumstances, for example, an illness or death in the immediate family. Instructors may ask for proof of extenuating circumstances.

The type of make-up exam given is at the discretion of the faculty and may be essay, short answer, open book, multiple choice, oral, or any combination of test formats. The student should make every effort to make up the exam as soon as possible. Exams not made up within one week of the scheduled date may be given a grade of zero at the discretion of the instructor.

Post Test/exam review

Learning theorists have proven that students retain and learn more when given immediate feedback regarding performance. Faculty members will assign high priority to the timely return of graded assignments, quizzes, and exams. Faculty may review exams with students and address all questions relative to the exam such that the entire class may benefit. Students may be required to express specific concerns about exams and grading in writing and make an

appointment with the faculty member for further discussion. For optimal learning, final exams should be reviewed during the last week of class when possible.

Testing Procedures

We, as a faculty, do not employ examination procedures because we think students are inclined to cheat. In fact, we expect that OTA students will not cheat. Instructors will design a class atmosphere that encourages and facilitates academic honesty. To do this, we adhere to the following procedure when administering written exams or quizzes:

1. Classroom tables must be separated from the team formation as directed by faculty.
2. Only two students are allowed per desk. If laptops are being used, students will sit facing each other on opposite ends of the desk.
3. Students will be required to place all materials on the floor or away from the testing area.
4. Each student may bring several pens/pencils to the testing area.
5. Once the instructor hands out or opens the exam, no talking is permitted.
6. During the examination period, students are permitted to go to the restroom one at a time.
7. If a student has a question regarding the examination, the instructor may address the question. When appropriate, all of the students are allowed to hear the question and answer that the instructor provides. Only questions regarding test question clarity will be addressed by the faculty.
8. Exams delivered by computer are password protected. As the students are taking the exam, the password will be changed to protect the integrity of the exam.

Testing Procedure for Lab or Skills Examinations

The OTA faculty members recognize that students learn from observing the lab or skills examinations of other students. During a skills examination, a limited number of students may be allowed to directly observe, and an unlimited number may be allowed to observe a live stream video. On occasion, students may participate in the exam as an untrained assistant. In such cases, observing students are to follow the verbal instructions of the student being tested if they are asked to participate in any way. Observing/participating students are not to act independently. Under no circumstances should observing/participating students give verbal or non-verbal cues to the student being tested. These actions will be considered as dishonest and unethical and could result in a zero for the observer or other consequences as described in the Disciplinary Action section of this manual.

Late Assignment Policy

Students are expected to submit assignments on time, according to written instructions. The course instructor may extend an assignment deadline if notified of extenuating circumstances prior to the deadline. Students can expect a 50% grade reduction for assignments that are submitted after the due date. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours late will result in a grade of zero.

OTA Student Advising

All OTA faculty are responsible for advising OTA students on matters related to coursework and/or fieldwork success. Academic advising guidelines are as follows:

1. Upon acceptance into the OTA program, students are assigned a faculty advisor.
2. During each Fall and Spring semester of the program, each student is collaboratively evaluated by their assigned faculty advisor using the Professional Skills Assessment form.
3. Students are expected to meet with their assigned faculty advisor at least once each semester to discuss academic progress.
4. Questions or concerns about a specific course should be discussed with the course instructor.
5. Students may make an appointment with an adjunct instructor or visit a full-time instructor during designated office hours (or by appointment).

Pre-Class Assignments

It is critical that students complete all pre-class assignments as outlined in the course schedule or assigned by the instructor. Students must also submit documentation related to coursework by the assigned due date (immunizations, insurance, etc.) Students failing to do so may receive up to a 5 percentage point deduction from their overall course grade for each day that the information is late and will be subject to further disciplinary action.

Video Recording and Photographs

To enhance the education process, photographs, or video and audio recordings of students will occur during lectures, demonstrations, and/or lab experiences. The OTA classrooms and equipment rooms have motion-triggered cameras that automatically record the learning environments. Video recordings of skills examinations may be used for instruction or evaluation purposes. Students should be prepared for photographs and/or video recordings during lectures or labs. Photographs and videos may also be used for OTA program advertisement. *Your signature on the last page of this Student Policy Manual grants permission to be videoed or photographed.* Exceptions can be requested and will be reviewed by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis.

Grade Reporting

Students who are not passing at mid-term will be notified electronically via “Campus Connect”. The percentage system for letter grades below will be used for all reporting with the exception of OTHA 2266 and 2267. Specific grading criteria are detailed in each course syllabus and reviewed at the beginning of each semester. The following grading scale is used throughout OTA Program:

90 - 100%	A
80 - 89%	B
75 - 79%	C
60 - 74%	D
Below 60%	F

Social Media

Integrity extends to social media. Social media is defined as web-based and mobile platforms for user-generated content that create interactive and highly accessible and

often public dialogues. This includes, but is not limited to: Bebo, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, MySpace, Orkut, Whatsapp, Vine, Snapchat, Twitter, Tumble, Flickr, Instagram, TikTok, any other electronic association such as photos or videos, on any device with internet or photo capability such as Smart Phone watches, and any future social media devices or networks.

Students and faculty should not request to be added, friended, or followed by each other on any social media. This includes clinical instructors, fieldwork educators, preceptors, and other people or entities affiliated with the Panola College Health Science programs and the education of Panola College students (i.e. any employee in the agency whether directly educating you or not). This does not apply to officially sanctioned, closed sites developed by or through Panola College nor does this apply once the student has successfully completed the program and has graduated from Panola College or is no longer a student.

