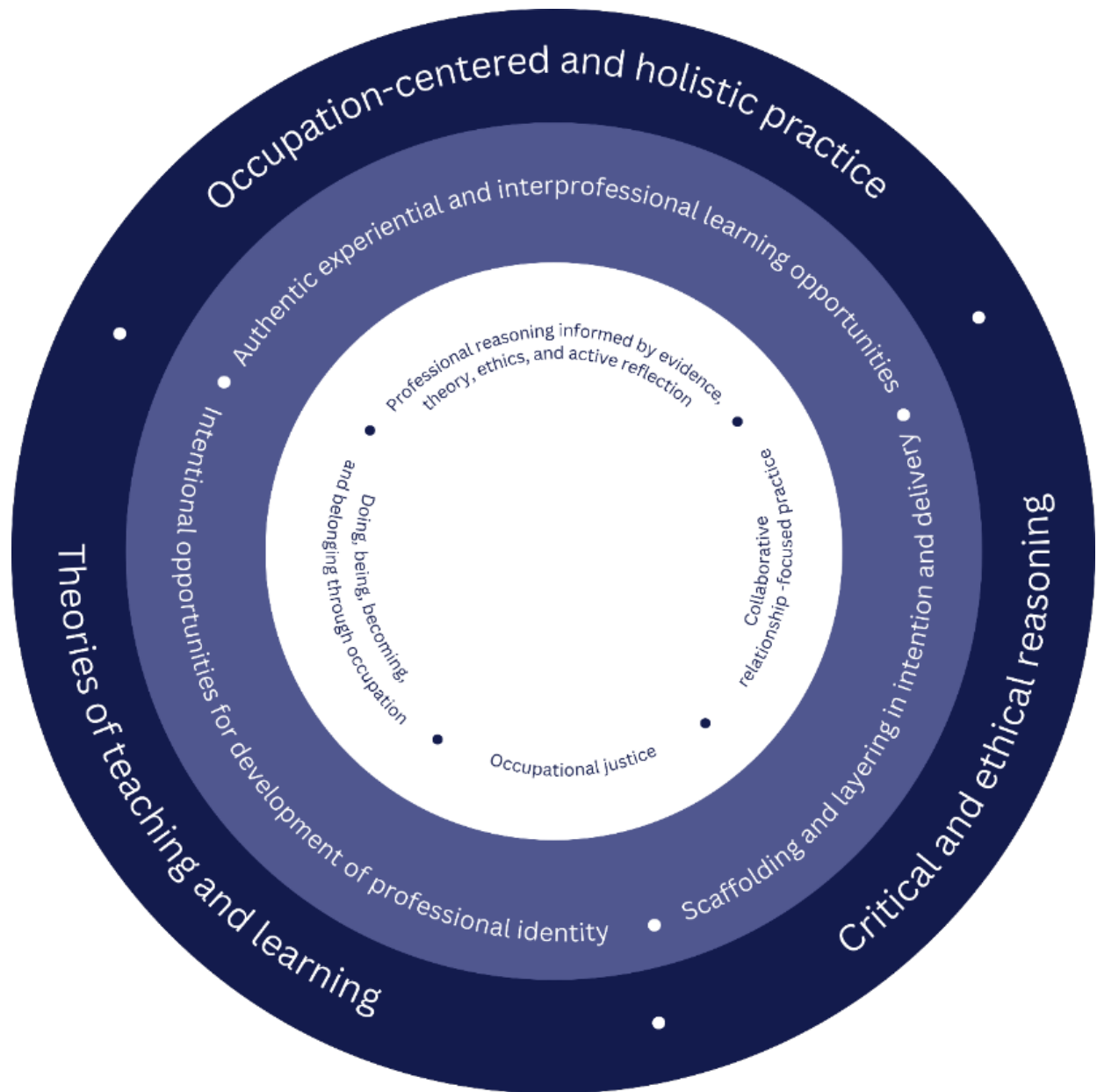


# MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM MANUAL 2025-2026



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## **Purpose of the Program Manual**

This manual is intended to inform occupational therapy students, faculty, and staff of Midwestern University's policies and procedures specific to the professional entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) degree program. This manual is to be used in conjunction with the Midwestern University Student Handbook. Additions, deletions, and other revisions will be made as deemed necessary by the Occupational Therapy (OT) Program and may be made without advance notice but will be made available to all students.

## **Foreword**

According to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA),

. . . occupational therapy is defined as the therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) with individuals or groups for the purpose of enhancing or enabling participation in roles, habits, and routines in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings. Occupational therapy practitioners use their knowledge of the transactional relationship among the person, their engagement in valuable occupations, and the context to design occupation-based intervention plans that facilitate participation in everyday living. Occupational therapy practitioners maximize health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective strategies that facilitate participation in occupations through adaptations and modifications to the environment or objects within the environment when needed. Occupational therapy services are provided for habilitation, rehabilitation, and promotion of health and wellness for clients with disability- and non-disability-related needs. These services include acquisition and preservation of occupational identity for those who have or are at risk for developing an illness, injury, disease, disorder, condition, impairment, disability, activity limitation, or participation restriction (AOTA, 2020).

AOTA has articulated their Vision 2030: "Enriching life for ALL individuals and society through meaningful engagement in everyday activities" (AOTA, 2025, p. 1). Further, AOTA has identified four foundational pillars that define core tenets of Vision 2030: (a) Inclusive and equitable professional community; (b) Evidence-based, client-centered, and innovative practice; (c) Universally recognized with valued excellence; and (d) Occupational justice and advocacy.

The Midwestern University Occupational Therapy Program is committed to providing an educational program that both challenges and enhances a student's ability to learn, and which facilitates the realization of AOTA's Vision. Through a curriculum that is of the highest standards and taught by learned faculty, students progress along a professional journey that will lead to entry into the field of occupational therapy. Midwestern University is dedicated to preparing entry-level occupational therapists who are capable of assuming leadership roles in a variety of practice settings.

This Program Manual is published to provide a readily available source of information for students and faculty alike. This document does not take the place of Midwestern University's official documents, but rather encourages individuals to review, reflect upon, and understand the positions taken by the University. This document is not static and is subject to change from time to time. Questions raised regarding this document should be brought to the attention of one's faculty mentor or the Program Director.

## Occupational Therapy Program Vision

MWU OT graduates will be leaders who optimize people's lives and elevate the occupational therapy profession.

## Occupational Therapy Program Mission

The MWU OT Program prepares future occupational therapists to optimize the lives, health, and well-being of individuals, groups, and populations through student-centered education, collaborative mentorship, and innovative learning experiences.

## Occupational Therapy Program Values

Our values are important core principles and beliefs that guide us toward achieving our mission and vision. They influence our decisions and actions related to planning and delivering our curriculum and engaging in interpersonal interactions with all members of our educational community.

- **Belonging:** We believe that belonging is achieved when every person involved in the program is recognized as having a unique and valuable contribution. We create an environment in which everyone is empowered to participate, influence, and contribute, enabling them to thrive in their education and future occupational therapy practice.
- **Collaboration:** We foster a culture of intentional collaboration by bringing together different types of knowledge, perspectives, and expertise to create meaningful learning experiences. Through structured mentorship, interdisciplinary teamwork and partnerships with the community, we cultivate the professional communication skills and humility needed for successful collaboration. We recognize that true innovation emerges when individuals share their strengths, support one another, and work collectively to advance the occupational therapy profession.
- **Compassion:** We prepare professionals who consider the social, economic, and cultural factors that are essential to health and well-being. Through critical thinking and person-centered care, we encourage future occupational therapists to acknowledge challenges, embrace diverse perspectives, demonstrate empathy, and deliver meaningful, equitable interventions.
- **Excellence:** We are committed to excellence in education that fosters professional competency through self-regulated and lifelong learning. We encourage learners to use curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking throughout their education and practice. We prepare future-oriented professionals to use best practice and innovative approaches.

## Occupational Therapy Program Outcomes

Upon completion of the Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program, graduates are expected to:

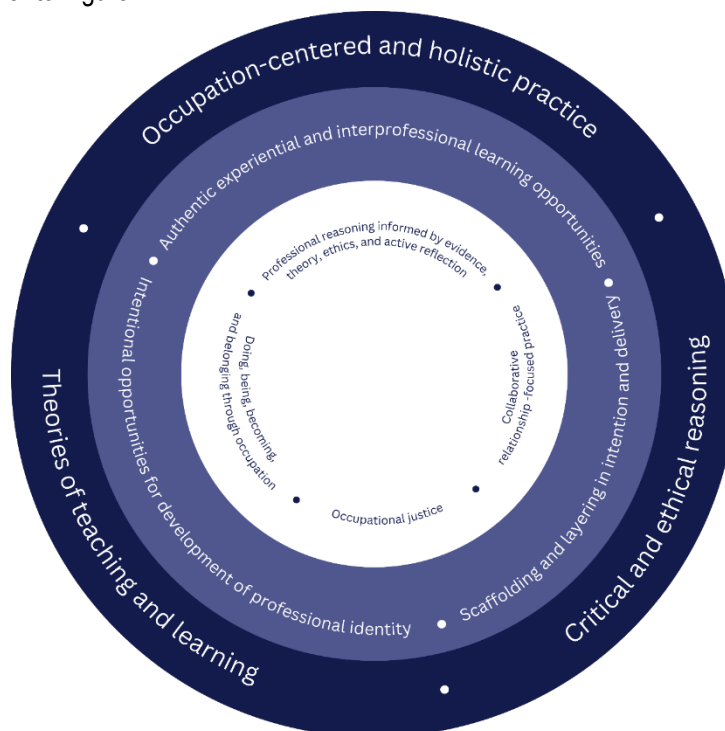
- provide theory- and evidence-informed occupational therapy services in traditional and emerging areas of practice;
- meet the occupational needs of individuals, groups, and populations through advocacy, leadership, and interprofessional collaboration;
- use occupations to support meaningful engagement in activities that promote health, well-being and quality of life;
- engage in ongoing professional development through lifelong learning activities; and
- uphold the ethical standards and values of the occupational therapy profession.

These outcomes are accomplished through:

- a curriculum model based on intentionally sequenced courses that act as vital links between application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge, skills, and behaviors;
- critical application of current relevant theories and evidence to advance occupational therapy practice and contribute to occupational therapy knowledge;
- sequential implementation of simulated and authentic experiential learning experiences across the curriculum;
- occupation-focused coursework, fieldwork, and capstone experiences designed to facilitate critical and ethical reasoning;
- opportunities for individual and group work to develop intra- and interprofessional leadership skills and professional and ethical behaviors; and
- provision of student-centered mentorship and support to facilitate professional development.

## Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum Design

The curriculum design is at the center of the Midwestern University Occupational Therapy Program. The curriculum design becomes real to the extent that faculty and students live the guiding professional and educational principles articulated in the *philosophical tenets*. The curriculum design is actualized within a *curricular framework* that is scaffolded and layered and provides intentional learning opportunities to develop students' professional skills and identities. In its depth and breadth, the curriculum is designed to develop a generalist occupational therapist who has advanced skills in critical reasoning and occupation-based and evidence-informed practice. Carefully planned learning experiences prepare students to use occupation in therapeutic interventions for individuals and groups of all ages. Four *curricular threads*, or themes, follow a path through the curriculum and represent the unique qualities of the OT Program. Refer to Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Figure depicting the philosophical tenets (outer ring), curricular framework (middle ring), and curricular threads (inner ring) of the OT Program curriculum design.

## **Philosophical Tenets**

The American Occupational Therapy Association (2017) revised a philosophical position that states:

*Occupations are activities that bring meaning to the daily lives of individuals, families, communities, and populations and enable them to participate in society. All individuals have an innate need and right to engage in meaningful occupations throughout their lives. Participation in these occupations influences their development, health, and well-being across the lifespan. Thus, participation in meaningful occupations is a determinant of health and leads to adaptation.*

*Occupations occur within diverse social, physical, cultural, personal, temporal, and virtual contexts. The quality of occupational performance and the experience of each occupation are unique in each situation because of the dynamic relationship among factors intrinsic to the individual, the environment, and contexts in which the occupation occurs, and the characteristics of the occupation.*

*The focus and outcome of occupational therapy are clients' engagement in meaningful occupations that support their participation in life situations. Occupational therapy practitioners conceptualize occupations as both a means and an end in therapy. That is, there is therapeutic value in occupational engagement as a change agent, and engagement in occupations is also the ultimate goal of therapy.*

*Occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupations are fundamental to health promotion and wellness, remediation or restoration, health maintenance, disease and injury prevention, and compensation and adaptation. The use of occupation to promote individual, family, community, and population health is the core of occupational therapy practice, education, research, and advocacy.*

In 2018, the American Occupational Therapy Association adopted a philosophical position on occupational therapy education that states:

*Occupational therapy education prepares occupational therapy practitioners to address the occupational needs of individuals, groups, communities, and populations. The education process includes academic and experiential components (fieldwork, capstone, continuing education). The philosophy of occupational therapy education parallels the philosophy of occupational therapy yet remains distinctly concerned with beliefs about knowledge, learning, and teaching.*

*Students are viewed as occupational beings who are in dynamic transaction with the learning context and the teaching-learning process. The learning context includes the curriculum and pedagogy and conveys a perspective and belief system that include a view of humans as occupational beings, occupation as a health determinant, and participation in occupations as a fundamental human right. Education promotes professional and clinical reasoning; critical thinking; cultural understanding; and the integration of professional values, theories, evidence, ethics, and skills. This approach will prepare practitioners to collaborate with clients to achieve health, well-being, and participation in life through engagement in occupation (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2014b). Occupational therapy education is an ongoing process that shapes a practitioner's professional identity.*

*Enacting these beliefs to facilitate the development of a sound reasoning process that is client centered, occupation based, and theory driven while also encouraging the use of best evidence and outcomes data to inform the teaching-learning experience may include supporting*

- *Active, engaging, diverse, and inclusive learning within and beyond the classroom environment;*
- *A collaborative process that builds on prior knowledge and experience;*
- *Continuous professional judgment, evaluation, and self-reflection; and*

- *Lifelong learning and continuous advocacy for the profession and society's occupational needs.*

Consistent with these messages, the OT Program at Midwestern University embraces three philosophical tenets that permeate the curriculum and the teaching-learning processes. The Program's philosophical tenets are interrelated with its curricular design and curricular threads which, together, highlight beliefs and values that are enacted across the curriculum. The three philosophical tenets are (a) *occupation-centered and holistic practice*; (b) *critical and ethical reasoning*; and (c) *theories of teaching and learning*.

### **Occupation-Centered and Holistic Practice**

Human beings are occupational in their intention and action, and each life garners meaning through the enactment of purposeful occupations performed within relevant physical, social, and cultural contexts. Occupations are expressions of oneself in the world; one's values, beliefs, and goals are given expression through occupation as the self-chosen activities one needs and wants to do. As such, occupation gives form and substance to each life and defines who one is through the doing of occupations. The OT Program embraces the stance that occupation holds the central, core position of our profession and guides what we do as professionals as both a means and an end for those with whom we work.

In addition to centering occupation at the core of OT practice, the OT Program acknowledges the importance of approaching practice holistically. Throughout the OT process, occupational therapy professionals consider the individual characteristics of the people with whom they work, the occupations in which they engage, as well as the physical, social, and cultural contexts in which they live. OT professionals rely on and use theories and frameworks from within and outside the occupational therapy profession to guide their reasoning and ensure their focus remains on *occupation-centered and holistic practice*.

### **Critical and Ethical Reasoning**

*Critical and ethical reasoning* refers to the cognitive and moral decision-making processes inherent to professional practice. The OT Program promotes education on how to approach and master complex and often ambiguous practice and ethical challenges. Students acquire the skills to use, assimilate, and evaluate current available evidence and assess their own ethical positions within the social and cultural dimensions of various contexts. Student development of professional reasoning encompasses both critical thinking and ethical reasoning, through which students learn to consider the ramifications of their attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

The development of critical and ethical reasoning skills requires the intentional engagement of students in their occupational therapy education. Intentional engagement refers to the process in which students participate actively in their learning and assimilate new knowledge and skills into their occupational lives. Such engagement allows for mastery of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. Students seek, create, and organize knowledge within the social contexts of the teaching-learning interactions in and out of the classroom, and in the therapist-client interactions in clinical and community contexts. Intentionally engaged learners are self-directed, curious, and responsible for their development into an occupational therapist who uses critical and ethical reasoning in their practice.

### **Theories of Teaching and Learning**

The OT Program recognizes students as self-directed, adult learners who take responsibility for their own learning. It also acknowledges the uniqueness of each student's educational journeys and learning preferences. As such, the OT Program incorporates numerous and varied teaching and learning theories into its curriculum design. These theories guide the development of courses, including the determination of how class sessions are

structured, how content is taught, and how student learning is evaluated. Some of these theories include:

- Andragogy: tailoring education to adult learners, who are assumed to approach learning with internal motivation and a readiness to learn when given the opportunity to apply past experience and understand future applicability
- Connectivism: designing learning experiences around a community where students actively contribute to the knowledge developed within that community
- Constructivism: recognizes that learning occurs when students can apply new information to and build upon previous knowledge and experiences
- Experiential learning: providing opportunities for hands-on learning, allowing for repeated practice and reflection to build knowledge and skills
- Pragmatism: participating in real-world experiences to apply previously learned knowledge and skills
- Self-regulated learning: the cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational processes involved in students being proactive participants in their own learning
- Universal Design for Learning: creating accessible curricula with multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to meet the needs of diverse learners (AOTA, 2021; Zimmerman, 2002)

The Program embraces the values of student-centered, interactional, and team-based approaches in the students' construction of their knowledge of occupational therapy. The intent of our educational approach is to evoke from our students their highest accomplishments through a compassionate dynamic of mentorship, challenge, and guidance. The faculty espouse the belief that the students who choose to attend the Midwestern University OT Program come with lives filled with rich and diverse experiences to which they desire to add direction, meaning, and purpose in order to help others individually and collectively through the practice of occupational therapy.

### ***Curricular Framework***

The OT Program curriculum is designed using a framework that guides how the philosophical tenets are embedded and communicated throughout the curriculum. The three main elements of the curricular framework are (a) scaffolding and layering in intention and delivery; (b) incorporation of authentic experiential and interprofessional learning opportunities; and (c) intentional opportunities for development of professional identity.

#### **Scaffolding and Layering in Intention and Delivery**

The curricular design reflects our strong belief that carefully sequenced courses and learning opportunities provide vital links between the acquisition, application, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge, all of which are required for critical reasoning and professional practice. Carefully placed courses and learning opportunities afford students with dovetailed opportunities to build upon essential concepts and assimilate the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that inform occupational therapy practice. Students are thus supported in their roles as adult learners to embrace occupation-centered and holistic practice through critical and ethical reasoning. The intentional placement of courses and learning opportunities, and the progression of content facilitates the scaffolded approach to learning, synthesis, and application of crucial content to various populations, settings, and clinical challenges inherent to occupational therapy practice.

#### **Incorporation of Authentic Experiential and Interprofessional Learning Opportunities**

The curricular design provides students with authentic opportunities to reflect and consider the impact of occupational therapy interventions on the quality of the lives of individuals, communities, and populations. Observation, case-based, and experiential learning provide opportunities to form questions, seek relevant resources, and integrate new insights to resolve unique occupational problems as they are expressed in real life

situations. Where occupational therapy already exists, aspiring practitioners demonstrate the merits of occupation-based practice; in emerging areas of practice, students promote and develop occupational therapy services. Interprofessional education provides opportunities for students to develop collaborative skills in preparation for working on multidisciplinary teams. Experiential learning facilitates authentic teaching-learning situations in which students learn by doing and serve individuals, groups, and communities through mentored occupational therapy practice.

### **Intentional Opportunities for Development of Professional Identity**

The curricular design presents multiple opportunities for students to develop their knowledge, skills, and behaviors as occupation therapy professionals. It includes the ongoing professional development process of reflecting on strengths and opportunities for growth, goal setting, acting, and reviewing progress. Through this process, they develop and refine their own professional identities. Students also learn the concept of professionalism and are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors. The development of professional identity requires self-regulated learning, effective therapeutic use of self, the consistent use of evidence-informed knowledge to guide occupation-focused and holistic practice, and the numerous skills derived from ethical and compassionate practice that is woven throughout the Program.

### ***Curricular Threads***

The OT Program curriculum consists of curricular threads, which are common themes that represent the unique qualities of the Program. These curricular threads emerge frequently and are woven throughout the curriculum from start to finish. The four curricular threads are (a) professional reasoning informed by evidence, theory, ethics, and active reflection; (b) doing, being, becoming, and belonging through occupation; (c) collaborative relationship-focused practice; and (d) occupational justice.

### **Professional Reasoning Informed by Evidence, Theory, Ethics, and Active Reflection**

Professional reasoning is “the process used by practitioners to plan, direct, perform, and reflect on” the care they provide to the people with whom they work (Schell, 2019, p. 483). This dynamic, complex process requires occupational therapy professionals to consider numerous factors that impact their decision-making. First, they need to be skilled at finding, understanding, and analyzing the current evidence to support their practice. This involves a commitment to remaining up to date and familiar with the evidence, especially as new studies are conducted and disseminated. Additionally, they need to know and use theories – both within and outside the occupational therapy profession – to inform their practice. This requires critical analysis of current theories and determination of the most appropriate ones applicable to a situation. Furthermore, occupational therapy professionals need to consider the ethical principles and standards of conduct that might impact their decision-making in any given situation. Finally, occupational therapy professionals need to practice active reflection and critical reflexivity as they engage in reasoning processes both before and after implementing interventions. They need to reflect on their own knowledge and experiences while also considering the various personal, narrative, ethical, and contextual factors surrounding the people with whom they work and the settings in which they work. They also need to reflect on the effectiveness of their interventions, the reactions and behaviors of the people with whom they work, and the quality of the person-therapist interactions.

