



Department of
Occupational Therapy

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Policies and Procedures

Updated Fall 2025

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Table of Contents	
Introduction	3
OT and The Humanics Philosophy of Springfield College	4
Mission and Goals of the Occupational Therapy Program	5
Curriculum Sequence and Enrollment Patterns	6
Fieldwork Requirements	6
Academic Advisement	7
Students With Disabilities	8
Transfer of Credits	8
Waiver of Required Courses	9
Academic Standards, Policies and Procedures	9
Class Attendance and Participation	10
Grading System	10
Academic Standards – Undergraduate Health Science/Pre-Occupational Therapy Program (HSOT/HSOD)	10
Academic Standards – OT Graduate Program (MSOT and OTD (non-senior PY1, PY2, and PY3 MSOT and OTD students	12
Minimum Grade Point Average:	13
Grades of "Incomplete"	13
Course Withdrawal:	15
Course Failure:	15
Level II Fieldwork Withdrawal and Failure	16
Course Plan Changes:	17
Leaves of Absence from the OT Program:	17
Continuous Registration:	17
Withdrawing from the OT Program:	18
Professional Behavior/Conduct/Dress	18
OT Programmatic Probation/Dismissal Standards and Procedures:	20
Occupational Therapy Review Committee (OTRC) Policies	20
Circumstances under which students must petition the OTRC include requests to:	21
Specific Procedures for Course Transfers or Waivers	21
Procedures for Appealing Decisions	22
Appeal to Change a Course Grade	23
Appeal to Re-Enter the OT Program After Dismissal	24
Appealing an OTRC Decision	24
Procedures for Graduation, Certification, and Licensure	25
Graduation	25
National Certification	25
State Licensure	26
Student Involvement in OT Program Planning and Administration	26
Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)	26

Program Review Sessions	27
Other Policies and Procedures:	27
Gift Acceptance Policy:	27
Changes in OT Department Policies and Procedures	27
References	28

Students are also referred to the following documents, available in the shared google folder “OT Department Forms and Policies Folder for Students 2025”

- OT Program Curriculum
- OT Department Student Fieldwork Manual
- AOTA Code of Ethics
- OT Department Essential Functions and Student Technical Standards
- Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities
- OTRC Forms:
 - OTRC 1 Occupational Therapy Petition to Continue in OT Program
 - OTRC 2 Occupational Therapy Appeal to Re-Enter OT Program after Dismissal
 - OTRC 3 Occupational Therapy Appeal to Enter Graduate OT Program

Introduction

This document is written to provide students enrolled in the entry-level Master’s & Doctoral Degree Programs in Occupational Therapy with guidelines, policies, and procedures governing their education here at Springfield College. It is intended to supplement, not supercede Springfield College policies and procedures as published in the Springfield College Catalog. Students will receive additional information pertaining to specific phases of their education periodically throughout the program, and policies and procedures may be updated or revised at times. Students who enter the entry-level Master of Science or Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) Degree Programs as undergraduates through the Health Science/Occupational Therapy Program or the Advanced Junior or Senior Programs are also provided with policies and procedures concerning the undergraduate phase of their programs. **Students in their senior year of the HSOT/HSOD program are considered Graduate Students in the eyes of the program.**

Students are encouraged to refer to the most current edition of the Springfield College Catalog to acquaint themselves with the OT program degree offerings and curriculum. Other documents referred to within this handbook include the most current editions of the Springfield College Student Handbook (available online and from the Dean of Students) and the Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2020).

Springfield College's entry-level Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program (MSOT) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association, located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814 (phone 301-652-2682).

Springfield College’s entry-level Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association, located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814 (phone 301-652-2682).

OT and The Humanics Philosophy of Springfield College

Springfield College has been educating students for careers in professional human services for over 100 years. The College's humanics philosophy has always been, and continues to be, an influential factor in the education of its students. This philosophy is in concert with that of occupational therapy: both emphasize that health and learning, or successful adaptation, are best gained through a spirit, mind, and body unified approach. In full support of this approach, the Occupational Therapy Program is designed with lectures, seminars, group projects, and continuous hands-on practice in supervised labs. This facilitates the learning of essential technical and clinical skills, critical problem-solving techniques, leadership skills, and the development of self-confidence and professional identity.

The choice of the Springfield College Occupational Therapy Program's frame of reference was based on two theoretical concepts which are used similarly in the profession and at Springfield College: that of human occupation, or a person's need for purposeful activity to promote adaptation, learning and health; and the humanics philosophy's belief in the interaction and education of the mind, the body, and the spirit for service to humanity. This combination is utterly congruent with the philosophical base of the profession of occupational therapy in the following ways: Occupational therapists provide services to persons whose daily occupations and life tasks have been disrupted by developmental problems, physical injury, mental illness, chronic diseases, stress, the aging process, and other factors. Occupational therapy is the art and science of directing a person's life task activities to promote adaptation toward maximizing function, fulfilling roles essential to productive living, and achieving life satisfaction. Underlying this therapeutic process is the belief that the client must be a participant and the activities must be meaningful. It is through their own active participation in valued activities that adaptation throughout the spheres of the human subsystems (including the mind, the body and the spirit) occurs and health may be gained and maintained.

Together, the art and science of occupational therapy constitute its practice (Peloquin, 1989). The science of our practice includes the systematic gathering of data through observation and research, and an understanding of such things as medical conditions (Yerxa & Sharrott, 1986), neuroscience (Farber, 1989), the science of occupation (Yerxa, 1981), systems theory (Kielhofner & Burke, 1980), and adaptation (King, 1978). Our field of therapy relies not only on these knowledge bases, however, but also requires the development of the art of practice, our ability to reflect on and integrate our knowledge of sciences with a particular caring which focuses on and facilitates the person's re-engagement in meaningful human occupation (Devereaux, 1984).

As "masters in the art of practice," occupational therapists view the individual as a whole system. Although each of the biopsychosocial spheres must be perceived and assessed separately to understand the client more clearly, the art of our practice lies in reintegrating the systems, seeing the whole, and, with caring and respect, directing our therapeutic actions (Mosey, 1981). It is in this manner that occupational therapists work with their clients to facilitate a positive cycle of actions, adaptations, and re-engagement in occupational performance.

Mission and Goals of the Occupational Therapy Program

Grounded in the core concepts and history of the profession of Occupational Therapy, the OT Department promotes the College's mission by educating students to become compassionate, thoughtful, and competent practitioners. Graduates of SC OT programs are innovative leaders who support the participation and engagement of individuals, families and communities in meaningful occupations and productive living.

Students who enroll in the Occupational Therapy Programs at Springfield College work toward achieving the following goals:

1. To provide services that promote occupation, participation, and health using models that are

- responsive to the unique needs of clients, families, and communities;
2. To develop the knowledge and reasoning ability needed to understand human occupation, to synthesize information to develop plans, and to implement intervention and transition services for a variety of people within various contexts across the lifespan.
 3. To describe various theories and their relationships to the philosophical base and historical perspectives of occupational therapy, and to demonstrate the application of theory in OT practice;
 4. To recognize and appreciate the diversity of human beings and their occupations;
 5. To communicate clearly, concisely and correctly, both orally and in writing;
 6. To use communication skills emphatically in order to understand, be understood by, and collaborate with clients, families, and colleagues;
 7. To be able to advocate for the consumer and the profession;
 8. To articulate the importance of research for practice and to demonstrate the ability to use evidence to make informed practice decisions;
 9. To apply management theory and principles to OT practice in order to maintain, develop, and improve upon programs as needed;
 10. To work independently, employing professional ethical practices and seeking assistance when needed;
 11. To demonstrate interest in continued professional growth and understanding of how to use resources to develop further skills and knowledge;
 12. To develop one's professional identity, values, beliefs and pride in the basic tenets of occupational science, occupational therapy, and ethical practice.