Students shall not post any derogatory or negative remarks regarding anything related to Panola College or their fieldwork/clinical setting. Federal laws such as HIPAA protect patient privacy and must be adhered to by every student at all times including on social media.

Consider what you post on any social networking site – you may think it disappears after a certain amount of time, but it does not. Many potential employers view your sites to determine if they are interested in hiring you. Be aware of everything you post – and be professional – now and always!

Violation of this policy by the student will result in disciplinary action according to this policy manual.

Student Safety - Classroom, Lab, and Fieldwork

The OTA Program promotes safety for all students, staff, faculty, and clients. The OTA program complies with accepted policies, standards, and guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Students learn about Standard Precautions and the concepts are practiced and reinforced throughout the program.

Students are responsible for using Standard Precautions and infection control guidelines and are responsible for any personal expenses that may occur in the event of an exposure. In the event a student becomes exposed to viruses, blood, or body fluids, the exposure should be reported to the fieldwork educator, course instructor, and the authorities at the fieldwork site. Guidelines from the fieldwork site for such exposure should be followed including documentation. Students understand and assume responsibility for the natural risk associated with working with individuals receiving services and general conditions related to the learning and intervention environments.

Additionally, the following procedures will be followed to ensure safety:

- For alerting purposes, drinks with a secure screw-on lid are allowed in the classroom. Great care must be taken if there is an electronic device nearby. Instructors may impose loss of privileges for non-compliant students and/or teams.

- The ADL areas in room 1120 may only be accessed by students during class/lab learning activities or certain SOTA activities, as approved by the SOTA sponsor in writing.
- Students may not use the ADL kitchen to store personal items or as a break room.
- Children are not allowed in classrooms, labs, or during student conferences.
- Panola College employees are not allowed to dispense or administer medications.
- The Maintenance department is responsible for the inspection of electrical equipment and fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers are labeled to reflect the date of inspection.
- Students will notify faculty members of non-working or malfunctioning equipment and the faculty member will submit a work order for repair. The malfunctioning equipment will be visibly labeled as such by the faculty and students will not be allowed to use the item until repairs are completed.
- Students are responsible for cleaning equipment and materials used in class/lab and returning them to the proper storage area.
- Dirty/used linens should be put in the laundry hamper.
- Only the department-provided safety ladder will be used when suspending therapy equipment.
- Safety mats will be placed under each suspended equipment platform when in use.
- Suspended equipment platforms will be removed when not in use and the height adjustment kit will be raised to approximately 6'
- Flammables (aerosols, paints, tanning fluids, etc.) are stored in the flammables cabinet located in room 1116.
- Physical agent modalities will be unplugged when not in use.
- Lint in the clothes dryer lint trap will be discarded upon each use of the dryer.
- Students may not access therapy equipment without instruction from a faculty member.
- Therapy equipment and supplies leaving the building must be signed out (and signed back in) by the responsible student.

Throughout the program, students will use a variety of therapeutic media, supplies, and tools. Students must follow all written and oral instructions prior to beginning lab activities. Faculty will orient students to potentially harmful materials/equipment and explain any risks and contraindications before demonstrating their proper use. Students will be required to demonstrate competent and safe use of materials and equipment prior to ongoing use. In the event of an accident, Crisis Management Plans and first aid kits are available in OTA classrooms/labs 1120, 1121, and 1122.

The Pony Alert system is an emergency notification program that notifies faculty, staff and students via text and email message in the event of severe weather or other campus emergencies. Also, there is a telephone in each classroom that can broadcast emergency messages to students and faculty. Using the classroom phone, faculty members can make local (on campus) calls and outside emergency calls.

Evacuation Procedures

If an emergency arises during class or lab, your instructor will safely escort you out of the building in the shortest possible route. If you are not in class and an emergency arises, proceed to the closest exit and continue well beyond the building to an area of safety. All classrooms are supplied with maps showing the nearest exit route.

Student Communication

(phones, data devices, telephone messages, and e-mail)

Handheld Electronic and Similar Devices

In an effort to promote an environment conducive to learning and testing, the following policies will be enforced:

Students are not allowed to use handheld electronic devices or other potentially distracting devices in the classroom, during class, labs or exams **except when approved for use by the instructor for educational purposes**. Students are not allowed to use handheld electronic devices or other potentially distracting devices at clinical or fieldwork sites. If a student has an emergency situation, he or she must obtain the course or fieldwork educator's permission to use the device. Because of the disruptive nature of cell phones, the student and instructor must agree on what constitutes an "emergency situation" for an exception to be granted. Students must set such devices so that they do not disrupt the classroom or clinic, i.e. off or in silent mode. As an aspect of classroom management, any OTA instructor has the option, at any time, to restrict the presence or use of cell phones in their classroom environment.

Devices used for medical purposes must not be audible and must be inconspicuously placed so as not to distract or draw attention to the device.

Emergency Access to Students

In the case of an emergency, your family may contact the OTA office at 903-694-4000 and speak with a department staff member. The staff may screen the call to determine if the message is of an emergency nature. If the student is on campus in class, the message will be delivered immediately. The student is responsible for notifying the family, daycare, etc. when he or she will be away from campus. Students are encouraged to have a backup system for emergencies. The information provided on your Student Information Sheet will be used to locate you or your next of kin in the event of an emergency. If an emergency requires that a family member must speak directly with a student, the department secretary will call the classroom, and the student will be dismissed. Family members are not allowed to directly access classrooms under any circumstance.