### **Doing, Being, Becoming, and Belonging through Occupation**

Doing, being, becoming, and belonging have long been considered within the fields of occupational therapy and occupational science, and are the four main concepts within the Occupational Perspective of Health theory (Wilcock, 2007). Through ongoing study and theoretical development, the understanding of these concepts has

evolved, and they have been described as follows:

*Doing* is the medium through which people engage in occupations, and the skills and abilities needed for doing accumulate across time. *Doing* involves engaging in occupations that are personally meaningful, but not necessarily purposeful, healthy or organized. *Doing* involves being actively engaged, either overtly (i.e., observable, physical) or tacitly (i.e., mental, spiritual). *Doing* follows broadly similar patterns across the population, and humans are able to adapt their doing to greater and lesser degrees according to circumstance.

*Being* is the sense of who someone is as an occupational and human being. It encompasses the meanings they invest in life, and their unique physical, mental, and social capacities and abilities. Occupation may provide a focus for *being*, but it also exists independently of it during reflection and self discovery. *Being* is expressed through consciousness, creativity and the roles people assume in life. Ideally, individuals are able to exercise agency and choice in their expression of *being*, but this is not always possible or even desirable.

*Becoming* is the perpetual process of growth, development, and change that reside within a person throughout their life. It is directed by goals and aspirations, which can arise through choice or necessity, from the individual or from groups. Regular modifications and revisions of goals and aspirations help to maintain momentum in *becoming*, as does the opportunity to experience new or novel situations and challenges.

*Belonging* is a sense of connectedness to other people, places, cultures, communities, and times. It is the context within which occupations occur, and a person may experience multiple belongings at the same time. Relationships are essential to *belonging*, whether they be with a person, place, group, or other factor. A sense of reciprocity, mutuality, and sharing characterize *belonging* relationships, whether they are positive or negative. (Hitch et al., 2014)

Therefore, occupation interweaves *doing*, *being*, *becoming*, and *belonging* within each person in the composition of their own life, and reflects the belief that human beings are socially interconnected and interdependent. As such, occupational therapy professionals consider these concepts within their work with individuals, groups, and populations. It necessitates an approach to therapy that is occupation-based, occupation-focused, and occupation-centered (Fisher, 2013).

While the concepts of doing, being, becoming, and belonging can often relate to the process of occupational therapy, they also apply to the process of students developing their own professional identities as occupational therapy professionals. They engage in new occupations related to the *doing* of occupational therapy. This engagement contributes to their role of *being* an occupational therapy professional. They engage in the ongoing process of reflection and growth related to *becoming* an occupational therapy professional. This process occurs alongside a cohort of other students, as well as faculty, educators, and mentors, and contributes to their *belonging* to the occupational therapy profession.

### **Collaborative Relationship-Focused Practice**

Collaborative relationship-focused practice is a concept of an approach to occupational therapy practice that has evolved out of client-centered practice. It embraces many of the foundational components of client-centered practice, including respect, choice, and trust. The four main characteristics of collaborative relationship-focused practice are that it (a) is contextually relevant, (b) is contextually and temporally nuanced, (c) strives for physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual safety, and (d) promote rights-based self-determination of the individual, family, community, or population (Restall & Egan, 2021). Occupational therapy professionals can achieve collaborative

relationship-focused practice in many ways, such as through therapeutic use of self, collaborative goal setting, ethical reasoning, and shared decision making.

It is not only important to build strong and collaborative relationships with the people with whom they work; occupational therapy practitioners also need to collaborate with interprofessional teams. A successful interprofessional team meets four main competencies: (a) values and ethics: work with team members to maintain a climate of shared values, ethical conduct, and mutual respect; (b) roles and responsibilities: use the knowledge of one's own role and team members' expertise to address individual and population health outcomes; (c) communication: communicate in a responsive, responsible, respectful, and compassionate manner with team members; and (d) teams and teamwork: apply values and principles of the science of teamwork to adapt one's own role in a variety of team settings (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2023). Occupational therapy professionals have a responsibility to continually develop their interprofessional collaboration skills to help achieve the best possible outcomes for the people with whom they work.

### **Occupational Justice**

Occupational justice refers to "equitable opportunity and resources to enable people's engagement in meaningful occupations" (Wilcock & Townsend, 2000, p. 85). The Participatory Occupational Justice Framework (POJF) has been developed over decades to "facilitate social inclusion by raising awareness of and addressing occupational injustices" (Whiteford et al., 2018, p. 497). The POJF identifies several theoretical foundations that focus on human rights, equalized power relations, social inclusion, social and cultural relevance, equitable opportunities and resources, and agency within adverse environments (Whiteford et al., 2018). To effectively work toward occupational justice, occupational therapy professionals must engage in a critical reflection on these foundations and the complex, dynamic contexts in which they live and work. The POJF also outlines six collaborative enabling processes that serve as a "blueprint for action" for occupational therapy professionals: (a) raise consciousness of occupational injustice, (b) engage collaboratively with partners, (c) mediate on an agreed plan, (d) strategize how to find resources, (e) support implementation and continuous evaluation, and (f) inspire advocacy for sustainability or closure (Whiteford et al., 2018, pp. 497-498).

A key component of addressing occupational justice within occupational therapy practice is action. Action can take many different forms, including, but not limited to advocacy, leadership within community or professional organizations, and community service and engagement. Advocacy requires both an understanding of laws, regulations, and policies that impact the people with whom occupational therapy professionals work and the communities in which they live as well as a collective effort to request or fight for changes. Leadership requires ongoing critical reflection on one's strengths and abilities to inspire others to work toward common goals. Community engagement involves taking the time to develop strong relationships with community members and community partners. Through these and other actions, occupational therapy professionals can help achieve occupational justice for the people and communities with whom they work.

### **Curriculum Design Summary**

The OT Program curriculum is comprehensive in its philosophy, curricular threads, and design. Faculty and students live the guiding professional and educational principles articulated in the Program philosophy, specifically, *occupation-centered and holistic practice*, *critical and ethical reasoning*, and *theories of teaching and learning*. The curricular framework speaks to the *scaffolding and layering in intention and delivery* of courses that build and expand upon content across the curriculum; *incorporation of authentic experiential and interprofessional learning opportunities* by which students develop and are evaluated on their developing knowledge, skills, and behaviors required for occupational therapy practice; and *intentional opportunities for*

*development of professional identity* as students grow and develop into occupational therapy professionals. The curricular threads that weave throughout the curriculum are *professional reasoning informed by evidence, theory, ethics, and active reflection; doing, being, becoming, and belonging through occupation; collaborative relationship-focused practice; and occupational justice*. As these ideals are embodied by faculty and students, this integrated and foundational design speaks to the breadth and depth of the Midwestern Occupational Therapy Program and affirms our commitment to developing students into leaders who optimize people's lives and elevate the occupational therapy profession.

## **Occupational Therapy Program Philosophy of Inclusivity**

The Occupational Therapy Program at Midwestern University embraces and values the diversity of all faculty, staff, and students. It is our policy to practice inclusivity in program policies, classrooms, programming, and activities. We are committed to the inclusion and recognition of all individuals, regardless of race, age, culture, ability, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and socioeconomic status. We believe each individual has a diverse background and perspective, and the wide range of lived experiences strengthens our community. With that in mind, we strive to create an environment free of bias and discrimination for current and future cohorts.

Therefore, our commitment to inclusivity is realized through actions we're taking to promote change and challenge inequality, including:

- implementation of Universal Design for Learning principles to promote inclusive teaching and learning practices and physical spaces for all students,
- use of faculty, staff, and student preferred names and pronouns to promote gender inclusivity,
- creation of a Coalition of OT Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) chapter that plans various educational and service opportunities related to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) on campus and within the community,
- provision of opportunities to anonymously submit questions or feedback related to DEIJA issues, and
- design of opportunities for continued learning and dialogue on DEIJA topics.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### ***ACOTE Educational Standards***

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) provides a requisite set of educational Standards that encompass the minimum standards of quality for preparing individuals to enter the occupational therapy profession. The extent to which a program complies with these Standards determines its accreditation status. The Standards therefore constitute the minimum requirements to which an accredited program is held accountable.

The Standards provide elements addressing the following:

- sponsorship and accreditation of the occupational therapy program,
- academic resources (administrative, faculty, and clinical or support personnel; financial support; physical facilities, equipment and supplies; library and instructional support),
- students (admission, evaluation and retention, health, and guidance),
- strategic plan and program assessment (outcomes and results of ongoing program evaluation), and
- curriculum framework (mission, philosophy, and curriculum design).

The Standards also include content requirements that are expected student requirements. These content Standards have been integrated into syllabi as course objectives throughout the curriculum and include:

- foundational content requirements (liberal arts and sciences)
- basic tenets of occupational therapy,
- occupational therapy theoretical perspectives
- referral, screening, evaluation, and intervention plan
- context of service delivery, leadership, and management of OT services
- scholarship,
- professional ethics, values, and responsibilities
- fieldwork education, and
- doctoral capstone

A copy of the Standards is available online at <https://acoteonline.org/accreditation-explained/standards/>

### ***Academic Integrity***

The Occupational Therapy Program adheres to the Academic/Professional Honesty and Integrity policies in the University Student Handbook. Students can login to the student portal to review the Handbook:

<https://online.midwestern.edu/auth/login.cgi>.

Academic / professional honesty and integrity are expected of all students throughout their course of study at Midwestern University. Any violation of the Code of Rights and Responsibilities of Students of Midwestern University is considered to be a serious academic violation and may result in a reprimand, written warning, filing of a Student Incident Report, academic and/or disciplinary warning/probation, suspension, dismissal or other penalty deemed appropriate by the student's respective College Dean. Academic / professional misconduct constitutes a breach of integrity that violates the academic / professional foundation of an institution, contaminates the honesty of its scholarship, and compromises the integrity and wellbeing of its educational programs. Midwestern University Occupational Therapy students are also expected to adhere to and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with

AOTA's Code of Ethics, which may be found at the following website:

<https://www.aota.org/practice/practice-essentials/ethics>

Generally, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following categories: cheating, plagiarism, computer misuse, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, multiple submissions, obtaining unfair advantage, unauthorized collaboration, aiding and abetting, and unauthorized access to academic or administrative systems.