Curriculum Sequence and Enrollment Patterns

The curriculum for the Occupational Therapy Master's and OTD Degree Programs are sequentially planned, with students beginning the program in the fall semester and completing their degree in the recommended 28 months (MSOT) or 33 months (OTD). All Full-time students register for an average of 15 credits per semester over 5 academic semesters and 6 months of full-time fieldwork. OTD students then complete their doctoral capstone which takes approximately 4 additional months. The course sequence for each program can be found on the Springfield College website on the Occupational Therapy pages.

Students who wish to take fewer credits each semester because of commuting distance, work, or home responsibilities, or health concerns may follow a different curriculum plan which extends the length of the program. Any student registered for 9 or more credits each semester is considered full-time, which maintains eligibility for financial aid, teaching fellowships, and other benefits typically available only to full-time students. Careful advisement and planning is required to ensure proper sequencing of courses for students on extended plans.

All students must complete the Occupational Therapy professional program within five years of registering for any graduate course required in the program. Exceptions may be granted to students with unusual circumstances, by submitting a petition to the Occupational Therapy Review Committee (OTRC) and then to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to the end of the five year period. Additional requirements may be imposed at that time, such as updating of certain coursework or knowledge.

Because of the sequential nature of the curriculum, continuous enrollment is required once a student begins the program. Students wishing to remain in the program without enrolling for at least one required course each semester (not including summer sessions) must request a leave of absence. Leaves of absence are typically granted for one year, and may be extended once.

All required Level II Fieldwork must be completed within 24 months following the completion of the didactic courses in the program. For most students, the completion of the academic program is defined as the end of the semester in which they last enrolled and attended required classroom courses. The endpoint of the academic program is not extended by pending grades of "Incomplete".

Fieldwork Requirements

In addition to Level I Fieldwork that occurs throughout the academic portion of the OT program, all students are required to complete the equivalent of six months of full-time fieldwork at the end of the academic program. More specific information on fieldwork requirements is provided in the OT Student Fieldwork Manual which can be found on the OT Pridenet page.. All Level II Fieldwork is graded on a pass-fail basis. The methods used for evaluating students' fieldwork performance will be discussed during the seminars that precede OTH 584: Clinical Education I and Professional Seminar II and OTH 683: Professional Seminar III, supplemented by information that may be found in the Fieldwork Manual.

Students return to campus after completing OTH 684 and OTH 685 (their Level II fieldwork) for OTH 687 Professional Seminar IV, in order to participate in small group discussions with faculty mentors, share case information from their fieldwork and engage in discussion, analysis, and clinical reasoning activities. Although the work is carried out in groups, students are evaluated individually in relation to the program's goals and objectives. Students whose performance in this seminar is determined to be unacceptable may petition the Occupational Therapy Review Committee for the opportunity to work with a second faculty member and complete a written case study assignment. If a student's performance remains unacceptable, they may be required to register for and complete additional coursework (such as repeating all or a portion of one or more academic courses, completing an independent study, or pursuing additional fieldwork) in order to meet the program requirements.

OTH 687 Professional Seminar IV is a required course within the OT curriculum. Eligibility to participate in OTH 687 requires the successful completion of at least ONE required Level II Fieldwork and its associated course (OTH 684/685).

OTD students must complete all of their Level II Fieldwork (OTH 684/685) as well as Professional Seminar IV (OTH 687) prior to enrolling in their Capstone Experience (OTH 784) and Capstone Project (OTH 785.)

Academic Advisement

All occupational therapy students in the entry-level graduate degree programs and the five-year Health Science/ Occupational Therapy (HSOT/MSOT) and 5.5 year HSOD/OTD degree programs are assigned an academic advisor from the Occupational Therapy faculty before beginning coursework in the program. Students wishing to change their academic advisor at any point in the program must submit their request in writing to the OT Department Chair and complete the Change of Advisor Form as required by the Registrar's Office.

The academic advisor is available primarily to provide guidance in planning course sequences and schedules and to assist students in following college and departmental policies and procedures. They may also offer assistance, support, and/or advocacy concerning academic or career planning issues. Students may be referred to other services on campus as appropriate, such as for job placement and resume preparation, support services for academic issues or for students with disabilities, or for counseling regarding issues of a more personal nature.

Faculty members are required to schedule at least five hours of office time each week to meet with students for academic advisement, to answer questions, discuss course assignments, and so on. These hours may be in person or using remote (digital) methods such as zoom. Faculty may also be reached by

phone and email. **It is the student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with their academic advisor at least once each semester, prior to the deadline for course pre-registration, to discuss course selections and to allow the faculty member to unlock the student's online registration status.** In addition, all course changes or withdrawals, petitions for course transfer or waiver, and paperwork being submitted to the OTRC must be reviewed and signed by the advisor prior to submission to the Committee, or they will not be reviewed. Students wishing to change their status (such as from full-time to part-time) or their curriculum sequence must obtain their advisor's approval prior to registering under the desired status. The advisor may consult with other faculty prior to approval.

Students With Disabilities

Students accepted into the Occupational Therapy program at Springfield College must possess the capability to complete, with or without reasonable accommodations, the entire curriculum of their chosen OT degree. The curriculum of the Occupational Therapy program of study requires students to demonstrate proficiency in a variety of intellectual, motor, perceptual, communicative, expressive, and interpersonal skills. To achieve these proficiencies, Springfield College requires that each student adhere to academic and social behavior policies found in the College Catalog and OT student handbook. Students must be able to meet the performance standards of each course in the Occupational Therapy curriculum.

All students admitted to the OT program are presumed to be willing to comply with College policies and regulations and able to successfully complete the professional standards set forth by the OT Department. Students are expected to read the documents, "Policies and Procedures for Students With Disabilities" and "Essential Functions and Student Technical Standards" that are posted on the Occupational Therapy Department PrideNet portal pages. Requests for accommodations of any requirements of the OT program or the courses within the program must be submitted through The Academic Success Center's [Disability & Accessibility Services \(DAS\)](#) in the Learning Commons. The Learning Support Services staff will then work with the student and with faculty in the OT Department to implement accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Each course syllabus contains contact information for the Academic Success Center.

Transfer of Credits

No more than nine (9) semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred from another accredited institution of higher education. Grades transferred from another school are not calculated into the academic index. The requirements and procedures for transferring courses depend on whether the course is required by the College or by the Occupational Therapy Department.

Procedures and criteria for requesting approval may be found in the Graduate Catalog. Students wishing to transfer credit for one of these courses must submit the appropriate form signed by both their academic advisor and the OT Department Chair to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Students may request approval of a course transfer either before registering for the course or after it has already been taken.

For courses required within the occupational therapy curriculum (i.e., courses with an OCH designation), students must submit a petition to the OT Department Chair. As above, students may request approval of a course to be transferred either before registering for the course or after it has been taken. In either case, the criteria listed below must be met, and the student must follow the procedures outlined below.