Change of Personal Information

It is the student's responsibility to immediately inform the OTA department secretary of changes in personal information while enrolled in the OTA program. This includes changes in e-mail and physical addresses, telephone and mobile phone numbers, marital status, etc.

Fieldwork Policies

Clinical and/or Practicum courses are considered “Fieldwork” experiences. Each semester, students will participate in a hands-on practical learning experience with individuals. Fieldwork provides an opportunity for the student to practice and learn in community-based agencies, schools, hospitals, clinics, mental health settings, and senior communities. Students will have three (3) Clinical courses each focusing on a specific area of study which will include Psychosocial factors, Occupational Engagement, and the Intervention Process. Each Clinical course provides an opportunity to apply didactic experiences with a variety of populations across the lifespan (children through adults). The focus of the Clinical courses is to give students opportunities to apply foundational skills needed by all OT practitioners rapport-building techniques, understanding of human behavior, group dynamics, interpersonal skills, group facilitation skills, and critical reasoning. Each Clinical course consists of 160 hours of Level I fieldwork which may be met through one or more of the following instructional methods: Simulated environments, Standardized patients, Faculty practice, Faculty-led site visits, and/or Supervision by a fieldwork educator in a practice environment. According to ACOTE, Level I Fieldwork may be completed through any combination of electronically simulated experiences, faculty-facilitated simulation experiences, or face-to-face experiences.

Practicum I and II are the two final courses of the OTA program and consist of 320 hours each, totaling 640 hours. The focus of Practicum courses is to provide an opportunity for students to apply their understanding of evidence-based practice in two eight (8) week full-time supervised OT practice settings under the direct supervision of an OT practitioner. In total, to complete the program, a minimum of 16 weeks of full-time Level II fieldwork is required. This may be completed on a part-time basis, as defined by the fieldwork placement in accordance with the fieldwork placement's usual and customary personnel policies, as long as it is at least 50% of an FTE at that site. The student can complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area or in a maximum of three different settings.

Unexpected circumstances created by a natural disaster, pandemic, or other major adverse events, could limit student participation at level II fieldwork sites. In such cases, fieldwork sites may completely limit student access, or some may offer alternative service delivery formats, such as telehealth, that optimize student participation.

Level II Fieldwork completion (as well as OTA Program completion and graduation) may be delayed. Level II Fieldwork completion timeline requirements are clearly defined in the College Catalog and in the “Fieldwork Completion” section below.

This section of the handbook describes policies and procedures which govern the fieldwork portion of your educational program. Please be aware that noncompliance with regulations or failure to execute the responsibilities in this section may jeopardize your standing in the program or affect your eligibility to practice after graduation.

Fieldwork Completion

As stated in the College Catalog, Level I Fieldwork (Clinical) placements begin and end in concert with the corresponding academic courses. Assignments related to fieldwork experiences may be given in any academic course taken concurrently with a clinical. It is the goal of the OTA program to integrate classroom learning within a context that supports the ability to apply new skills.

Level II fieldwork (Practicum) courses are capstone experiences designed to help students integrate information learned in didactic courses. To ensure a positive learning experience for both student and fieldwork educator (FWE), Level II Fieldwork experiences (OTHA 2266 and 2267) must be completed within 18 months of the completion of the 5th semester.

Pregnancy and Progression Policy

In alignment with the Panola College Pregnancy and Parenting policy, the OTA program welcomes pregnant and parenting students as a part of the student body. Our program is committed to providing support and adaptations for a successful educational experience for pregnant and parenting students. Students experiencing a need for accommodations related to pregnancy or parenting will find a Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations Request form in The Pathfinder or may request the form from an OTA Program course instructor.

Fieldwork Placement Policy

While the OTA Program Chair and other faculty members have input into student placements, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) is responsible for finalizing all Clinical and Practicum assignments. Fieldwork placements are designed to expose the student to as many areas of occupational therapy practice as possible and, thereby, facilitate the attainment of the essential skills needed for the entry-level practice of occupational therapy.

Students are given an opportunity to provide input regarding areas of interest before fieldwork assignments are made. However, the program cannot grant assurances that students will be placed in specific or preferred sites. Students should be prepared to incur expenses for transportation, travel, food, and uniforms during required fieldwork assignments. Every effort will be made to place students within a reasonable (60-90 minute) driving distance from their residence. Students residing in rural areas can expect longer commutes.

Quality fieldwork sites and fieldwork educators whose practice supports the program's mission are limited. For this reason, students may be required to comply with additional site requirements as listed in the College catalog. For example, some fieldwork sites require additional background check information, immunizations, drug screens or health insurance. In such cases, these must be purchased at the student's expense.

Students who choose not to attend an assigned Practicum fieldwork site may earn an "F" for that course. Extenuating circumstances for consideration may be submitted to the Program Chair in writing. Depending on the circumstances, the student may be re-assigned to a different site, however, it is up to the AFWC if there will be any special criteria for the re-assignment. Students who choose not to attend an assigned Clinical fieldwork site experience may earn a 0 for assignments related to the clinical course. Level I clinical students declining a fieldwork placement must request, in writing, a meeting with the Program Chair to discuss extenuating circumstances for consideration.

Fieldwork placements are reserved many months (and in some cases, up to a year) in advance of a scheduled fieldwork experience. The AFWC will assign all eligible students to specific facilities for Level I and Level II Fieldwork experiences. It is very difficult to re-schedule student fieldwork placements once assignments have been made. For this reason, the decisions regarding fieldwork placements are final.