- *Cheating* refers to unauthorized use of text, notes, or other aids during an exam; copying the work of another student; allowing another person to do one's work and submitting it for grading; obtaining and using a copy of an examination in advance of its administration; gazing at another student's work; talking during an exam; signaling during an exam; neglecting to protect their answer sheet or scrap paper from the view of others; or any other violation as stated in the Testing Center Policy.
- *Plagiarism* refers to presenting the work of another as one's own, including AI (artificial intelligence) generated work, without proper acknowledgment; deceitful practice, utilizing a substitute or acting as a substitute in any academic evaluation, of knowingly permitting one's work to be submitted by another person without the instructor's authorization.
- *Computer misuse* refers to the disruptive or illegal use of computer resources including the inappropriate transmission of class/examination material via e-mail, texting, or any other form of electronic communication.
- *Fabrication* refers to inventing or falsifying information, data, or citations; presenting data gathered outside of acceptable professorial guidelines; failing to provide an accurate account of how information, data, or citations were gathered; altering documents affecting academic records; forging signatures; or authorizing false information on an official academic document, grade, letter, form, ID card, or any other university document.
- *Facilitating academic dishonesty* refers to intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- *Multiple Submissions* is another form of dishonesty that involves submitting identical papers or course work for credit in more than one course without prior permission of the instructor.
- *Obtaining Unfair Advantage* includes: gaining or providing access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by an instructor; stealing, defacing, or destroying library or research materials which can deprive others of their use; unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment; retaining, possessing, or circulating previously used examination materials without the instructor's permission; obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work; or engaging in any activity designed to obtain an unfair advantage over another student in the same course.
- *Unauthorized Access*: viewing or altering in any way computer records, modifying computer programs or systems, releasing or distributing information gathered via unauthorized access, or in any way interfering with the use of availability of computer systems/information.
- *Unauthorized collaboration* refers to working together on an exam or any other form of assessment when expressly prohibited from doing so by an instructor.
- *Aiding and Abetting* consists of providing material, information, or other assistance which violates the MWU Standards for Academic Integrity or providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity.
- *Copyrighted Materials*: Copyrighted works that are stored in digital form, such as software, music, videos, and photographs, can be easily acquired or distributed over computer networks using freely

available file sharing software. Despite the ease of such transfers, it is illegal to download or distribute such copyrighted works without permission from the copyright holder. Further information on Peer-to-Peer-File Sharing and Copyright infringement can be found at <https://www.midwestern.edu/institutional-disclosures/information-technology-disclosure>.

If an OT student engages in academic dishonesty, the following procedures will take place:

1. First Violation:

- a. A score of zero will be given on the assignment or exam on which the violation occurred. The course faculty will contact the student regarding the infraction. Depending on the situation, the instructor may require the student to redo the assignment or examination to establish competency. Thirty-one percentage points (31%) will automatically be deducted from the grade of the alternative assignment/exam prior to grading. Please note: this may result in failure of the course if the assignment is so weighted.
- b. The course faculty will inform the student's mentor and the Program Director about the violation of academic honesty. The student will be required to meet with the course faculty and Program Director to discuss the situation and determine the most appropriate course of action. The potential actions include: 1) initiation of Professional Behaviors Improvement Plan, which will outline the act of academic dishonesty, include consequences of any further violations, and be placed in the student's OT Program file; 2) a meeting with the OT Program Student Support Team to determine additional steps to be taken; or 3) referral to the Midwestern University Student Services department.

2. Second Violation:

- a. With the occurrence of a second violation, the OT Program Academic Review Committee will convene to determine the most appropriate course of action.

For additional information regarding procedures for upholding academic integrity, including sanctions for violation of the system, contact the Office of Student Services.

### ***Academic Performance***

Students in the OT Program must pass all courses with at least a grade of a "C" in each course. Students must also maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher to have maintain satisfactory academic progress. In addition to GPAs, the OT Program monitors student academic performance by reviewing grades on course assignments and exams. When students receive a grade below a "B-" on an assignment or exam, faculty may require them to participate in remediation. See the "Grading" section below for more information regarding remediation. If a student participates in remediation at least two times in one course or at least one time across two or more courses during a quarter, their faculty mentor may work with them to complete an "Academic Performance Improvement Plan" (see Appendix). The plan may include goals to improve study skills and/or test taking strategies, or to meet with a University Learning Specialist. After a designated period of time, the student and faculty mentor will review progress using the "Academic Performance Improvement Plan Review" (see Appendix). Depending on progress, they can choose to continue, discontinue, or revise the plan, or refer the student to the OT Program Student Support Team, Academic Review Committee, or Student Services.

### ***Advisement***

See the section entitled, "Mentorship".

### **APA Format**

Students in the OT Program will be expected to consistently utilize the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) for submission of all papers and assignments using *APA format*. Students are required to use the most current version of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition for proper formatting, citations, and use of references in scholarly writing. Additionally, all written assignments should be type-written with one's name, the date and the course number provided to ensure accurate grading unless otherwise stated by the responsible faculty member. Handwritten work may not be accepted.

### **Attendance**

Regular and prompt attendance at all OT Program lectures and laboratory sessions is required to ensure the acquisition of content and skills for the development of occupational therapy practice. Tardiness and absences from class result in missed content from faculty presentations and student discussions that are relevant not only for each course but for the student's overall preparation for the certification examination and the development of needed competence for fieldwork and future practice. Furthermore, each student has a responsibility to their classmates to fully participate in educational activities and share unique perspectives and experiences to enrich the learning process. Students are expected to consider their education as a priority and are expected to avoid non-educationally related activities that conflict with class or educational time periods.

Class and lab sessions are considered to be separate sessions for students to attend. Class and lab sessions may range from two to four-hour blocks of time. Therefore, during compressed courses, one calendar day with compressed courses may include two to three class or lab sessions; depending on the quarter, this may be 20-30% of an entire course's content. Attendance at all required sessions is expected.

Although it is a rare occurrence, a faculty member may find it necessary to be unexpectedly absent or late to a class. Students will be notified at the earliest possible time by email regarding this absence.

While attendance is required, students may find the need to miss a class due to illness or other serious life event. The student must contact the instructor **prior to** the class session by email. If the student is unable to contact the instructor, they must phone the OT Program Administrative Coordinator as soon as possible at 630-515-6188.

Regardless of the reason for an absence (planned or unexpected), it is the responsibility of the student to initiate determination of how to make up for missed content, assignments, or exams. Students must collaborate with the course director to determine an appropriate makeup plan. They must document their makeup plan through completion of a "Student Absence Notification Form" (Appendix). They must submit this form to both the course director and the Program Director. For planned absences (for example, when travelling to a conference or an important family event), students must submit this form by the end of the first week of the quarter, or at least two weeks prior to the absence. For unexpected absences (for example, for illness or a family emergency), students must submit this form within one week of the absence. Make up exams or assignments will be scheduled at the convenience of the instructor.

In some instances, it may be possible for faculty to offer an option to attend a course virtually through an online option. In other situations, faculty may record the class session and make the recording available after the class session. These options may not always be feasible, but students are encouraged to ask about the availability of these options.

As attendance at class sessions is essential for learning, faculty will monitor students' class attendance. Faculty may choose to request that students check in by initialing a sign-in sheet at the beginning of class sessions. This will likely be a common practice especially in the first quarter of the program or when a faculty member has not taught the cohort before. Beyond the initial quarters when faculty learn all students' names (and often their chosen places in the classroom), faculty may choose to utilize the sign in sheets to ensure they are monitoring attendance.

Faculty will contact students whose frequent absences present concern, and the student's faculty mentor may also be contacted to ascertain ways to support the student better in their engagement in the curriculum. The Program Director will be notified whenever such behaviors could endanger the student's academic standing or the ability of the Program Director to certify that the student has met the requirements for sitting for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). The Academic Review Committee may be convened consistent with university policies for decisions related to course failures.

Specific to fieldwork rotations, the student must promptly notify the Director of Clinical Education and Fieldwork Educator(s) of tardiness or an absence. Frequent occurrences of absenteeism and/or tardiness may result in dismissal from fieldwork placement. In all instances, work missed during an absence must be made up as well as the actual amount of time missed.

Specific to the Doctoral Internship, the student must promptly notify the Director of Capstone Development and the Site Mentor(s) of tardiness or an absence. Frequent occurrences of absenteeism and/or tardiness may result in dismissal from fieldwork placement. In all instances, work missed during an absence must be made up as well as the actual amount of time missed.

### ***Basic Life Support (BLS) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)***

Upon matriculation, each student is expected to certify their currency in Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers from the American Heart Association (cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification). Students will be enrolled in a recertification course in the University Simulation Center during the Spring-I quarter to ensure that each student maintains their certification through Fieldwork and Internship rotations in the curriculum. Each student is responsible for uploading their BLS certification to the student portal and should keep a copy for their own records.

### ***Classroom and Lab Supplies***

Use of the equipment and supplies in the OT Program is intended for educational purposes only. Access to the OT Lab classroom is achieved by students' ID badges during the weekdays, 6:00am – 6:00pm. Tables, chairs, and equipment should not be removed from the lab/classrooms and must be returned to their designated areas after use. Property of Midwestern University should not be removed without prior written permission (note or email) from a faculty member. It is imperative that students seek permission well in advance of the need to assure availability of equipment.

Materials for classroom teaching and labs are distributed by the faculty member for optimizing cost containment. Students are not to take or use materials in the teaching kitchen, classrooms, or storage closets, such as splinting materials, assessment forms, craft supplies, toys, etc. without the express permission of the OT faculty. Reference materials and evaluation and assessment kits should be signed out and returned to the Program Administrative Coordinator or faculty member. These materials tend to be very expensive and are not always easy to replace in a timely manner. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to be fiscally responsible with all classroom supplies.

### ***Complaints***

It is the intent of the CHS Dean, OT Program Director, faculty, and staff to work with each individual and class to address complaints or concerns. The faculty and administration are committed to making the learning environment one of trust and a mutually satisfying experience. Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns in a timely manner with the primary responsible party prior to taking their concerns to higher levels of administration. Such discussion often clarifies the considerations that factor into why a decision was made, and professional discourse can bring the parties into shared understanding of the situation. The ability to resolve conflict is an important professional behavior and one that will be encouraged and mentored throughout any complaint process. Larger issues can be brought to the attention of the student's mentor directly or through the class representatives, the faculty member, and the Program Director. If the issue is not resolved within the OT Program to the satisfaction of the student(s), then the next administrative level to be contacted would be the Dean of the College of Health Sciences. Students should refer to the Midwestern University Student Handbook for more specific information.

### **Contact Information**

Each student is required to immediately notify the OT Program in writing of any name, address, or contact information changes. These changes may be e-mailed to the OT Program Administrative Coordinator who will notify faculty appropriately. Students must also update changes to contact information within the MWU online portal and within any fieldwork databases. It is also highly encouraged that you keep the Program informed of your contact information after graduation.