1. The course must be completed with an earned grade of "B" or better, as noted on an official transcript submitted to the OT Department Chair;
2. It must be comparable to the required course, as supported by accompanying documentation (see equivalency description under the waiver section);

3. It must carry graduate credit at an accredited institution, as noted on the transcript; 4. It must be or have been completed during the five year candidacy period.

Courses from an occupational therapy assistant program or an undergraduate OT professional program typically do not transfer into the graduate professional level curriculum because of the difference in the level of academic requirements and the accreditation standards. Students interested in this option should discuss with their advisor whether waiving or transferring the course may be feasible.

Waiver of Required Courses

No more than nine semester hours of required coursework may be waived under the following guidelines. The maximum number of semester hours of required coursework that a student may waive and/or transfer following these procedures is twelve, which may be any combination thereof. As with transferring courses, the requirements and procedures for waiving courses depend on whether the course is required by the College for all graduate students, or specifically by the Occupational Therapy Department.

Students wishing to waive a course required by the College must file a petition for approval of exception to graduate regulations. The petition must include the reason and must be signed by both the academic advisor and the OT Department Chair before being submitted to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Students may request to waive a course required in the OT curriculum in cases where clinical, teaching, and/or research experience and/or a combination of courses taken previously appear to have fulfilled the course's learning objectives. This may be an appropriate option for students who have completed some OT coursework in a baccalaureate or assistant level program, since undergraduate courses cannot be transferred for graduate credit. Students wishing to waive a course in the OT curriculum must file a petition for approval of the OT Department Chair. Waivers may be approved in full, approved with contingencies, or denied.

Academic Standards, Policies and Procedures

The primary source for information about the academic standards to which all professional level occupational therapy students are held is found the [College Catalog](#), which provides a detailed description of the grading system, how grade point averages are calculated, and the minimum requirements for cumulative grade point average at different points in the students' course of study. Academic performance is reviewed by both the OT Department and the Registrar at the end of each semester. Students in the Occupational Therapy Department are required at minimum to meet the same academic standards as any other graduate student, with some additional program requirements. The points listed below include information about how these standards apply specifically to students in OT Programs, and describes the additional standards or requirements. Students are responsible for reading and following the policies and procedures outlined in the Course Catalog and other College publications, available on the College's website and in hard copy form in most campus offices.

Class Attendance and Participation

The Occupational Therapy Department adheres to the college-wide policy on class attendance that is included in the College Catalog. In general, students are responsible for information, assignments, and classwork missed in their absence, and are expected to notify the instructor and make arrangements for making up work when an absence is necessary. In addition, the collaborative nature of much of the learning which takes place within the curriculum increases the responsibility of each student to be an active participant in all learning activities. Instructors may exercise their prerogative to penalize students

for poor class attendance and/or participation.

Grading System

1. The grades assigned for graduate courses are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, and F. The formula for translating letter grades into honor credits to determine the cumulative grade point average may be found in the College Catalog.
2. The Occupational Therapy faculty uses the following uniform formula for determining letter grades for assignments and courses. Numerical values generally are not rounded off to the next higher whole value, that is, an 89.99 **is not** interpreted as a 90.

A = 93 and above	C+ = 77 - 79
A- = 90 - 92	C = 73 - 76
B+ = 87 - 89	C- = 70 - 72
B = 83 - 86	F = 69 and below
B- = 80 - 82	

3. Grade point averages are calculated using a quality point system for letter grades as shown below. Quality points are multiplied by the number of credits for the course, and then the total quality points are divided by the total number of credits for graded courses. A = 4.0 QP C+ = 2.3

A- = 3.7 C = 2.0
B+ = 3.3 C- = 1.7
B = 3.0 F = 0
B- = 2.7

4. Because all Level II Fieldwork courses (OCTH 684, OCTH 685, and the optional OCTH 686) are graded on a pass/fail basis, none of the academic courses in the OT Program may be taken pass/fail.

Academic Standards – Undergraduate Health Science/Pre-Occupational Therapy Program (HSOT/HSOD)

All students enrolled in the Health Science/pre-Occupational Therapy Programs (HSOT/MSOT and HSOD/OTD) undergo academic review every semester. **During the senior year of the HSOT program, students join post baccalaureate students and are considered “Graduate Students” in the eyes of the OT Department.** Academic requirements for the HSOT program are based on various categories of classes, and each of those categories have their own criteria. Each category has a GPA average requirement and individual course grade requirements.

Health Science - Pre-Occupational Therapy, B.S. (HSOT/HSOD)

A 3.200 minimum category **average** and **individual** grades of C (73) or better in the foundation science requirements

BIOL 130 - Anatomy and Physiology Concepts I Credits: 3
BIOL 131 - Anatomy and Physiology Concepts II Credits: 3
BIOL 132 - Anatomy and Physiology Concepts I Lab Credits: 1
BIOL 133 - Anatomy and Physiology Concepts II Lab Credits: 1
CHEM 101 - Chemistry Survey Credits: 3
CHEM 102 - Chemistry Survey Laboratory Credits: 1

A 3.000 minimum category **average** and **individual** grades of C (73) or better in the social science requirements

PSYC 101 - Introduction to Psychology Credits: 3
PSYC 109 - Human Development Credits: 3
PSYC 221 - Abnormal Psychology Credits: 3
RHDS 230 - Psychology of Disability and Illness Credits: 3
SOC 101 - Introduction to Sociology Credits: 3

A 3.000 minimum **average** and **individual** grades of C (73) or better in
Occupational Therapy pre- professional requirements

a. Required Courses (17 credits)

HSCI 201 - Introduction to Health Care Ethics Credits: 3
OCTH 100 - Occupational Therapy Seminar I: Essentials for Academic and Professional Success
Credits: 1
OCTH 101 - Survey of Occupational Therapy Credits: 3
OCTH 284 - Occupational Therapy Practicum & Seminar II: Introduction to the OT Clinic
Credits: 3
OCTH 335 - Client Occupations through Service Learning Credits: 1
OCTH 384 - OT Practicum and Seminar III: OT Practice Framework Credits: 3 PHTH 310 -
Healthcare Language: Systems, Specialties, Pathologies and Culture Credits: 3 or HSCI 260 -
Human Disease and Chronic Illness Credits: 3

b. Mathematics Selective (3 credits) Select 3 credits from the following list: MATH

115 - College Algebra Credits: 3
MATH 125 - Precalculus Credits: 3
MATH 131 - Introduction to Calculus with Applications Credits: 3
MATH 140 - Calculus I Credits: 3 MATH 201 - Contemporary Applications of
Mathematics Credits: 3

c. Statistics Selective (3 credits) Select 3 credits from the following list:

HSCI 225 - Biostatistics Credits: 3
MATH 215 - Probability and Statistics Credits: 3
PSYC 211 - Introduction to Statistics Credits: 3

Occupational Therapy **professional core** requirements

A 3.000 (83) minimum category **average** and **individual** grades of B-(80) or better · OCTH

501 -Occupational Therapy Fundamentals Credits: 3

- OCTH 503 - Professional Seminar I Credits: 1
- OCTH 505 - Group Process Credits: 1
- OCTH 506 - Group Process Lab Credits: 1
- OCTH 520 - Development, Occupation and Performance in Infancy and Childhood Credits: 4
- OCTH 560 - Evidence Based Practice I Credits: 3
- OCTH 561 - Evidence Based Practice in Occupational Therapy II Credits: 3 · OCTH 570 -
Social Policy and Social Justice in Healthcare Credits: 2 ·
OCTH 584 - Clinical Education I and Professional Seminar II Credits: 2

Occupational Therapy **professional science** requirements

A 3.000 (83) minimum category **average** and **individual** grades of B-(80) or better · OCTH

510 - Functional Human Anatomy Credits: 3

- OCTH 511 - Functional Human Anatomy Lab Credits: 1
- OCTH 512 - Neuroscience and Occupation Credits: 3
- OCTH 514 - Neuroscience and Occupation Lab Credits: 0
- OCTH 515 - Functional Movement in Occupations Credits: 2

In the **professional** portion of the program (OCTH 650 and OCTH 5xx courses your senior year) you must earn a GPA of 3.000 or higher in the professional core and professional sciences groups of courses. Grades are not “rounded up” and students must achieve grades of B or above for each occupational therapy program course in order to remain in the HSOT/HSOD program and be considered for advancement beyond their senior year. Any grade of B- or below will impact your overall GPA and will require higher grades in other courses to meet overall GPA standards.