The Program cannot assume liability for timely rescheduling of fieldwork placements canceled by the clinical site. However, the Program recognizes and accepts its ethical obligation in those situations where the facility or fieldwork educator has canceled a scheduled placement, or when extenuating circumstances have precluded the student's participation in the experience.

CPR Certification and Immunization Policy

Students **must** have current CPR and immunization documentation on file in the OTA office in order to participate in service learning activities that involve community participants, clinical courses, and fieldwork courses.

OTA Program and Fieldwork Site Collaboration - Student Progress

At a minimum, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) will receive student progress reports at midterm from the fieldwork educator. Contact between the AFWC, the student, and/or fieldwork educator increases if problems arise. This is explained in detail below in the FIELDWORK PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS section.

Fieldwork Evaluation

Level I Fieldwork (Clinical)

Student performance in Level I Fieldwork is evaluated by the fieldwork educator assigned at the site and/or by OTA faculty through the completion of assignments. The student will complete three (3) Level 1 (clinical) courses during the OTA program each consisting of a minimum of 160 hours each. The focus of Level I courses is to develop foundational OT practitioner skills related to professionalism, interpersonal skills, and clinical reasoning. The fieldwork educator will use the Clinical Skills Assessment form to assess student performance. This form evaluates basic professional behaviors of the student rather than specific, technical skills. The student is responsible for submitting this finalized, scored, document to the corresponding course instructor on the designated date. Students must achieve a 75% on each Clinical Skills Assessment.

As part of each Clinical course, students will complete a Student Evaluation of Level I Fieldwork which is discussed with the course instructor and shared with the AFWC.

Students participating in Level I fieldwork are required to complete a Clinical Time Log that verifies attendance required for Fieldwork. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the time log entries, obtain required signatures and keep a running total of fieldwork hours completed. Inaccurate or incomplete time logs will be considered an ethical violation and may result in disciplinary action and/or course grade reductions.

If a student fails, is removed/withdrawn from, or fails to complete the hourly requirement of the Level I Fieldwork rotation, this will result in an "F" for the course. Health-related exceptions may be made with the consent of both the AFWC, OTA Program Chair and Dean of Health Sciences.

Level II Fieldwork (Practicum)

The student will complete two (2) 320-hour Level II Fieldwork placements once all other OTHA courses have been successfully completed. Student performance and course grades in Level II Fieldwork is assessed by the fieldwork educator assigned at the site of the affiliation and the

course instructor as stipulated in the course syllabi. Grading is guided by AOTA's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student (FWPE). The evaluation form provides an objective assessment of the student's skills performed at the fieldwork site. The fieldwork educator meets with the student weekly to discuss progress, formally at the midpoint and again upon completing the 8-week experience. Student progress is submitted at both midterm and final evaluation periods. Level II Fieldwork courses are Pass/Fail with a sum score of 91 or higher required to receive a Pass on the final FWPE. In addition, to pass the course, the student must score at least a "3" on the first three areas of the FWPE, which pertain to **Ethics and Safety**. Scores of "1" are not allowed on any item to pass the FWPE.

The student will complete and share with their fieldwork educator a Panola OTA Student Evaluation of Level II - Practicum Fieldwork Experience form at the midterm and final evaluation periods each rotation.

Students participating in Level II fieldwork are required to complete a Time Log that is signed by the fieldwork educator at least weekly. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the time log entries, obtain required signatures and keep a running total of fieldwork hours completed. Inaccurate or incomplete time logs will be considered an ethical violation and may result in disciplinary action and/or course grade reductions.

If a student fails, is removed/withdrawn, or fails to complete the hourly requirement of the Level II Fieldwork rotation, this will result in an "F" for the course. Health-related exceptions may be made with the consent of both the OTA Program Chair and Dean of Health Sciences.

Fieldwork Problems or Concerns

Fieldwork concerns may be identified at any point by the fieldwork educator, the student or by the AFWC. Students may contact the AFWC any time he or she has a concern. However, the student will be encouraged to resolve issues as independently and professionally as possible. If unresolved concerns remain, the fieldwork educator, AFWC, student and course instructor will discuss problem areas and strategies for success. In such cases, the AFWC will remain in weekly contact with the fieldwork educator, the course instructor and/or the student until the issues are resolved. The OTA Program Chair may be asked to participate in meetings or discussions at any time during this process. All conference minutes and information related to student performance are maintained in the student's electronic file in the OTA department. A student may file an appeal through the academic appeals process described below.

Fieldwork Academic Appeal Process

The purpose of the fieldwork academic appeal process is to provide a mutually acceptable method for the prompt and equitable settlement of student grievances regarding fieldwork.

The following steps should be followed by as student wishing to file a fieldwork academic appeal:

Step I: Resolution with Fieldwork Educator (FWE)

The student who believes he/she has a legitimate appeal should first discuss the concern with the Fieldwork Educator. The Fieldwork Educator is responsible for:

1. Seeking the underlying causes of the problem or concern.
2. Rendering a fair and impartial decision based on the facts relevant to the issues involved.
3. Consulting, with the course instructor and/or the AFWC for a solution to the problem.
4. Documenting all efforts to settle the issue.
5. Notifying the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator promptly if a complaint has not been resolved.

If the student still feels the problem has not been resolved, he or she, can proceed to step 2 and file a formal academic appeal. A formal appeal must be submitted in writing to the OTA Program Chair and must include a description of the problem, the history of efforts to resolve the problem and the requested remedy.