### **Counseling**

Group support sessions and personal counseling are available to students through the Office of Student Services. A limited number of sessions are free, and the student may be referred to appropriate professionals outside the university for additional sessions if needed; costs are then the responsibility of the student. A student may contact Dr. Torgerson, the Associate Dean of Students, at (630) 515-7142 or [ctorge@midwestern.edu](mailto:ctorge@midwestern.edu), to request assistance. Counseling services are completely confidential and will in no way affect students' rights in the Occupational Therapy Program. Students' utilization of counseling will not be disclosed to Program faculty or staff unless the student grants such permission. The standards of confidentiality will be maintained with any counseling issues. Additional information about counseling services, including telemedicine, live phone counseling, and emergency services, at <https://www.midwestern.edu/student-experience/student-services/counseling-services>.

### **Criminal Background Checks**

The Joint Commission requires that all healthcare workers have a criminal background check prior to working within the organization, whether they are student interns, fieldwork students, or paid employees. This background check may also include fingerprinting, depending on the site. The background checks are provided by the university and included in the student's fees. If the site requires specific background information (e.g., fingerprinting, drug screening, etc.) not covered in the university's background check process, students will be required to comply with individual facility requirements and may be asked to pay for this background check and provide the necessary information to the OT Program and to the site.

Fieldwork and doctoral internship sites reserve the right to accept or reject a student for placement based on the results of the criminal background check. Students need to be cognizant that criminal charges and convictions (felony and/or misdemeanor) may impede participation in fieldwork or doctoral internship experiences. A criminal record may also negate the student's ability to sit for the NBCOT exam and therefore prevent practice as an occupational therapist and use of the title of registered occupational therapist.

### ***Disability Services – ADA and Universal Design***

Prior to enrollment, students certified their ability to complete the technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, associated with performing as an occupational therapy student. Reasonable accommodation refers to ways in which Midwestern University can assist students with disabilities to accomplish these tasks (for example, providing extra time to complete an examination or providing a less distracting environment in which to complete an examination). Reasonable accommodation does not mean that students with disabilities will be exempt from certain tasks; it does mean that the OT Program will work with students with disabilities to determine whether there are ways to assist the student toward completion of the tasks.

The OT Program is committed to providing all students with the supports needed for them to access and learn the academic content, skills, and attitudes of an occupational therapist. To that end, each faculty member will be responsive to the individual needs of students who may, for various reasons, struggle to access course material or to manage the stresses associated with graduate professional education. Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are the intended goal in every course and are considered for students without the danger of minimizing students' acquisition of required content, depth of learning, and ability to participate fully in academic educational experiences. Principles of UDL may be applied to physical learning spaces (e.g., providing standing tables, therapy balls for seating, etc.), representation of information (e.g., use of audiovisual resources or hands-on labs to support verbal instruction), and assessment of student knowledge (e.g., variety of assessments options including exams, written papers, or oral presentations). A variety of teaching-learning strategies will be utilized across courses to enhance student engagement and learning. Students should communicate with their faculty mentor and their course faculty to discuss their learning needs.

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Midwestern University will provide reasonable accommodation of all documented disabilities. Students with a disability who wish to have reasonable accommodations must provide documentation to the Office of Student Services (630-515-6470) substantiating the claimed disability. Once the student has submitted paperwork to the Office of Student Services and a conclusion has been made, formal documentation will be provided to the course faculty concerning the student's accommodations. A student may be administratively withdrawn if it becomes apparent that: 1) the student cannot complete essential tasks, even with reasonable accommodation; 2) the accommodations needed are not reasonable and would cause undue hardship to the institution; or 3) fulfilling the accommodations would create a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of others.

In addition to the Technical Skills written in the University Catalog, to which students attest upon matriculation to the University, the OT Program has articulated Essential Skills and Abilities for occupational therapy practice (refer to the section entitled Essential Skills and Abilities). These essential skills and abilities must be upheld and maintained throughout the didactic, experiential, and fieldwork portions of the OT Program.

### ***Doctoral Capstone***

Students are directed to the online Doctoral Capstone Manual (<https://www.midwestern.edu/academics/degrees-programs/college-health-sciences/doctor-occupational-therapy-program/doctor-occupational-therapy-downers-grove-campus/resources-manuals>) for the most complete information regarding the Doctoral Capstone.

### ***Dress Code***

Students and faculty/staff represent the University in their actions, attire, and behavior on or off campus. As representatives of the OT Program and Midwestern University, students are expected to dress in an appropriately professional manner. The dress code is designed to help assure safety and a professional demeanor in the classroom, laboratories, fieldwork, and doctoral internship experiences. Students must exhibit good judgment in personal hygiene, attire, jewelry, make-up, and body piercings or tattoos to support a learning environment that reflects the professional role they are being trained to assume.

All students are expected to use their best judgment in determining how to dress both inside and outside of the classroom. When making the decision about how to present themselves, students should consider their environment, including potential clients they may be treating, or professionals with whom they may interact. There is an expectation that students be mindful of how their clients, client family members, and staff members may respond to them within professional settings. Students' courtesy towards others and their respect for individual and cultural differences are aspects of therapeutic use of self that promote best practice. The OT Program dress code does not restrict students' clothing or appearance on the basis of culture, religion, or gender. If students have questions about what is appropriate, they should consult their instructor for additional information about the relevant sociocultural environment, so that a decision can be made accordingly.

Additionally, it is important to note that students are expected to comply with dress codes on fieldwork or internship assignments, and that these may be quite different from the OT Program. Students may contact the Director of Clinical Education or the Director of Capstone Development regarding dress for fieldwork or doctoral internship experiences. Failure to follow a designated dress code may be grounds for immediate dismissal from a fieldwork or doctoral internship assignment. Identification (ID) badges are required for entrance to all fieldwork settings. Students are required to wear either their MWU ID badge or an ID badge provided by the fieldwork or internship site during the time they are on a rotation.

### ***Email and Electronic Communication***

Students are provided with a university e-mail address. The OT Program will communicate with students using their Midwestern e-mail address only. **Each student must log on / check and respond to their MWU email account at least once each day** to ensure timeliness and responsiveness to communication related to coursework, experiential opportunities, or other professional communication. Midwestern OT students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when communicating in any form when on campus, in class, and on fieldwork.

Students should refrain from using electronic communication (e.g., texting, emailing, searching the web, etc.) when in class, laboratory sessions, fieldwork, or internship. Cell phones must be turned to silent and stored out of sight during class and laboratory sessions. Should the student have an imminent emergency situation they may set their cell to vibrate and leave the classroom, if absolutely necessary, to answer the call. However, the student should inform the faculty member of the potential for such a situation to arise prior to responding to the call. The OT Program office staff do not take phone messages for students unless it is an emergency. The general OT Program phone number (630-515-6188) may be given out as an emergency contact number for such rare and unforeseen occurrences warranting the need to contact a student while they are in class.

While on Level II fieldwork and doctoral internship rotations, mentors will contact their mentees via email, phone call, or text to offer support, encouragement and perhaps assist with problem solving. However, it is not appropriate for students to engage in social networking or texting faculty, fieldwork educators, or internship site mentors. Students must never discuss specific identifying details of the OT Program, including faculty, staff, or other students in the context of a social networking or any public forum (e.g., Listservs, Facebook, etc.). Students must also not discuss

specific identifying details of fieldwork or internship issues including names of facilities, clients, supervisors, or other students in the context of a social networking or any public forums. It is a violation of HIPAA to discuss patient identifying information (please see HIPAA policy). If you have any questions about the appropriate use of electronic devices or social networking please contact the OT Program Director, faculty, or the Director of Clinical Education for clarification.

### **Essential Requirements**

The Midwestern University OT Program supports the standards and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 2010) and is committed to the elimination of discrimination against qualified students with disabilities. To become safe and responsible occupational therapists, the OT Program recognizes that students must not only demonstrate academic competence but must also possess a set of competencies in the following domains: physical, sensory, cognitive, interpersonal, communication, affective, and professional. Students must meet these essential requirements throughout their period of enrollment, with or without accommodations. The essential requirements listed below expand and clarify the Technical Standards for the University and illustrate essential functions specific to both the Program and the practice of occupational therapy. These requirements apply to classroom, laboratory, experiential, and fieldwork environments. The Program acknowledges that students demonstrate proficiency in different ways; therefore, students should consult with individual course instructors and/or the Program Director as necessary with any questions or concerns. Additionally, if a qualified student with a disability has been provided with reasonable accommodations, they may request to use an intermediary or aid for assistance. Such accommodations should not replace a student's ability to meet the essential requirements of the Program, and an intermediary may not provide cognitive support or supports that supplement clinical judgment.

The student must demonstrate sufficient **physical and sensory** skills to:

1. tolerate sitting up to 2 hours at a time, over a 10-hour period
2. tolerate periods of physical activity up to 10 hours per day
3. demonstrate ability to manipulate, or direct the manipulation of, parts or whole bodies of simulated and real clients for purposes of evaluation and treatment including, but not limited to, transfers, ambulation, and positioning
4. demonstrate ability to use common occupational therapy equipment, devices, materials, and supplies and demonstrate competency in the use of these objects within assessment and treatment procedures commonly used in occupational therapy practice
5. engage in a wide variety of therapeutic techniques, activities, and occupations used in the occupational therapy assessment and intervention process
6. arrange or modify the physical environment to facilitate client occupational performance and participation
7. legibly record/document evaluations, patient care notes, referrals, etc. in standard medical charts in clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the norms of clinical settings
8. tolerate physical contact with others and manipulation of their own body by peers or instructors for instructional purposes
9. respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately, including performance of CPR
10. travel to various community and fieldwork sites for academic and experiential learning

The student must demonstrate sufficient **cognitive** skills to:

1. acquire, apply, process, retain, and apply knowledge through a variety of instructional methods such as:

written materials (i.e., texts, journals, documentation, and other written sources), oral delivery, visual demonstrations, laboratory experiences, clinical experiences, and independent learning

2. complete reading assignments, search and analyze professional literature, and apply information gained to guide practice
3. process (measure, calculate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate) large amounts of complex information, apply theoretical concepts to practice activities, and perform clinical problem-solving in a logical and timely manner
4. perceive and understand three-dimensional relationships and spatial relationships necessary for education and practice related tasks such as moving in a variety of environments, designing treatment equipment, and fabricating splints
5. maintain attention for 2 - 4 hours; tolerate days when classes, fieldwork, or community learning may last up to 10 hours
6. complete tests/quizzes in a variety of formats
7. complete written assignments and produce written documentation in standard and organized English
8. apply knowledge and judgment required to demonstrate ethical reasoning and behavior
9. apply safety knowledge and judgment to a variety of situations
10. comply with university, program, fieldwork, or community learning site rules and regulations
11. demonstrate problem-solving skills and judgment to modify evaluation or intervention methods, when necessary, to address the specific needs of individuals and populations (behavioral, cultural, etc.), in order to maximize client performance
12. identify and select occupations that are goal directed and motivate and challenge clients
13. demonstrate judgment necessary to establish priorities and develop and use strategies
14. apply clinical reasoning and judgment necessary for interpretation of evaluation data and development of individual treatment plans or program planning