In the event that a student does not meet the academic standards to advance beyond senior year of the program, they will receive a letter outlining their academic progress/standing. A student may still graduate with a Bachelor of Science HSOT/HSOD degree, but not be admitted into the graduate phase (beyond senior year). If a student wishes to appeal not being admitted to the graduate portion of the program, they should appeal to the OTRC using form 3. Additional details about the appeal process will be included in the letter referenced above.

Academic Standards – OT Graduate Program (MSOT and OTD (non-senior PY1, PY2, and PY3 MSOT and OTD students)

Students in the OT program are expected to earn grades of B or better, or grades of P for P/F courses, in all required coursework and must maintain a minimum semester and cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. Any student who meets **all** of these standards is considered to be in good academic standing.

Any student whose academic performance is equal to or less than the criteria listed below in any of the following ways will be dismissed from the OT program:

1. Achieves a grade of C or below in any course
2. Achieves a grade of F in P/F course
3. Achieves a semester and/or cumulative GPA of <3.0
4. Earns greater than 9 credits of coursework with grades of B-/C+

A student who has earned one B-/C+ is considered to be on programmatic academic probation as long as the total number of credits of coursework with a grade of B-/C+ does not exceed 9 credits.

Minimum Grade Point Average:

1. General policies for academic standing and progress for graduate students may be found in the College Catalog. These policies state that all graduate students must maintain a B average, that is, a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative grade point average, throughout their academic career at Springfield College and in order to receive a graduate degree.
2. A graduate student whose CGPA is at or above the minimum standard of 3.00 is classified as a graduate student in good academic standing at the College.
3. The OT Department requires students maintain a semester **and** cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. If a semester or CGPA falls below 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program and must petition the OTRC as previously described.
4. Students receiving financial aid who are placed on college academic probation are advised to contact the Financial Aid Office concerning their loss of eligibility for College and Federal assistance, including loans, fellowships, and work-study funding.

5. In addition to the College policies on academic standing, Occupational Therapy students must meet the academic standards outlined above. In addition:
 - a. Students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or above before beginning any Level II Fieldwork (OCTH 684/685/686).
 - b. Although Health Science/OT students and Advanced Juniors and Advanced Seniors are taking graduate-level courses during their first professional year in the OT Program, they are required to follow the Academic Standards of the Health Science/Pre-Occupational Therapy Program (HSOT). Seniors in the HSOT program WILL continue to be considered "Graduate Students" during their PY1 year in the eyes of the department.
6. As stated in the College Catalog, grades obtained in coursework transferred from another school and grades for undergraduate courses taken at Springfield College are not calculated into the academic index for the graduate program.

Grades of "Incomplete"

1. The College policy on incomplete grades states:

"A student may request from the instructor a grade of incomplete (I) in situations where exceptional circumstances beyond their control (such as incapacitating illness or a death in the family) prevent him or her from completing course requirements. In order to be eligible for an incomplete, the student must have completed the majority of the coursework (e.g., 75% or more) with passing grades. The decision to grant an incomplete is at the discretion of the instructor." **A student will have a specified period of time, not to exceed one semester (exclusive of summer for non-SHS students), to complete incomplete work. A contract for incomplete grades must be completed and signed by both the instructor and the student. A copy of this contract will remain with the student, the instructor, the registrar, and the academic department (or SHS Campus) offering the course.** ****If a student is granted an incomplete during the Spring of their senior year in the HSOT/HSOD program, the contract must be complete PRIOR to summer courses starting.**
2. If the student does not meet the conditions of the contract for the completion of the incomplete by the time specified or prior to graduation, the registrar will automatically change the I grade to an F grade or an alternate grade designated by the instructor that is based on the work completed.
3. Incompletes are not granted when a student's performance has been unacceptable throughout most of the semester, unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances such as documented medical issues. A student whose level of performance remains unacceptable must either accept a failing grade or withdraw from the course within the timeframe established by the College Registrar (see section below on course withdrawal).
4. A student requesting a grade of Incomplete must negotiate the terms of completion with the course instructor before the last day of the classes. This includes completing the Contract for Incomplete Grade form, identifying outstanding assignments, and determining due dates of any work being completed. Any student who fails to submit assignments by the end of the semester without receiving prior approval for an Incomplete from the instructor will receive a course grade which is based on a "0" for the missing assignments.
5. Since the OT program is a fast-paced, year-round program, the OT Department considers the summer session as well as the fall and spring semesters in counting when courses with an I grade must be completed. For example, a student with an Incomplete for the fall semester must complete and submit the work to the instructor by the end of the spring session; work for an incomplete in the spring semester must be completed and submitted by the end of the summer session or that same year, etc.
6. Incomplete work for courses is a particular concern in an intensive professional program of short duration, where many of the courses are built upon information presented in preceding courses.

Therefore, no student may begin attending courses for a new semester with an incomplete in more than one required course without explicit approval from the OTRC. (That is, the student must have completed all the work for these courses, although grades may not have been submitted yet.)

7. Students may not begin Level II Fieldwork with grades of incomplete in any academic courses without explicit approval from the OTRC.
8. A student who finds it necessary to exceed the time limits described above must receive approval from the course instructor and then petition the OTRC for an extension. Students must appeal to the OTRC for this extension no later than the last OTRC meeting of the semester in which the incomplete should have been completed. Therefore, if a fall course required an incomplete, the appeal must be made by the last spring meeting of the OTRC. If an extension is required because the student must wait a year to repeat a portion of a course in order to complete its requirements, the student need only receive approval from the course instructor, and does not need to appeal to the OTRC, unless the one-year extension is not met.
9. Most students will receive grades of "Credit Pending" (CP) for their fieldwork experiences due to non-conformity between the Springfield College Registrar's due dates for grade reports and the actual date of fieldwork completion. This is an administrative incomplete and is expected and acceptable. However, a student who receives a grade of incomplete in fieldwork due to failure to complete requirements at their assigned site must appeal to the OTRC before another fieldwork experience can be rescheduled by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC). This student must meet with the AFWC to discuss fieldwork issues and develop an action plan with strategies toward successful completion of the next fieldwork assignment. This action plan must be included with a letter of appeal to the OTRC and signed by the AFWC.
10. A student who is on academic probation because of academic performance may not begin attending courses for a new semester until they have completed all the requirements for prior semesters' coursework. That is, a student on academic probation may not proceed in the program until they have submitted the work for all Incompletes. This allows the faculty to determine the student's academic standing more accurately before allowing them to continue, since the final grades for incomplete coursework will affect the student's cumulative GPA.