Step II: Formal Appeal

When the OTA Program Chair receives the written notification of grievance by the student the following will occur:

1. The fieldwork course instructor and the academic fieldwork coordinator will collaboratively form an action plan.
2. Action plans may include but are not limited to:
 - Contacting the student for gathering of data, counseling and/or advisement.
 - Contacting the FWE for clarifying information. Resolution may be possible at this point with resources, advising, etc.
 - Review of current OTA program and fieldwork site policies.
 - Arranging for a site visit to meet with the student and FWE to clarify areas where misunderstanding may exist due to a failure by either party to properly clarify their intentions. The Program Chair may attend this meeting.
 - Providing the FWE and/or student with resources for solving the grievance and for optimizing the learning experience.
3. Assigned OTA faculty/staff will document the details of the situation and place into the appropriate student file and send a copy to the OTA Program Chair.

Step III: Final Resolution

The OTA Program Chair will be responsible for:

1. Reviewing documentation and recommendations from the AFWC, course instructor and FWE.
2. Collaborating with the AFWC, course instructor and FWE to determine a course of action. Fair and impartial decisions/actions will be made based on the facts relevant to the issues involved.

If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter then he or she may continue with the academic appeals process as described in the Student Pathfinder. If a decision was made to withdraw a student from the fieldwork site, the student will not be assigned to a different site until the appeal is fully resolved.

Professional Risks

Interactions with clients in the health care system carry inherent risks to both the client and the health care provider, including, but not limited to communicable diseases. In the first OTA course and regularly throughout the curriculum, students will be given information regarding known risks for various diseases and the standard precautions required to prevent the spread of infection.

All students will be expected to provide appropriate care to clients assigned to them in any health care setting as a learning experience. These assignments may include clients with medical diagnoses of COVID-19, tuberculosis, hepatitis A or B or C or HIV. Refer to the Classroom/Lab safety section of this manual for additional details.

Fieldwork Attendance Policy

If a student is tardy (arrives late or departs early) or is absent on the scheduled days of fieldwork, he/she **MUST** notify the OTA Program Secretary AND the fieldwork educator by telephone prior to the assigned reporting time. Each failure to follow this policy will result in 5-point reduction from the student's final grade and will be considered a "strike" (see Disciplinary Action section of this manual). If the student fails to follow this procedure a third time, the student will withdraw from the program and will receive an "F" for that Level II fieldwork course.

Should a student need to schedule an **elective absence or tardy**, the student **MUST** submit a written request to the course instructor and obtain prior approval before any elective changes are made to the FW rotation schedule. Any student failing to follow this protocol will lose 10 points off the overall grade, and a Disciplinary Strike will be acquired.

All absences from fieldwork experience **must** be made up at a time convenient to the clinic as agreed upon by the student, the fieldwork educator, and the course instructor.

Recurrent tardiness or absences from fieldwork will not be permitted. If a student is tardy or absent more than once, an action plan must be created as a performance improvement measure with the fieldwork educator and course instructor. If an additional tardy or absence occurs after the action plan is in place, it will result in a "strike" (see Disciplinary Action section).

Fieldwork Educational Assignments

Students should be prepared for additional assignments that may be required by the fieldwork educator at the facility. Assignments are designed to enhance your learning experience and should be treated as such. ALL assignments must be completed in a timely manner to successfully complete the clinical affiliation.

Confidentiality

It is unethical to share information with other individuals regarding facilities, fieldwork educators, or classmates outside of the classroom. It is illegal to share such information about patients. Violation of this ethical code may result in expulsion from the OTA Program. For additional information, refer to the Ethics section of this manual.

Student Conference

For information about student advising, refer to the Student Advising section of this manual. Student conferences may be scheduled at times convenient for both student and faculty. At any time, students may request to meet with any faculty member or the Program Chair to discuss academic issues or other issues that impact the student's success in the Program. When a student's academic or professional performance is unsatisfactory, she/he will be required to meet with the OTA Program Chair and/or faculty to discuss areas of concern. Topics of discussion might include the student's classroom/lab performance, fieldwork issues, or professional behaviors. Concerns regarding future or present fieldwork placements are directed to the academic fieldwork coordinator.

The Professional Skills Assessment Rating Scale and/or Conference Forms may be used to guide conference discussions. Students may be asked to generate a written action plan.

Disciplinary Action

When students make poor choices, especially those that violate policies described in this manual, it is the OTA faculty's responsibility to meet with the student individually to provide feedback and help the student learn from the situation. In such cases, a "Disciplinary Action Form" will be completed by the faculty and student. The student will be provided with a copy of the completed form.

First time poor choices may result in a "warning." First offense warnings are often associated with immunizations, dress, cell phones, and tardiness. Subsequent poor choices that involve minor infractions and consequences will result in a "foul". More serious infractions that include but are not limited to failure to respond to previous feedback, behaviors that affect or could potentially affect the safety of others, and dishonesty will result in a "strike." Fouls and strikes are cumulative throughout the program. Every third foul converts to a strike, even if the offenses are unrelated. Upon earning three strikes (or nine fouls), the student will receive an "F" for all OTHA courses in the semester the student is currently enrolled and will be dismissed from the program without eligibility for readmission or reapplication.

Below are more examples of the lesser "foul" offenses. This is not an all-inclusive list.

- Smoking on the Panola College campus or other prohibited areas
- Cell phones disrupting the educational environment
- Failure to adhere to social media policies
- Violations of the Personal Appearance and Dress Code policy in this manual
- Using offensive voice tone or language
- Unauthorized use of supplies or equipment
- Failure to submit weekly action plans related to professional skill assessment
- Failure to follow procedures regarding tardiness
- Non-adherence to direct requests (contacting fieldwork educators, completing immunizations) that affect educational programming

Below are some examples of behaviors that warrant a "strike". This is not an all-inclusive list.