The student must demonstrate sufficient ***interpersonal and communication*** skills:

1. demonstrate positive interpersonal skills including, but not limited to, cooperation, flexibility, tact, empathy, and confidence
2. collaborate with faculty, supervisors, classmates, clients, family members, significant others, and team members
3. function successfully in supervisory and instructor-student relationships; change and adjust behavior and performance in the classroom, laboratory, clinic, or community site on the basis of instructor feedback
4. participate equitably in cooperative group learning activities; actively participate in class discussions and as a member of a team
5. present information to groups of people
6. communicate in the English language effectively and clearly in verbal and written forms, using proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar to explain procedures and teach skills
7. use language appropriate to the recipient, with faculty, peers, clients, and other health professionals from different social and cultural backgrounds; use communication skills needed to practice safely

8. obtain information from clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and other professionals
9. use therapeutic communication skills such as attending and active listening during therapeutic interactions, and motivating and facilitating client behaviors in order to maximize client performance
10. communicate effectively both verbally and non-verbally; elicit and describe factual information and perceive information derived from verbal and non-verbal communication and social cues
11. be appropriately assertive as required to speak in class, initiate and guide the therapy process, establish limits as needed for the safety of self and clients, and establish professional identity within complex systems
12. utilize the computer for communication and academic assignments
13. observe persons, scenarios, and associated environments, and elicit relevant information for use in assessment and intervention
14. plan, guide, and implement both individual and group interventions

The student must demonstrate sufficient **affective** skills to:

1. sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program in occupational therapy that includes academic and clinical components that occur within set time constraints and often concurrently
2. identify and seek out resources or professional supports to proactively manage stressors encountered in the intensive educational process and clinical practice environments
3. respond appropriately in environments where there is exposure to disability, illness, pain, and death
4. maintain general good mental and physical health and self-care in order to not jeopardize the health and safety of self and others in the academic and clinical settings

The student must demonstrate sufficient **professional behaviors** to:

1. show respect for diversity consistent with the Program Philosophy of Inclusivity
2. function successfully in supervisory and instructor-student relationships; change and adjust behavior and performance in the classroom, laboratory, clinic or community learning site on the basis of instructor feedback
3. exhibit professional demeanor, including appropriate language and attire, and acceptance of responsibility for conduct
4. maintain organizational and time management skills to prioritize activities effectively as needed to attend class and fulfill class requirements
5. exhibit flexibility and adapt to changing environments and expectations
6. exhibit consistent work behaviors including initiative, preparedness, dependability, punctual attendance, and work site maintenance
7. maintain ethical standards including honesty, integrity, and confidentiality, at all times
8. produce the required volume of work in the expected time frame

***Ethics (also, see Professional Responsibilities and Behavior)***

The American Occupational Therapy Association's Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020) is a public statement of the values and principles used in promoting and maintaining high standards of behavior in occupational

therapy. The American Occupational Therapy Association and its members are committed to furthering people's ability to participate fully within their total environment. To this end, occupational therapy personnel provide services for individuals in any stage of development, health and illness, to institutions, to other professionals and colleagues, to students, and to the general public.

Midwestern University Occupational Therapy faculty and students are expected to understand and abide by the AOTA Code of Ethics in their personal and professional interactions, decisions, and behaviors. Students learn and develop ethical, professional behaviors throughout their tenure at Midwestern University into fieldwork and ultimately, clinical practice. Please refer to the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020).

### ***Examinations***

Students are expected to prepare for and take examinations during the scheduled dates and times. Make-up examinations are reserved for those students who are ill or have other emergencies that prevent them from taking the exam during the scheduled time period. Students who will be unable to take an exam during the scheduled period must contact the course director and/or OT Program office before the exam time indicating the problem preventing them from taking the exam. Make up examinations will be scheduled at the convenience of the instructor and course progression. Make-up exams may have different test items and format from the original exam at the discretion of the faculty member.

Faculty will return graded examinations in a timely manner and, when appropriate, will discuss the correct answers. All test questions remain the property of Midwestern University and in possession of the OT Program. In a dispute regarding the answer to a test item, the judgment of the faculty will be final.

### ***Faculty Office Hours***

Faculty will post their office hours outside their door and on their syllabi each quarter. However, the OT Program is also committed to an "open access policy" which assumes that faculty are available to students in-person or remotely during typical workdays unless otherwise busy with teaching, meetings, or off-campus obligations. In many cases, this means that specific appointment times do not need to be scheduled and students can seek out their mentors or course faculty for simple sharing of information or question-answer needs. Therefore, a student need not wait until posted office hours if there is an important issue to discuss. There are times when it is prudent to contact the faculty member in advance and set a time to meet to avoid the risk of the faculty member being out of the office.

Except for teaching, mentor meetings, and office hours, faculty may work from home during any given week but are still available for student meetings. Students should email the faculty member who, if available, may provide a virtual meeting link or telephone number. Students are also welcome to arrange other times for meetings with their mentor and instructors based on the mutual availability of all parties involved. Mentors and course instructors may also be contacted by their office telephone, University email, and through the Canvas course site.

### ***Fieldwork Policies: Requirements and Guidelines***

Students are directed to the online Fieldwork Manual (<https://www.midwestern.edu/academics/degrees-programs/college-health-sciences/doctor-occupational-therapy-program/doctor-occupational-therapy-downers-grove-campus/resources-manuals>) for the most complete information regarding Fieldwork.

All Midwestern University OTD students are required to complete two 1.5 credit Fieldwork Level I rotations and two 12- week Fieldwork Level II rotations. A student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 and successfully complete all didactic coursework scheduled prior to a Level II fieldwork. A student must complete all

Level II fieldwork at a satisfactory level in order to graduate and be eligible to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) Examination. According to the *2023 Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards and Interpretive Guide*, students are required to complete a minimum of 24 weeks of full-time Level II fieldwork. This may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis, but may not be less than half time, as defined by the fieldwork site.

For Level I fieldwork rotations, concurrent with the OT Practice courses, students will be notified of their placements no later than the last week of the previous quarter. For Level II-A and II-B fieldwork rotations, students will be notified of their final placements no later than eight weeks prior to the initial starting date. Student requests to change their Level II fieldwork placement after fieldwork placements have been finalized will not be honored. Conflicts, cancellations, and special circumstances do not apply to the above-noted timeline and will be handled on a case-by-case basis as deemed appropriate by the Director of Clinical Education.

In the event that extraordinary circumstances occur that have the potential to affect fieldwork placement, the student is responsible for notifying the Director of Clinical Education immediately. The Director of Clinical Education and Program Director will then determine if the circumstances warrant special consideration. Students complete six full quarters of didactic coursework prior to beginning Fieldwork Level II-A and another full quarter prior to Fieldwork Level II-B. As stated in the University catalog, all coursework must be completed successfully prior to beginning fieldwork.

The FW Level I experiences are each worth 1.5 credits and are situated in the summer and fall quarters of the second didactic year to be held concurrent to the OT Practice courses. These experiences focus primarily on the psychosocial factors of children/adolescents or adults across a variety of settings. Level I Fieldwork experiences may be supervised on site by an occupational therapist, but more commonly by another professional (educator, social worker, staff member, etc.) from the site. The goal of Level I Fieldwork is to utilize therapeutic use of self, practice observation and communication skills, and use one's "OT lens" through which to view human occupation. The student will receive a grade of pass or fail for each Level I rotation.

Levels II-A & II-B are full-time experiences that are 12 weeks in duration; each Level II rotation is worth 12 credits. While there are no restrictions as to the type of site, students **must** experience a range of settings and individuals with whom to work. It is ideal that one of the Level II rotations focus on OT practice with an adult population. Level II-A fieldwork is scheduled in the Spring-II quarter (March through May). Level II-B fieldwork is positioned in the Fall-III quarter (September through November). Students receive a grade of pass or fail for each Level II rotation.

### **Attendance Policies for Fieldwork Rotations**

Students are required to attend all scheduled days, meetings and/or rounds associated with a fieldwork rotation. If the rotation requires or recommends students to participate in additional activities, the student is expected to do so. Part-time jobs or extracurricular activities are not acceptable excuses for absences. All students **must** notify the Director of Clinical Education **and** their Fieldwork Educator(s) if they are going to be absent at any time from a rotation. All students are expected to be in daily attendance throughout each rotation unless prior arrangements have been made with their Fieldwork Educator(s) and the Director of Clinical Education. Unexcused absence from a rotation may jeopardize a student's completion of Fieldwork and progression through the OT Program. The Occupational Therapy Program will monitor student attendance. Being prompt and on time is essential and can have clear consequences for the student's fieldwork performance evaluations and grade.

Students are expected to consider their education as a priority. When activities other than those related to the educational program conflict with fieldwork, students are expected to change the non-educationally related activities.

Making up time is permitted for religious holidays and emergency situations only. Emergencies include accidents, illness, or deaths in the family (i.e., things over which a student has no control). Due to the limited number of weeks required for fieldwork, students will be required to take full advantage of the fieldwork experiences by making up any and all time missed. Any questions regarding making up time during fieldwork rotations should be directed to the Director of Clinical Education. Students who do not complete experiential time requirements for Fieldwork Levels I and II are at risk for failing those courses and impeding their successful progression through the Program.

### **Changes to Fieldwork Sites**

Securing fieldwork sites for students requires a considerable amount of time and effort by the OT Program Fieldwork faculty and staff, and University administration/staff. Moreover, the agreement between the University and each Fieldwork site is legally bound by contractual policies and procedures. Many factors, out of the control of the Director of Clinical Education, may, at any time, impact the ability to successfully place a student at a particular rotation site. Students must, therefore, understand that changes in fieldwork assignments may and sometimes do occur. When this happens, the Director of Clinical Education will work closely with the student to secure alternative fieldwork arrangements at a site that meets program requirements. As a general rule, once site assignments (local and/or out-of-state) have been made for a student, no student-initiated requests for site changes will be considered.

### **Failed Fieldwork Rotations**

As with any course failure, if a student fails a fieldwork rotation for any reason, the course failure must be reviewed by the Academic Review Committee consistent with university academic policies. Subsequent site placement to replace the failed FW rotation is not guaranteed and will be determined following a full review by the Committee of the circumstances surrounding the failure. If subsequent site placement is permitted, the student may have a remediation requirement which needs to be met prior to beginning a subsequent fieldwork experience. Site assignment settings must meet Program requirements and be approved by the Director of Clinical Education. Any placement of a student following a failed rotation will be assigned according to the Program's established rotation schedule, up to one year later. In the case of failure in a second fieldwork course, the student may be dismissed from the Program consistent with university academic policies and procedures.

### **Financial Considerations during Fieldwork**

Students completing Level II Fieldwork are still enrolled as full-time students and are required to follow University policy. Therefore, if Fieldwork II rotations should fall outside of university timeframes, it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the Registrar's Office and the Student Financial Aid Department, as there may be financial ramifications.