Course Withdrawal:

1. Withdrawals will follow the guidelines outlined in the College Catalog. Current policies indicate that a student may withdraw from an academic course at any time up to that point at which 80% of the requirements for the course are completed (by the end of week 12 in a 15-week academic course). Refunding of tuition is determined according to a schedule set by the Business Office (see Business Office webpage).
2. The procedure for withdrawing from a course includes requesting permission from the course instructor and the academic advisor and submitting a withdrawal form to the Registrar. Exceptions to the Withdrawal deadline described above may be made only by the Registrar, with the approval of the OT Department Chair.
3. The course instructor will notify the OT Department Chair and the OTRC when a student has withdrawn from a course. The student must then petition the OTRC to continue in occupational therapy coursework. Approval to continue may require a change in course sequence or schedule, since a student may not proceed to coursework for which the withdrawn course is a prerequisite until that course is satisfactorily completed.
4. Since Springfield College does not differentiate between those students withdrawing from a course with a passing grade and those withdrawing with a failing grade, an OT student who withdraws from a required course must re-enroll in and pass that course within one year. A student may withdraw from any single OT course only once.

Course Failure:

1. The consequences for failing a course follow the college and programmatic policies for academic standing relative to the level of the cumulative grade point average and the number of semester hours of coursework attempted, as previously described.
2. If a student fails a course but their grade point average remains above a 3.00, the student will be subject to the conditions outlined in the Academic Standards section of this Handbook.
3. A student who wishes to continue taking courses in the occupational therapy program while on college or programmatic probation must submit a petition to the OTRC. Approval to continue may require a change in course sequence or schedule, since a student may not proceed to coursework for which the failed course is a prerequisite until that course is satisfactorily completed.
4. All required courses in which a student has received a failing grade must be retaken and passed within one year. Both grade entries will appear on the student's transcript, but only the credit hours and the grade resulting from the repeat will be used in computing the grade point average. Any course for which a student has received a failing grade may be repeated only once.

Level II Fieldwork Withdrawal and Failure

1. Fieldwork is an integral and important part of the occupational therapy curriculum which requires significant investments of time and resources by the student, the college, and the training site. Level II fieldwork challenges students to apply what they learned in classrooms, labs, and Level I experiences within real-life situations in community and clinical settings. Students are encouraged to work hard and use their resources fully and wisely, including those provided by Springfield College throughout their time in the OT program.
2. For all fieldwork experiences, the student is expected to demonstrate appropriate professional behavior and assume responsibility for maximizing learning during each fieldwork experience as evidenced by a demonstrated commitment to learning; effective utilization of information and resources; clear and timely communication; informed, responsible decision-making; continuous regard for all; and effective provision/utilization of feedback. Level II Fieldwork, in particular, is intended to challenge each student in a variety of ways in order to prepare them for entry-level practice. The student is expected to communicate with the AFC/AAFC at scheduled intervals based on the course assignments and requirements, and at any point that they feel additional support or resources are necessary. The site/fieldwork educator(s) also communicate with the fieldwork department throughout the learning experiences. The student, the site, and the AFC/AAFC may collaborate at any point and throughout the experience to explore options for successful accomplishment of learning objectives.
3. Sometimes, as with academic courses, a student is unable to meet the performance standards necessary to pass the fieldwork experience. A midterm review with the fieldwork supervisor will provide early warning of this situation and the AFC should become involved as soon as possible. Most often, it is possible to work out a successful revised fieldwork plan. However, occasionally, resolution is not possible and the student has the option of withdrawing from the placement. (Refer to OT Fieldwork Manual for details.)
4. Students wishing to withdraw from a Level II Fieldwork placement must do so within the first 60% of the time scheduled for their affiliation, or at the beginning of the seventh week of a 12-week experience. Refunding of tuition is determined according to a schedule set by the Business Office (see Business Office page on PrideNet). If withdrawal is chosen, the AFC will make every effort to schedule a new fieldwork placement within a reasonable period of time.
5. If remediation efforts are not undertaken or if they are unsuccessful and the student fails the fieldwork experience, the same procedures are followed as for failure in other required Occupational Therapy courses.
6. A student may withdraw from or fail each fieldwork course only once. Students who withdraw or fail a fieldwork course must follow the procedures outlined in the OT

Department Student Fieldwork Manual, and must petition the Occupational Therapy Review Committee to continue in the OT program.

7. A student may attempt only two different placements for each of the two required Level II Fieldwork courses, OTH 684 and OTH 685.
8. It is important to note that ACOTE requires successful completion of the equivalent of 24 weeks of full-time fieldwork within an accredited OT program, and the NBCOT requires the same in order for an OT graduate to take the certification exam. It is the OT Department's policy that all required fieldwork must be completed within 24 months of completing the academic component of the OT program.

Course Plan Changes:

1. The curriculum of the OT program is designed sequentially. Most students attending the program follow a recommended, full time curriculum sequence, although occasional circumstances may make it desirable for a student to take a course out of sequence. These circumstances and their consequences should be discussed thoroughly with the academic advisor prior to requesting a change in the curriculum sequence.
2. A student who wishes to take a course before having completed its prerequisite courses must petition the OT Department Chair for permission to do so, and receive the permission of the course instructor. The petition should explain the reason for the request and include a copy of the student's proposed course sequence plan, as well as information on how the student will overcome the disadvantage of taking the course without the normal preparatory work.
3. Petitions for course plan changes must be submitted prior to the beginning of the semester in which the courses in question would be taken.
4. Any subsequent changes in course plans must be resubmitted to the OT Department Chair for approval.
5. A student may not begin Level II Fieldwork until all of their required academic coursework is completed.
6. Once a Level I or II fieldwork assignment has been confirmed, placements may not be altered, nor other placements for the associated course explored on the student's behalf, except in the case of significant and extenuating circumstances. In such cases, the student must petition the OTRC to demonstrate this need. Approval by the OTRC must be determined prior to any alternative site exploration by the AFC/AAFC. If approved by the OTRC, any confirmed site reservations must be canceled prior to pursuit of alternative fieldwork placements. **Under no circumstances should the student contact any fieldwork facility directly to change fieldwork assignments without the express permission of the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.** (Refer to the OT Department Fieldwork Manual for detailed information.)

Leaves of Absence from the OT Program:

1. Students wishing to remain in the OT program without enrolling for at least one required course each semester(not including summer sessions), are encouraged to consult with their advisor followed by the OT Department Chair.
2. Leaves of absence are typically granted for one year. Students who wish to extend a leave of absence beyond one year must petition the OTRC and submit a new course plan.
3. Students who wish to take a leave of absence are reminded of the five-year limit for completion of the OT Program, and the 24-month limit from the end of the academic portion of the program until the completion of all required fieldwork.

Continuous Registration:

1. Graduate students are required to be continuously enrolled in courses until they graduate, unless they have been approved to take a leave of absence. The College Catalog describes a procedure

for maintaining continuous registration status for students who have completed all their academic requirements except for their research requirements (thesis, dissertation, or research project). This status allows students to maintain use of campus facilities including but not limited to off-campus access to library resources.

2. OT students on continuous registration status must petition the OT Department Chair for a change in curriculum sequence and enrollment status. The petition must be accompanied by a completion plan and must be signed by the student's academic advisor.