- Repeated “foul” offenses or foul offenses that result in unusually negative consequences
- Non-adherence to direct requests from Panola College faculty or staff (i.e. contacting fieldwork educators, failure to execute/track or report action plans or behavior contracts, completing and submitting immunizations) that affect educational programming
- Behavior that threatens the safety of others (hitting, throwing objects, etc.)
- Threatening, coercing or intimidating others
- Failure to follow notification procedures when absent (depending on results)
- Breaches in confidentiality that adversely affect clients or peers

Some behaviors may result in immediate withdrawal from the Program without going through the above listed 3-step process. Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Extreme cases of “strike” offenses
- Offenses involving substance abuse, patient abuse, or fieldwork site/learning site abandonment (leaving a learning environment or designated area without notification/permission)
- Violation of patient confidentiality
- Academic dishonesty
- Falsification of documentation
- Unprofessional/unsafe behavior that seriously jeopardizes student, faculty, staff, fieldwork educator, client/patient, caregiver, or supervisor safety

* The student's signature does not necessarily indicate that the student agrees with the statements made on the form(s), only that the issues stated on the form were discussed with the student and the student had an opportunity to review the form(s) and make comments.

Disciplinary actions are cumulative throughout the program and part of the student's permanent record with the Panola College OTA program. If a student is re-admitted, the student is re-admitted with disciplinary action as received at the time of withdrawal or failure from the program.

Physical Examination/CPR Certification/Immunizations

Students accepted into the program must complete a physical examination by a licensed physician and must show proof of current immunizations. Students must submit the completed physical examination as directed. Students are required to complete a Healthcare CPR certification that is dated after admission into the OTA program and prior to the beginning of the second (first spring) semester. Students will provide the OTA office with electronic copies in PDF format of required immunization and CPR documentation.

****Important!!** Students are responsible for maintaining current health records in the OTA department; students failing to do so will not be allowed to attend OTA classes. Failure to maintain current immunizations and submit health care records is considered an ethical violation and will result in disciplinary action. Non-compliance could result in dismissal from the OTA Program.

Immunizations

All required immunizations must be kept current. Students provide proof of required immunizations as required during admission and prior to participating in clinical experiences. In addition, **students must meet the college immunization requirements as well as any individual facility requirements when attending clinical.**

Required Vaccinations for Students Enrolled in Health-related Courses in Institutions of Higher Education:

This section applies to all students enrolled in health-related courses, which will involve direct patient contact. Students may be enrolled while obtaining the required vaccines and acceptable evidence of vaccination but cannot be in simulation or clinical until vaccination status is current.

- **MMR** - Two doses required. (*Students born prior to 1/1957 are exempt from the MMR vaccine.*)
If you cannot produce records for two MMR vaccines, you must provide a positive titer for Rubella (Measles), Mumps, and Rubella.
- ***Rubella Titer IgG** (*this is in addition to the MMR*) – A positive antibody titer for Rubella (lab report required). If the titer is negative you will need to receive a booster, then 30 days later have another titer drawn.
- **Tdap** – One dose of Tetanus/diphtheria/acellular Pertussis is required followed by TD every 10 years.
- **TB Skin Test** - An annual negative TB test (ppd or Quantiferon Gold) must be documented. If positive, an annual negative chest exam must be verified by the primary provider. TB skin tests have to be read 48-72 hours after administration, otherwise, the test will have to be repeated.
- **Hepatitis B** – Students shall receive a complete series of the Hepatitis B vaccine. Shots in progress must be as follows: # 1 received by orientation, # 2 one month after the first dose, and # 3 – six months after the first dose. One month after the last vaccine the Hepatitis B titer must be drawn to show proof of immunity.
- ***Hepatitis B Titer AB** – (To be drawn one month after the 3rd Hepatitis B vaccine) Students must provide proof of a positive titer once the Hepatitis B series is completed. If, the titer comes back negative the series **MUST** be repeated. If after 6 doses of the vaccine the student produces a negative titer; then the student shall be deemed a non-responder and is considered to have met the criteria.
- **Varicella Titer IgG** – A positive antibody for Varicella (lab report required). If the titer comes back negative you must receive the Varicella booster, then 30 days later have another titer drawn.
- **Seasonal Flu Shot** – This is required during the fall sessions.
- ***COVID-19 (Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson)** - Complete the COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation form and provide proof of vaccination status if choosing to vaccinate. **Panola College does not require COVID-19 vaccination, nor does the OTA program, but many clinical sites do.** Student participation in clinicals and practicums can be limited if

the student chooses not to obtain the COVID-19 vaccination in accordance with affiliation agreements to comply with fieldwork site policies.

*Declination of any immunization must follow Department of State Health Service Policy Title 25 Part 1 Chapter 97 Subchapter B Rule 96.62 of the Texas Administrative Code:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx>. Students may also be required to complete a declination required by a clinical facility.

Polio vaccine is not required but students are encouraged to determine if they are immune to poliomyelitis.

Acceptable Evidence of Vaccinations:

- a) Vaccines administered after September 1, 1991, shall include the month, day and year each vaccine was administered.
- b) Documentation of vaccines administered that include the signature or stamp of the physician or his/her designee, or public health personnel is acceptable.
- c) An official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority, such as a registry, is acceptable.
- d) A record received from school officials including a record from another state is acceptable.
- e) Laboratory results must be provided for titers: Serologic confirmations of immunity (titer) for measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, and varicella illnesses are acceptable if they consist of a laboratory report that indicates confirmation of immunity.