Due to potential conflicts of interest, any student who is receiving financial assistance in the form of scholarships or other resources from a clinical rotation site must inform the Director of Clinical Education of this arrangement as soon as possible. A copy of the contract you sign with the facility should also be provided to the Director of Clinical Education.

Students receiving an incomplete as a grade for fieldwork are not required to pay tuition during the quarter when the *incomplete* is completed. However, the student must pay fees, notify the MWU registrar and Student Financial Aid department, and assume responsibility for any additional expenses incurred due to the extended time frame.

### **Liability Insurance**

The University provides evidence of liability coverage for each student assigned to a fieldwork rotation. This is submitted annually to the fieldwork sites through the Centralized Office of Experiential Education (COEE).

## ***Fire Evacuation Procedures for Non-Residential Buildings***

1. Assist any person in immediate danger to safety if it can be accomplished without risk to you.
2. Immediately activate the building fire alarm system. This will automatically notify the fire department and get help on the way. It will also sound the fire alarm bells to evacuate the building and shut down the air handling units to prevent the spread of smoke. It is best to have the fire department respond and not be needed than to have them arrive too late for potential rescue. If you are in a building without a fire alarm system, dial 911 from a safe location to report the fire.
3. If the fire is small enough, use a nearby fire extinguisher to control and extinguish the fire. Do not fight a fire if you don't know what's burning; you don't have the proper equipment, you might inhale toxic smoke, or your instincts tell you not to do so! Safety comes first!
4. Doors, and if possible, windows, should be closed as the last person leaves a room or area.
5. Do not use elevators, use building stairwells.
6. Upon evacuation of the building, all should proceed to a designated meeting area where head counts can be taken. Never reenter a building without permission from the fire department.
7. Never block access to building; fire lanes must be clear at all times.

## ***Grading***

The OT Program provides students a variety of assignments to demonstrate their mastery of course content. Individual and group assignments may include narrative papers, creative projects, evaluation reports, intervention plans, etc. All course-related assignments are to be completed and submitted on or before the assigned target date. For most courses, the late submission of an assignment will result in a loss of 10% of the grade for the assignment per day (weekday or weekend), and no credit for the assignment will be given after 72 hours after the due date and time. Each faculty member will determine specific requirements for their course and will provide these in the syllabus. Further, in most cases, all assignments must be completed and submitted for feedback in order to pass the course.

The Midwestern University Catalog explains thoroughly the grading policies and use of quality points to which both students and faculty may refer. Each course instructor will maintain the students' grades for the course throughout the duration of the course and will submit final grades for online entry within two days following finals week to ensure timely recording of course grades. Please refer to the University Course Catalog for specific information pertaining to course failure, academic review procedures, and progression.

## ***Safety and Foundational Knowledge***

In occupational therapy practice, safety and the application of foundational knowledge are non-negotiable. Therefore, any assignment or practical demonstration that exhibits significant safety concerns or a disregard for foundational concepts previously covered in the curriculum may receive up to a 31% deduction from the total grade. This policy is intended to underscore the importance of safe, ethical, and evidence-informed practice.

## ***Remediation***

In most cases, if students receive a grade below "B-" on an assignment or exam, faculty may require them to participate in remediation. Remediation may include, but is not limited to, redoing the assignment, retaking the exam, or engaging in some other activity to demonstrate mastery of the content. The purpose of the remediation request is to ensure students understand the course content and can apply it in future courses and practice. Upon completion of the remediation, it is important to note that faculty will not change the student's grade on the exam or assignment; original grades will stand. Furthermore, a student may not be able to pass the class without completing the

remediation.

### **Requests for Deadline Extensions**

Faculty understand that students sometimes experience extenuating circumstances that prevent them from turning in an assignment on time. If students know they may be unable to submit an assignment on time, they are encouraged to speak with the course director before the assignment due date to request a reasonable extension without penalty. Students who request multiple extensions within a course or quarter may be directed to speak with their faculty mentor to explore opportunities for academic or personal support.

### ***Health and Safety***

The health and safety of the student, faculty, guests, and other participants in the OT Program is essential. Faculty and staff will enforce maintaining a safe working and learning environment. Students are also empowered to create a safe working and learning environment by following verbal and written directions, using best practice strategies when working individually or in groups, and complying with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA is an agency of the US government under the Department of Labor with the responsibility of ensuring safety at work and a healthful work environment and whose mission is to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths. Horseplay or misuse of equipment will result in disciplinary action. Students must use sound judgment with regard to self and others and adhere to safety regulations. Any broken equipment needs to be reported immediately to the OT Program faculty or OT Program Administrative Coordinator, and electric equipment should be disconnected from any power source and properly labeled as “out of service”. Students should not operate equipment without reading the operator manuals and/or receiving instruction from the OT faculty. Each OT lab/classroom and the OT Program office have a copy of the OT Program Safety Manual that includes specific safety information on equipment in the Program.

Students are responsible for assuring that the OT Program Administrative Coordinator has their current emergency contact information including names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for the respective emergency contact persons. This information will be kept electronically in the OT office and should be updated at the beginning of each quarter or when a change is indicated.

### ***Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Illness and Injury OSHA Training, & Bloodborne Pathogens***

HIPPA protects the privacy of individually identifiable health information. Consideration for the dignity and integrity of each individual, patient, client, and family should govern all contacts in coursework, experiential learning, and fieldwork experiences. “Privileged information” (information concerning patients’ or clients’ diagnoses, care and treatment, prognosis, and/or psychosocial problems) should be guarded carefully and shared only with other professional people concerned with aiding the client / patient / family. Hallways, elevators, dining rooms, etc. are not appropriate places for discussions regarding clients. Client/patient names should never be mentioned or used as identifying information on any assignments. Unethical and/or unprofessional behavior(s) can be grounds for immediate dismissal from a fieldwork assignment or result in formal reprimand and professional behavior incident report through Student Services.

Students participate in Vector courses online related to HIPPA, OSHA and Bloodborne Pathogen training and are then provided a certificate of completion annually to provide to each fieldwork experience. This is a required document for fieldwork which students should maintain in their professional portfolio to have available to provide to each fieldwork site.

### ***Identification Badges***

It is the student's responsibility to wear their Midwestern University photo identification (ID) badge when on campus and on experiential rotations. One's ID badge allows access to campus, to buildings on campus, and to the OT classrooms/labs. If a student ID badge is damaged, lost, or stolen, the student is required to inform the University Office of Safety and Security and arrange for a replacement badge. A fee of \$25.00 is required to replace a lost or damaged ID badge. Given the importance of the badge, students should not leave their IDs on car dashboards to avoid excessive heat from disabling the electronic portions of the badge. Students must not punch a hole in their ID and should not lend their ID badges to others.

### ***Immunization and Student Records***

It is the student's responsibility to maintain their own copy of Health and Immunization Report forms and health records in their professional portfolios (e.g., TB test; drug testing, etc.). The OT Program Fieldwork Office will send a one-page summary of a student's health information to the respective fieldwork site. Health records are not maintained in the OT Program files or office. They are maintained through the Wellness Center on campus and the Centralized Office of Experiential Education in secured files. The program has access to each student's immunization and annual physical summary through the Centralized Office of Experiential Education.

All students are required to submit a current copy of their immunization and vaccination history as a part of the matriculation agreement. Each student is responsible for maintaining their immunizations and being up to date with documentation of all immunizations, CPR certification, and accuracy of health requirements and records. **Students must ensure that their records are current and documented at least two weeks prior to the expiration date to maintain compliance with the OT Program policy.** Failure to do so will result in endangering one's progression through the program and perhaps a delay in a fieldwork start date with a subsequent delay of graduation.

The documents that should be kept current and maintained in one's portfolio include:

- Records of an annual, general physical examination
- Updated or completed immunizations, including:
  - Hepatitis B Series and titers
  - MMR titers
  - Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis Immunization (This must be updated every ten years to be compliant)
  - Varicella titer
  - 2 step TB and/ or chest x-ray or IGRA Test (Quantiferon/T-spot)
  - Seasonal Influenza Immunization (updated annually)
  - COVID vaccine and booster(s) (recommended)
- Healthcare Insurance (Required to provide proof of insurance to the University upon request)
- Drug Screening (as requested by FW site is student responsibility to pay for and have completed)
- Proof of current certification in Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers from the American Heart Association
- HIPPA training / testing annually (Provided by the University) – Fall-I quarter and Winter-II quarter
- Illness and Injury - OSHA training / testing annually (Provided by the University) -- Fall-I quarter and Winter-II quarter

Non-compliance or failure to meet and maintain these requirements will result in a student's inability to progress to the next quarter or further coursework until the requirements are met. Such health records are University requirements and extend to the OT Program coursework and Fieldwork leading up to graduation. It is the student's

responsibility to ensure that their records are complete and accurate.

Students will receive from the University regular online training courses on HIPAA, OSHA Training, Universal Precautions, Harassment/Discrimination, Sexual Violence, TB Prevention and COVID. Students will also receive (re)certification in CPR/BLS in the Spring-I quarter prior to fieldwork rotations which are scheduled to begin in the Summer-II quarter for all students. Verification of completion of these courses will be provided to students and should be uploaded to the portal by the student.

### ***Laboratory Participation***

Students should realize that many courses require the student to examine and be examined by other students, and to practice learned techniques and procedures under the supervision of faculty members. As a result, occupational therapy laboratory sessions may require the student to dress in shorts, T-shirts, or tank tops in order that the body part to be evaluated and treated may be adequately exposed. During any given laboratory session, students are responsible for disclosing to the instructor any physical/medical condition or religious tradition that might make receiving certain examinations and techniques inadvisable. (Also refer to the *Essential Skills and Abilities* section in this manual for additional, specific information on physical and sensory requirements for the OT Program). In no instance will a student be penalized if there is a valid reason preventing them from receiving certain examinations or treatment procedures.

However, the student must comply with the ADA in terms of performing the examinations and techniques. In other words, disabling conditions do not excuse the student from performing essential functions of occupational therapy. Reasonable accommodations may be implemented so that competent performance occurs (refer to the section on ADA).

Lecture/lab courses rely heavily on in-class learning opportunities and student participation. Therefore, students enrolled in these courses are expected to participate in all activities, demonstrations, and labs with faculty and other students. Activities include but are not limited to:

- Movement of body parts
- Lifting activities, pushing, pulling, and manipulation of equipment
- Use of assistive devices and wheelchairs
- Gait, transfers, and/or bed mobility training
- Light and deep touch to soft tissue and tendons
- Appropriate exposure, access, and palpation of various body regions common to the practice of OT as needed
- Interaction with outside guests / standardized patients
- Each student will be responsible for treating all participants with respect, to maintain dignity, and to always demonstrate professional and safe behavior. Further, confidentiality of any information gained as a participant in this lab course will be maintained.