Withdrawing from the OT Program:

1. Students who wish to withdraw from the OT Program are asked to send a formal letter of withdrawal to the Chair of the OT Department and to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences.
2. A student who has withdrawn from the OT Program who wishes to have transcripts sent to another institution may contact the Registrar's Office directly.
3. A student who has withdrawn from the OT Program who wishes to have a letter of recommendation sent to another institution or individual may contact the appropriate faculty member(s) directly.
4. A student who has withdrawn from the OT Program and who wishes to re-enroll must submit a complete, new application to the OT Program through the Graduate Admissions Office. It is advisable to include in the cover letter or personal statement some discussion of his/her reasons for withdrawal and desire for readmission.

Professional Behavior/Conduct/Dress

The Occupational Therapy program values student development in professionalism as well as academics. With this in mind, students complete the Professional Behavior Self-Assessment (PBSA) form each semester. Faculty review student development related to professionalism throughout each semester. Students receive regular feedback related to their developing professional behavior skills as this is an essential component of being a successful occupational therapist. Students who require additional support related to professionalism may be placed on programmatic probation so that they may work with their advisor to create an individualized development plan to facilitate their success.

It is expected that students in the Occupational Therapy Program will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This includes physical and virtual interactions with academic and clinical faculty and staff, with clients and families, and with peers. Classroom and lab time should be viewed as an opportunity to practice and model professional behavior and demeanor. Students spend a considerable amount of time interacting with professionals and clients in the community, both in formal fieldwork and when fulfilling academic assignments. Students are encouraged to utilize channels of communication and authority appropriately and to handle personal and professional matters in a mature and responsible manner throughout the program.

When visiting or working at facilities outside the college, giving a presentation, attending a guest lecture, participating in a practical/skills exam or simulation lab experience, students should present a clean and neat appearance and conform to the dress requirements and the apparent culture and expectations of their surroundings, remembering that they represent the College, the program and the profession. Some courses may require specific clothing in order to practice clinical skills. Hands on/lab experiences often require movements such as squatting, bending, and assisting people to move. Clothing should adequately cover areas above and below the waist at all times. Closed toed shoes are often standard for lab and clinical experiences as well.

Among the guidelines for professional behavior available to OT students are the Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association and the Springfield College disciplinary code as published in the Student Handbook (available online and from the Office of the Dean of Students).

Students who violate ethical, legal, or regulatory guidelines or requirements on or off campus may be subject to disciplinary action and/or judicial review in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Student Conduct Code published in the current Springfield College Student Handbook. Problems in the classroom or clinical setting are handled at the discretion of the OT faculty, the Fieldwork Educator, the OT Department Chair, and the Dean of the School of Health Sciences. Students with complaints about the behavior or actions of other members of the College community are encouraged to discuss them with the Department Chair or other faculty, and/or they may file a complaint with the Vice President for Student Affairs. This would include conduct which involves any form of harassment or discrimination (see Springfield College Policy on Harassment, posted on the webpage of the Office of Human Resources).

Outside agencies that provide educational services for the Occupational Therapy Program, such as Level I and II fieldwork sites, may impose additional regulations or expectations for behavior. Because of increasing legislation concerning the presence of people with criminal records in schools and in childcare and clinical settings, most fieldwork sites now require the completion of Criminal Offense Record Investigations (CORI checks) and/or sexual offender (SORI) checks on any student before allowing them to enter the setting. Some fieldwork sites may require drug testing of students prior to and during their fieldwork experiences. Students must comply with departmental requirements and timelines for completing these checks and are responsible for any fees or costs associated with them.

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and many state licensure boards also have regulations regarding the certification and licensing of individuals who have been charged with or convicted of a felony. Students who have concerns about their status related to these regulations may wish to consult legal counsel before encountering a situation which requires disclosure. Further information about the NBCOT policy is included in the Appendix. Students who are concerned about how this may affect them and who wish an early determination of their eligibility may contact the NBCOT at:

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
12 South Summit Avenue, Suite 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
301-990-7979
www.nbcot.org

Any information conveyed by the individual to the NBCOT is confidential, and is not communicated to the college or university which the student is attending.

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

Students are referred to the [Springfield College Student Handbook](#) and the [College Catalog](#) for policy statements on academic integrity and honestly representing their work. These include incidents of plagiarism (intentional or otherwise), cheating on exams or assignments, obtaining or purchasing papers or projects from individuals or commercial organizations, or presenting the same written work for more than one course without express permission of the faculty. The Academic Integrity Policy, as well as the process for addressing violations of the policy are outlined in the College Catalog, which should be reviewed. Penalties may include receiving a failing grade for the assignment or course, being placed on college or programmatic probation, or being dismissed from the College.

All of the courses in the OT Program use APA format for writing; both the APA website and the current APA Manual (7th edition) include information about plagiarism. Students are also advised to obtain copies of handouts about proper citation methods, writing tips for paraphrasing and avoiding what is commonly known as “modified copying,” and other pitfalls that may expose one to accusations of plagiarism from Writing Support Services at the Academic Success Center, located on the 3rd Floor of the Learning Commons. Many other resources on how to avoid plagiarism are available online. Ignorance is no excuse for improper or inadequate acknowledgement of sources, particularly at the graduate level. For plagiarism to occur, intent to deceive is not required.

OT Program Probation/Dismissal Standards and Procedures:

- Students may be placed on programmatic probation based on academic performance and/or professional behaviors that do not meet departmental standards.
- Students placed on programmatic probation must schedule a meeting with their assigned academic advisor to create an individualized development plan designed to facilitate student success. The student is then responsible for independently following that plan within the timeframe specified.
- Any student placed on programmatic probation must meet all of the requirements of their outlined remediation plan within the following semester in order to remain in the program. In some situations, the OTRC may recommend an extended period of probation.
- The contingencies and/or remediation plans outlined while on programmatic probation are specific to that individual student and may include requirements in extending beyond standard student expectations including but not limited to:
 - Additional assignments
 - Additional expectations of existing assignments
 - Repetition of a course(s)
- Any student who has been dismissed from the program based on the standards outlined above may petition the OTRC for consideration to return to the program using OTRC Form 2. This petition must include a remediation plan developed in conjunction with their advisor using the forms and procedures outlined in the current OT Student Handbook.

Occupational Therapy Review Committee (OTRC) Policies

The Springfield College Occupational Therapy Review Committee (OTRC) is the committee that reviews student requests for exceptions to the OT Department policies outlined in this Handbook. The OTRC reviews petitions for all students in the professional portion of the program. This includes seniors and advanced seniors in the HSOT/HSOD program as well as all students that enter the OT program as post baccalaureate students. Any student requesting an exception to an established policy must follow the general procedures outlined below:

1. Before submitting a petition to the OTRC, the student must meet with their academic advisor to discuss options and procedures. **The advisor's approval and signature are required on all forms before they are submitted to the OTRC.**
2. If the request involves any change in the student's schedule or sequence of courses, the petition must be accompanied by a complete Course Sequence Plan, also signed by the advisor. This helps protect the student from being "trapped" into waiting a long period of time for a required course to be offered.
3. Supporting documentation must accompany the petition as described previously and on the form appropriate to the request being made. For example, a student wishing to waive a course based on prior work experience must submit a resume, at least one reference from a supervisor of that work experience, and a description of how the student has met each of the objectives of the course.
4. Students must submit requests for changes in schedule or sequence of courses or for transfer or waiver of a course **prior to** the semester in which that change would take place. Waiting until the semester has begun may necessitate that the student enroll in (and pay for) the required course, with some risk to the student that the decision cannot be made prior to the deadline for refunding of tuition.
5. Paperwork must be submitted to the OT Department Administrative Associate by the deadline established for the next OTRC meeting, with all required signatures and supporting documentation. OTRC meeting dates/deadlines are emailed to students by the administrative associate, and posted in the OTRC folder in the shared folder "OT Department Forms and Policies Folder for Students 2025".