Section III – HEALTH SERVICES, PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS, BACKGROUND CHECKS, AND DRUG SCREENS

Health Services

Students in the OTA program have the same access to health services provided to other students enrolled in the College. Panola College offers no healthcare facility on campus. If an accident or emergency occurs on campus, aid will be administered in accordance with the *Panola College General Catalog* and *The Pathfinder*. The cost of any professional service is the student's responsibility. Students are encouraged to have medical insurance coverage from a company of their choice. The Panola College Human Resources Office provides information concerning sickness and accident insurance policies available to students and their dependents. Students are encouraged to contact student services regarding any additional available resources for physical health, mental health, and dental health services. The OTA program will make a list of available resources available to OTA students. A list of area healthcare providers can be obtained in the OTA office.

Physical Limitations Policy

In the event of an illness, accident, injury, pregnancy, or other medical condition that hinders a student's ability to perform in the classroom, laboratory, or fieldwork setting, the Occupational Therapy Assistant program may require a physician's statement authorizing the student to continue participation in academic and/or fieldwork courses. Specific release guidelines may be requested for situations involving back injury, surgery, pregnancy, communicable diseases, etc.

If a student is injured in class, lab, or fieldwork, the course instructor must be notified immediately. If the student is injured at fieldwork, the fieldwork educator must be notified immediately and the student may be treated in the hospital emergency room or may go to a private physician. Agency guidelines will be followed for unusual occurrence reporting. Students are responsible for any medical costs incurred.

The student will also notify his/her course instructor of the condition so that appropriate policies may be followed. It is the responsibility of the student to advise the Program Chair, current instructor(s), and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (if the semester includes a fieldwork course) of any activity limitations or changes that occur from any condition that may affect the successful completion of the current course objectives. The student will then have his/her physician complete the Limitations & Liability Release Form at the beginning of each semester and/or anytime during the semester as changes occur.

The OTA faculty will consider the limitations or other treatment plans prescribed by the primary care provider and will attempt to accommodate such plans. In the case of pregnancy, Panola College assumes no responsibility for problems that may occur with the fetus, the pregnancy, or the delivery. (Refer to the Fieldwork section of this manual for additional information regarding pregnancy and fieldwork).

**Panola College OTA Program
Limitations & Liability Release Form**

I, _____, age _____, am a student at Panola College. I

am currently under the care of _____ **(primary care provider name and credentials)** for the following condition(s)/injury:

_____.

My primary provider has recommended the following limitations: _____

Primary Provider Signature with date:

Printed Primary Provider Name: _____

I am requesting to be allowed to continue in the OTA curriculum with modifications as outlined by my instructor(s) and participate in activities as able.

I HEREBY FREELY, KNOWINGLY, AND VOLUNTARILY ELECT TO PARTICIPATE IN ASPECTS OF THE OTA PROGRAM AS I AM ABLE. I HEREBY AGREE TO RELEASE, INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS PANOLA COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM, ITS FACULTY, STAFF, AGENTS AND EMPLOYEES FROM ANY AND ALL LOSS, DAMAGE, CLAIM, OR LIABILITY ARISING FROM THE SAME, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PERSONAL INJURIES SUSTAINED BY ME OR INFLICTED UPON ANOTHER. I PERSONALLY ASSUME ALL RISKS OF MY VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. _____ **(initials)**. I HAVE READ THIS IN ITS ENTIRETY, AND I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT IS LEGALLY BINDING.

Dated this _____ (day) _____ (month) _____ (year)

Student Signature

WITNESS:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screens

In an effort to promote client safety, most OTA Program fieldwork sites require verification of a student's background check and drug screen results prior to permitting the student to participate in the educational program at the facility. For this reason, background checks and drug screens are required as a condition of continued enrollment in the OTA program. Panola College engages the services of a private agency to conduct background checks and drug screens. A favorable review by the OTA Program as a condition of continued enrollment is not binding upon a fieldwork facility. A fieldwork facility may refuse to permit a student to participate in a Clinical or Practicum if current background check information and/or drug screen results are not provided or if upon review, it determines the student is disqualified. For this reason, upon admission to the OTA Program, students are required to acknowledge, in writing, that background checks and drug screen results must be shared with fieldwork facilities. Panola College will designate the agency selected to complete the screenings. All drug screening and background information will be kept in confidential paper or electronic files.

The drug screen procedure is as follows:

1. At the beginning of student participation in the program, the student will sign and submit the Confirmation of Student's Understanding and Agreement page of the Student Policy Manual indicating knowledge of and consent to this policy.
2. Students will complete a Student Medication Record.
3. The list of OTA students to be tested will be sent to the designated screening agency.
4. The results of the screenings will be sent directly to the OTA Department for review.
5. A student with a positive drug screen must provide documentation that identifies the name of the physician authorizing any prescription medications (such as the prescription bottle of the medication or a letter from the physician). A student with an unexplained positive drug screen will be dropped from the program (see Substance Abuse Policy).
6. Students are responsible for providing drug screen documentation to a designated person at the fieldwork facility.