6. Students are advised to keep copies of all submitted paperwork for their own records.
7. The Committee will generally decide on matters based on the paperwork submitted, but the petitioner and/or Committee may request that the petitioner meet with the OTRC to appeal verbally to the committee.
8. The OTRC will deliberate in private and will notify the student and the OT Department Chair of their decision in writing within two (2) business days of the OTRC meeting where the appeal is presented.

Circumstances under which students must petition the OTRC include requests to:

- Exceed the five year limit for completing the program* Form 1
- Change a confirmed fieldwork placement Form 1
- Continue in the program after withdrawing from a course Form 1
- Appeal to re-enter OT Program after dismissal Form 2
- Appeal to enter Graduate OT program Form 3

*also requires approval from Academic Affairs and/or School Dean

Specific Procedures for Course Transfers or Waivers

A student should meet with their advisor early in the semester when planning to submit a request, especially for course transfers or waivers and for program changes. At the very latest, the student should meet with their advisor by the middle of the semester before the course or program change being requested would take effect. This will give the faculty and student sufficient time to review the verifying procedures and assemble the necessary documentation.

The OT Department Chair will consider student requests for course transfers or waivers only after the student has (1) met with their academic advisor and with the instructor who is teaching the course s/he wishes to have considered, and (2) assembled and submitted appropriate documentation. Incomplete submissions will be returned to the student for proper completion and must be resubmitted for consideration at a later meeting. The following steps must be followed in order to request a course transfer or waiver or a program change:

1. The student should familiarize themselves with the appropriate procedures and forms within this Student Handbook, using the checklist and the appropriate forms. Copies of all forms can be found on the registrar's PrideNet page.
2. Students should complete these forms in a timely manner.
3. The student should meet with his/her academic advisor, who may have specific information or suggestions that would be useful in deciding which courses and how to best go about preparing the request. At this meeting, the student should discuss:
 - a. The role of the course in question within the curriculum;
 - b. His/her experience, past courses, etc.; and
 - c. Specific supporting documentation that might be relevant to the request for transfer or waiver.
4. The student should also meet with the course instructor in order to:
 - a. Review the syllabus of the course in question;
 - b. Discuss their experience, past courses, etc.;
 - c. Provide and discuss all supporting documentation, such as transcripts, letters from previous professors and/or supervisors, previous course syllabi, copies of papers or projects submitted for previous courses, etc.; and
 - d. Specifically discuss how each objective of the course the student is seeking to waive

should be addressed in the written request.

5. The student will prepare the written request, describing specifically how each course objective has been or will be met and attaching appropriate documentation. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and provide copies of all supporting documents, whether completed in other departments at Springfield College or outside of the College.
 - a. Equivalency information regarding a course must include an official transcript, catalog description, and syllabus.
 - b. Determination of the equivalency of work experience is based on objective and verifiable information provided by the student, such as a curriculum vitae, an official position description, a letter of reference from the supervisor, evaluations of work performance, etc.
 - c. In both cases, the student should obtain a copy of the syllabus of the course they are seeking to waive and address each specific learning objective. A copy of the syllabus can be obtained through the OT Administrative Assistant/Associate and or Department Chair.
6. The student will then submit the request to the course instructor for final review and signature. After the instructor has signed the form, the student must also have it signed by their academic advisor.
7. Students must submit requests to the OT Department Administrative Associate and cc the OT Department Chair.

Procedures for Appealing Decisions

Students have the right to appeal decisions made regarding academic standing or disciplinary action. The specific procedures for appealing decisions made by the College are described under Academic Grievance Procedure in the College Catalog. Students are encouraged to read and understand these procedures, but they should discuss their concerns and plans with their academic advisor prior to initiating an appeal.

Appeal to Change a Course Grade

In most situations, a student should know when their work is not meeting the instructor's or the program's requirements. It is the student's responsibility to pursue remediation at the earliest detection. A student with borderline grades at mid-semester should make an effort to meet with the instructor and determine how to achieve a satisfactory outcome to the course.

When a student perceives that they have been treated unfairly in their academic work, they are responsible for initiating discussion with the instructor. Possible resolutions might include retaking exams, performing additional work, or demonstrating in some manner that the student has accomplished the course objectives. The student may expect the instructor to cooperate within reason, but the instructor is under no obligation to agree to accept additional work or "extra credit" to improve a grade. It is not the quantity of work that earns a higher grade, but the student's ability to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the content of the course.

This negotiation process should be viewed as an opportunity to practice problem-solving and professional work skills. Students and instructors alike must keep in mind that course objectives are closely aligned with the American Occupational Therapy Association's Standards for an Accredited Educational Program, and adherence to these Standards is imperative for developing competent and credible occupational therapists and maintaining a program of excellence. Note that the appeal process is not in place simply to grieve a grade the student is unhappy with, but rather to address the perception of unfair treatment in academic work.

The formal procedure for appealing a final grade in an academic course is as follows: 1. Within 14

calendar days of receiving the grade, the student should contact the instructor in writing to schedule a meeting.

2. The instructor will arrange an appointment to occur within one week of being contacted and document the time and date of the appointment in the students' record. If the instructor is unavailable, the Department Chair will facilitate the process.
3. If the student and the instructor reach a mutual agreement during this first appointment, the outcome is documented in the student's record. If no agreement is reached, the student may either select step four, or proceed directly to step five.
4. The student and/or the instructor may request that the Department Chair act as a moderator in a three-way discussion. Documentation of this meeting and its results will be noted in the student's record. If the student remains unsatisfied with the outcome, they may proceed to step five.
5. The student may request that the Department Chair meet individually with the student and the instructor. Further information about grading procedures and standards may be collected from other students or faculty. A decision will be made by the Department Chair and forwarded to the student and faculty member.

If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may submit a final appeal to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences using the Academic Grievance Form, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. In the event the Department Chair is the instructor or co-instructor of the course in which the final grade is being appealed, the appeal will progress to the final appeal process after step 3.

Students wishing to appeal a final grade in a Level II Fieldwork experience will follow the same procedure outlined for academic courses (above).

Appeal to Re-Enter the OT Program After Dismissal

The Occupational Therapy Department Chair will communicate the dismissal of a student from the Occupational Therapy Program for any of the following reasons:

- a. Failure to meet academic standards, as outlined within this document and the documents referenced within;
- b. Academic dishonesty, as defined within this document and the documents referenced within;
- c. Unprofessional behavior conduct, as defined within this document and the documents referenced within.

A student wishing to appeal a dismissal from the OT Program must follow these procedures:

1. The student is encouraged to meet with their academic advisor or another OT faculty member for advisement on the appropriate procedure and rationale for appeal.
2. The student must submit a written appeal of the decision to the OTRC. The appeal should describe the circumstances for dismissal and state the reasons they should be allowed to re-enter the program.
3. The written appeal must be submitted to the OT Department Administrative Associate within five (5) business days of the dismissal notification.
4. The OTRC will generally decide on matters based on the paperwork submitted, but the petitioner and/or Committee may request that the petitioner meet with the OTRC to appeal verbally to the committee.
5. The OTRC will deliberate in private and will notify the student and the OT Department Chair of their decision in writing within two (2) business days.

Appealing an OTRC Decision

1. A student may request an additional hearing at the department level if they are not

satisfied with the decision rendered by the OTRC.

2. The student and the OTRC will each submit their reports to the OT Department Chair, who will appoint a committee to review the decision. This committee will consist of three persons: an OT faculty member not on the OTRC, and two other members of the Springfield College community. The Department Chair may choose to be one of these members.
3. The appeals committee will review the documents, and the student may ask or be asked to present their case. The committee will deliberate in private. A simple majority will determine the committee's decision.
4. The committee will submit its decision and rationale in writing to the student, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the School of Health Sciences within two weeks after the meeting at which the decision is reached.

If further action is desired, the student may file an academic grievance with the Dean of the School of Health Sciences, as outlined in the College Catalog. The Dean's review of this grievance is to determine if the student has received due process of their appeals rather than to rehear any previous appeal. The Dean will conduct whatever review is needed to arrive at a decision, including, if necessary, a meeting or meetings with the student or other parties. The Dean will notify the student and the Department Chair of their decision and any subsequent actions. The decision of the School Dean in this matter is final.

If the student is pursuing any of these procedures while classes are in session, the student may ask to continue attending classes in the program at their own risk, but only with the written permission of the Department Chair. The right to continue fieldwork during this appeal period will be decided by the OT faculty on a case-by-case basis. If the dismissal is upheld, any coursework completed during this period is considered invalid and will not be applied to the student's academic record. If the dismissal is overturned, the coursework will be evaluated and applied to the student's record in the same manner as that of other students in the program.

Procedures for Graduation, Certification, and Licensure

Graduation

Springfield College awards degrees three times each year, in May, August, and December. At present, the College holds only one college-wide commencement ceremony, on the second or third weekend in May when most students in the OT Program are off campus for their required Level II Fieldwork. The OT students therefore observe a separate ceremony in lieu of attending commencement. This Academic Completion Ceremony is typically held in May, during the week of finals and the same day as the Research Colloquium. Faculty and staff join the students and their families in celebrating student achievement at both the Academic Completion Ceremony and the Research Colloquium. Typically students wear their caps and gowns to the ACC and receive commemorative pins to welcome them to the clinical phase of the program and profession. In order to participate in this ceremony, a student must have no more than 3 semester hours of academic coursework to complete, which they must complete by the end of the summer session, and they must complete all required Level II Fieldwork by the end of the following fall semester. Students with requirements remaining beyond these standards will be considered for eligibility to participate in the ceremony the following year.

The master's or OTD degree itself may be awarded at the end of any of the three semesters within which the student successfully completes all requirements, including fieldwork and the post-fieldwork seminar, and the capstone requirements for OTD students. The OCTH 687 post-fieldwork seminar timing and sequence has been previously described. The student is responsible for filing the

application for the degree by the appropriate deadline. Specific dates and application forms for filing are available in the Registrar's Office or through the OT Department office.

Graduation from an accredited program in occupational therapy alone does not qualify one to practice as an occupational therapist. Occupational therapists must be nationally certified and, in all states, licensed in order to call themselves occupational therapists and to provide occupational therapy services.

National Certification

Students who have completed all the requirements of Springfield College and the Occupational Therapy program are eligible to sit for the national certification examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). The exam is administered by computer on demand to eligible candidates. The specific requirements determining eligibility are determined by the NBCOT and are described in the NBCOT Candidate Handbook and on the organization's website, www.nbcot.org. The OT Department will provide students with information on how and when to contact the NBCOT for a Candidate Handbook and application form in time to meet the deadlines appropriate to the student's schedule of program completion. It is the student's responsibility to submit the application, the required fee, and supporting documentation to the Board by the NBCOT's deadline. After successfully passing this examination, the individual will be an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). Students may also contact the NBCOT directly at 12 South Summit Ave., Suite 100, Gaithersburg MD 20877 (phone 301-990-7979; www.nbcot.org) for further information.

State Licensure

All states also require licensure in order for occupational therapists to practice, and base eligibility for licensure upon graduation from an accredited Occupational Therapy program, successful completion of the national certification examination, and other requirements. Many states make provisions for temporary licensure for students who have completed all requirements for graduation but who have not yet received their degrees and/or taken the national certification exam. Students are provided with information on policies and procedures for obtaining a state license before completing the OT Program. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and submit the appropriate applications and fees for licensure in the state in which they wish to practice.

Student Involvement in OT Program Planning and Administration

The faculty and founders of the Springfield College Occupational Therapy Program believe students should actively participate in the decision making and operations involved with the program. All students in the OT Program are therefore expected to attend periodic meetings with the faculty and/or the Department Chair to discuss current issues, usually during a time designated on the schedule as "Professional Development Time." At least one week's notice will be given for these meetings whenever possible.

Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)

The Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) is Springfield College's chapter of the Assembly of Student Delegates of the Occupational Therapy Association (ASD). As a club on campus, students are entitled to participate in Student Government activities, request money from the Student Activities budget, organize activities within the department and on campus, and engage in fundraising for special

events like the activities surrounding the Department's graduation ceremony. As a local chapter, students may send a representative to the Assembly of Student Delegates at the AOTA Annual Conference and participate in national and international occupational therapy activities.

Any Springfield College student may join the SOTA, but most members are students enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Program. Meetings are held approximately once a month, with meeting times posted at least one week in advance. The SOTA holds annual elections for officers; committee members and chairs are usually chosen from among volunteers. Bylaws and other written information about the SOTA and ASD are available in the OT Department.

Program Review Sessions

The purpose of the Program Review sessions are to provide a mechanism for students and faculty to communicate about academic, professional, and administrative issues within the OT Department and the larger Springfield College community. Sessions are held by the OT Department Chair approximately once each semester, and are open to all matriculated OT students, including both full- and part-time students in the entry-level graduate and five-year programs. Meetings are held outside of scheduled class times, and the source of any information shared within the meetings is held confidential. Students attending are expected to communicate with their classmates before and after the meetings to represent their concerns. The Department Chair informs the faculty of student concerns and then reports the results of those discussions back to the students within a reasonable period of time.

Other Policies and Procedures:

Please see the Springfield College Graduate and Undergraduate catalogs for additional academic and social/behavioral policies and procedures, including but not limited to policies related to drugs and alcohol use, smoking, academic integrity, and social behavior.

Gift Acceptance Policy:

While the faculty and staff of the Occupational Therapy Program at Springfield College appreciate the desire for students to give gifts for a variety of reasons, including holidays or to express thanks, we recognize the financial burden of higher education. For this reason, individual faculty and staff will be unable to accept gifts, gift cards, or other purchased items. In the event a student would like to express their gratitude to a faculty or staff member, handwritten notes and cards are welcomed and greatly appreciated. This is consistent with healthcare practice in professional settings.

Changes in OT Department Policies and Procedures

As a growing and changing professional program, the faculty and students continually strive to improve the quality of the education provided to aspiring occupational therapists. Through the committee mechanisms described above and other methods of program, faculty, and student evaluation, department policies and procedures will undoubtedly evolve. Students will be informed of changes in a timely manner and new policies will be phased in gradually whenever possible. However, there may be times when a student feels that a change in policy or procedure has affected him or her unfairly. Students are then encouraged to utilize the appropriate methods of communication, petition, and appeal to seek satisfaction.

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