The criminal background check procedure is as follows:

1. Backgrounds will be checked by outside agencies.
2. The results of the criminal background checks will be sent directly to the OTA Department for review if the background check indicates a restriction for participation in fieldwork.
3. Students with restrictive criminal backgrounds will be individually counseled and advised to obtain early eligibility determinations from NBCOT for certification and TBOTE for Texas licensure, both of which are required in order to legally provide OT services.
4. Students are responsible for providing criminal background documentation to a designated person at the fieldwork facility.
5. In the event that the fieldwork facility requires additional background screening, the student will bear the cost of the required screening.

Student Policy Compliance Forms

Panola College OTA program utilizes digital forms for capturing student policy compliance and signatures. The following forms are listed and linked for student reference.

[Consent for Drug Screening](#)

[Essential Functions Requirements](#)

[Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Confidentiality, Standard Precautions, and HIPPA Guidelines](#)

[Panola College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation](#)

[Student Handbook Confirmation of Understanding and Agreement](#)

[Student Medication Record](#)

Section IV - HEALTH SCIENCES SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Any student enrolled in a Health Science program will be tested for drugs twice while completing the Program (see Criminal Background and Drug Screen Policy). In addition, testing will occur when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, i.e. drugs which are controlled substances under federal law that are not being used under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional (as prescribed), or otherwise in accordance with the law. The student will be subject to disciplinary guidelines as indicated in the Student Handbook for Panola College and/or the department.

Procedure:

1. Students will be asked to submit to drug screening by their program Chair in the following circumstances:
 - a. Annually each fall semester
 - b. Observable indications of actual use or impairment such as slurred speech, lack of coordination, incoherence, marijuana or alcohol odors
 - c. Possession of drugs, apparent paraphernalia, or alcoholic beverages.
 - d. Detailed, factual, and persistent reports of misuse by multiple colleagues.
 - e. Abnormal or erratic behaviors such as sudden outburst, mood swings, hostility or unusual anxiety that suggests possible drug use or alcohol misuse.
 - f. Involvement in suspicious accidents.
 - g. Apparent lapses in judgment or memory
 - h. Unusual lethargy.
2. Faculty and students will adhere to the following testing guidelines:
 - a. The student will sign consent to undergo drug screening.
 - b. The instructor(s) will document the student's behavior and confer with the program Chair. If a program Chair is the faculty member concerned about the student's behavior or if the program Chair is unavailable, the conference will be with the Dean of Instruction or Dean's designee.
 - c. A request for a drug screen will be initiated.
 - d. If the student refuses to consent to drug screening, the student will be immediately dismissed from the program.
 - e. The Program Chair will arrange for testing either on campus or at a designated testing center accompanied by a Panola College representative.
 - f. After the drug screen specimen has been obtained, the Program Chair will arrange for the student's return back to the student's point of origin prior to testing or home as deemed appropriate.
3. The student is excluded from all clinical/field and/or classroom and lab activities pending the results of the drug screen.
4. Drug screen findings will normally be interpreted by the designated testing center as soon as possible.
5. Positive results will be sent to the Department Chair and kept in the confidential electronic student file. Records may be released only to the student or the decision maker in a lawsuit, grievance, or other legal proceeding against the College, or its agents, arising out of a positive drug test.
6. The student bears the cost of the annual drug screen as a part of OTA program fees at the time of enrollment.

7. Students may have a positive drug screen detailed and verified by a second testing center at a cost to the student. Students should be advised that additional testing may cost in excess of \$200.
8. During the review process by the Vice President of Instruction and the program Chair, the student will have the opportunity to:
 - a. Explain the cause of the positive drug screen
 - b. Provide the name of the physician authorizing any prescription medications.
9. The Dean or Chair will contact the attending physician for verification. If verification is obtained, the student will be monitored to assure medication use is appropriate.
 - a. Any evidence of impairment (inability to function in the role defined by the program) due to prescribed medications will result in probation. The student, in collaboration with his/her physician and the program Chair, will develop a plan for reducing the impairment. Failure to develop or follow the plan will result in dismissal from the program.
 - b. Any evidence of impairment due to misuse of prescribed medication will be documented and result in dismissal from the program.
10. If the student's drug screen is positive and unexplained/unverified, the student will be:
 - a. Dismissed from the program (see readmission below)
 - b. Reported to the state licensing agency, if applicable
11. The student may appeal the recommendation using the student Grievance Procedure in the Student Handbook (*Pathfinder*, online).
12. A student who tests positive will be provided a list of community resources for treatment.
13. If the drug screen is negative, the student will be immediately reinstated by the program Chair and will be provided an opportunity to make up assignments. The student will be subject to all other objectives related to safe behavior and care of clients.

Substance Abuse Recovery – Student Applicant or Readmission

Panola College believes that persons identified as having substance abuse problems can benefit from therapeutic counseling regarding substance withdrawal and rehabilitation from a reliable source. No recovering student shall be denied learning opportunities purely on the basis of a history of substance abuse. A student applicant with a positive pre-admission test result or with a prior history of substance abuse (whether or not they have previously been dismissed from a health science program) will be required to do the following before entering:

- A. Demonstrate at least two years of abstinence immediately prior to application.
- B. Provide letters of reference from all employers within the last two years.
- C. Provide a report of participation and current status from an acceptable treatment or support source(s).
- D. Sign an agreement to participate in monitoring by random drug screening consistent with the policy of Panola College Health Sciences Division and the clinical agency where assigned for client care. Testing will be paid for by the student.
- E. For ADN candidates only: Obtain information regarding a declaratory order from the Board of Nurse Examiners prior to taking the licensure exam.
- F. For VN and OTA candidates: Faculty will provide directions for contacting licensure/certification boards.