The benefits of participation in labs include learning to perform these activities and procedures through active engagement and observation. Possible risks may include:

- Sore and achy joints and muscles
- Soft tissue tenderness and skin irritation

- Neck or back strain
- Loss of balance and falls
- Soft tissue tenderness and skin irritation
- Skin redness due to exposure to heat and cold
- Exposure to sharp objects, solvents, adhesives
- Discomfort related to immediate, constructive feedback.

Students are not allowed to treat any medical problems or conditions of other students. Students should never provide treatment for medical or therapy-related problems without supervision from an initially certified and state licensed occupational therapist. The professional liability insurance that covers each student only covers the student when providing occupational therapy interventions with the appropriate supervision sanctioned by Midwestern University. In the same regard, students should not ask faculty to treat their medical conditions.

### ***Mentorship***

Each student in the OT Program will be assigned a faculty mentor who will serve as their primary mentor. The primary role of a mentor is to collaborate with the student to meet their individual goals for learning and professional development while supporting the student's evolution into becoming a practice leader in occupational therapy. The interests and goals of each student will be matched with the strengths, interests, and availability of the core faculty in the OT Program. Faculty mentors and student mentees will be matched early in the first quarter of the OT Program. Matching each student with an appropriate faculty mentor is an important process and one that is undertaken with care and consideration. The faculty mentor may also serve as advisor, guide, and mentor for the student's research and capstone scholarship endeavors, although each student may have a separate research mentor. Mentors, therefore, have a significant professional impact on the student through the student's tenure in the OT Program. This mentoring process is built on and solidified through a dynamic and collaborative professional relationship, one that is initially based on shared interests, experiences, or mentorship styles, but grows across time as the student and mentor engage in collective projects in the second and third years of the curriculum.

Each faculty mentor may be matched with several students for scheduled quarterly and as-needed meetings. During the quarters in which research course content is taught, the student will meet with their research mentor at least weekly. The student's faculty mentor will likely also serve as the student's doctoral capstone mentor. Each potential faculty mentor is a core faculty member of the Program with documented expertise to serve in the role of mentor to guide and support the student through the substantial scholarship endeavors within the curriculum. The faculty mentor will be responsive to the student and will be responsible for collaborating with the student to facilitate the individualized goals and objectives to best meet the curriculum requirements and the satisfactory completion of the individualized doctoral internship and capstone project.

In addition to a faculty mentor, each student will have a capstone site mentor to support them through their doctoral capstone process. Please refer to the OT Program Doctoral Capstone manual for more information about capstone mentorship: <https://www.midwestern.edu/academics/degrees-programs/college-health-sciences/doctor-occupational-therapy-program/doctor-occupational-therapy-downers-grove-campus/resources-manuals>

### ***Personal Safety / Personal Injury***

If at any time a student feels threatened in any way, they should report this immediately to a member of the faculty or staff of the OT Program or to the Security office on campus. Any safety concern will be taken seriously, and confidentiality will be preserved as needed.

In case of a personal injury in the classroom, lab, or on the Midwestern campus, the student, faculty, or staff member should immediately seek first aid if this is a minor injury. First aid kits are located in the OT Program office and in the OT labs. Contents in each kit will be checked regularly and updated at least yearly or prior to being depleted. In case of a non-life-threatening injury or illness, dial 7111 for the campus security and notify them of the location and type of injury, and the need for an ambulance, if applicable. Once security personnel assess the situation, they will determine the next course of action. If the person requires transportation to the hospital, security will escort that person or arrange for the injured person's safe transportation. Faculty, staff, and students should not transport the injured person to the hospital.

If the situation is serious or life-threatening, call 911 immediately and provide a complete description of the location, person(s), injuries, and type of support being provided. Notify Safety and Security (7111) of your call to 911 Emergency Services as the Safety and Security department will then be ready to assist the arriving emergency personnel to the location of the occurrence. Attend to the person until the emergency personnel reach the location of the person in need. The Dean of Students in the Office of Student Services should also be notified and, as appropriate, will accompany the student in transition to the hospital for medical care.

After any occurrence or personal injury occurs on the Midwestern University campus, faculty and/or staff most knowledgeable about the occurrence must complete an Occurrence Report within 48 hours of the incident. These forms can be found in the OT Program office and are available electronically to faculty on the Midwestern network K-drives. This form should be disseminated to the Occupational Therapy Program Director, Student Services, and Risk Management ([riskmanagement@midwestern.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@midwestern.edu)).

### ***Pregnancy***

Please refer to the University Student Handbook for its policy on student pregnancy. Students who are pregnant are asked to inform the Program Director and/or the Director of Clinical Education or Director of Capstone Development immediately to ensure progression through the curriculum, including fieldwork and doctoral capstone responsibilities, and to ensure safety precautions are being taken. Pregnancy is treated like other temporary medical conditions.

If a student is or becomes pregnant prior to beginning fieldwork or while on fieldwork, they must notify the Director of Clinical Education immediately, as well as inform their clinical Fieldwork Educator. If a student is or becomes pregnant prior to beginning their doctoral internship or while on the internship, they must notify the Director of Capstone Development immediately, as well as their Site Mentor. This is extremely important so appropriate plans can be made for any clinical learning experience. Any student who is pregnant will be required to have a letter from their physician stating that they are capable of assuming the normal clinical responsibilities of an OT student, and that the physician does not have any objection to the student's specific assignment for fieldwork or internship. Communication and careful planning during fieldwork and internship experiences are critical to ensuring the safety of those involved.

### ***Professional Organizations / Memberships***

Membership in the state and national professional organizations is both a benefit and a professional responsibility of an occupational therapist. Students are strongly encouraged to join the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), as well as their home state's or the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association (ILOTA) by October 1 of their first year in the Program. Membership in the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) is required. Memberships should be maintained throughout their tenure at Midwestern University. Reduced student rates for AOTA and ILOTA exist, and when combined, the membership dues for all three organizations will cost a student approximately \$110.00 per year.

There are many student benefits to membership, including:

- Subscription to professional and research journals and publications
- The opportunity to connect with other students and participate in student-only events
- Savings on textbooks, conferences, and other items
- Opportunities to participate in legislative events that support our profession

The American Occupational Therapy Association membership information can be found at [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org) and the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association website is [www.ilota.org](http://www.ilota.org).

### ***Professional Responsibilities and Behavior***

Students are expected to interact with patients, clients, other professionals, fellow students, faculty, staff, and other individuals in a professional and ethical manner. The student represents Midwestern University and the profession of occupational therapy as a whole, not only during matriculation in the OT Program but also after graduation and in practice. Refer to the University Student Handbook for the descriptions of personal conduct violations, the social misconduct disciplinary process and the personal conduct sanctions. Also refer to the policies on alcohol beverages, illicit drugs, sexual assault, sexual harassment, solicitation, and tobacco use. Occupational therapy students are expected to behave in a professional, mature, and ethical manner in all interactions during on-campus and off-campus activities. Expectations regarding professional conduct include the following:

- Communicate verbally in a respectful manner using a quiet volume and calm tone of voice, refraining from inappropriate and obscene language.
- Demonstrate respectful nonverbal communication, refraining from inappropriate gestures such as eye-rolling.
- Demonstrate respectful electronic communication, including email, text messages/group chats, and social media.
- Respect the privacy of all University members, including faculty, staff, students, guest speakers, and community partners, avoiding gossip or sharing of others' personal information.
- Demonstrating respect for all University members, refraining from intimidating, threatening, coercing, or assaulting any other University member on campus or in the community.
- Take actions to promote acceptance, inclusion, and belonging for all members of the University community.

Additional expectations regarding professional behaviors include the following:

- Complete all assigned readings prior to class to ensure acquisition of the foundational knowledge to engage in critical discussions. Faculty may modify in-class activities to facilitate reading and student preparation to foster mastery of course content.
- Be prepared to discuss and/or utilize the material in class and lab activities. Students are expected to actively participate in classroom and lab activities.
- Arrive on time and spend the entirety of the course hours in lecture or lab. This may require planning to arrive early for class. Attendance expectations are described in another section of this document.
- Be proactive in addressing questions or ideas with the class and/or instructor to maximize the learning experience. It is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification if they are unsure of an assignment or have questions about content.
- All written communication should be professionally presented.

- Take responsibility for contacting the faculty in writing during the first week of classes with a request for any adaptations or accommodations consistent with the guidelines specified in the University Student Handbook (under Disability Services). Students with disabilities will also request accommodations through the Department of Student Services.

Occupational therapy students are both professional and graduate and are responsible for working cooperatively and collaboratively in small and large groups. One's behavior towards self, peers, and instructors is expected to be professional, courteous, and respectful. Disrespectful or disruptive behavior and microaggressions will not be tolerated. Given the possibility of potentially sensitive content presented in certain class sessions, and some students' emotional responses to class discussions, the OT Program's expectation is that students will respond to one another appropriately and professionally. As we communicate both with our voices and our body movements and expressions, even subtle indicators of disrespect, such as giggling or rolling one's eyes in response to another person's disclosure of personal information or emotionality, may be considered to be unprofessional. Further, students should use their judgment and discretion to handle their own emotional and behavioral reactions to potentially sensitive or provocative class sessions and to respond professionally and with sensitivity.

Faculty informally assess the professional behaviors of all students in their courses. If a concern arises, the faculty member will confidentially address the concern with the student and notify the student's faculty mentor. If a concern persists or a significant concern arises, the faculty member will arrange a meeting with the student and faculty mentor. The purpose of this meeting will be to help the student understand the concerns and to identify strategies or goals to address the concern and thus correct the behavior. Prior to this meeting, the faculty mentor may consult with other faculty members who may identify concerns in order to formally assess the student's professional behavior. The "Professional Behavior Assessment" form (see Appendix) is used by faculty and the student to assess professional behavior. During the meeting, the faculty mentor will work with the student to develop a "Professional Behavior Improvement Plan" (see Appendix). This plan will be shared with all faculty members teaching the courses in which the student is enrolled. For the duration of the timeline identified on the improvement plan, the student may be placed on "Disciplinary Warning". If concerns persist and/or goals are not met, the student may be placed on "Disciplinary Probation". Continued concerns with a student's professional behavior may result in dismissal from the Program. See the University *Student Handbook* and the *University Catalog* for additional details regarding the Conduct Code and Code of Responsibilities and Rights.

Students enrolled in the OT Program are also expected to comply with the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020). Students found to be in violation of the standards of professional or personal conduct during experiential or fieldwork experiences are subject to sanctions that include immediate removal from the clinical site and possible expulsion from Midwestern University. In order to protect individuals who are treated by occupational therapy students in assigned fieldwork facilities, it is the responsibility of the student at all times to safeguard the patient from physical and emotional jeopardy. When the fieldwork educator believes a patient has been placed in jeopardy by the student, the student may be withdrawn from that fieldwork experience. The student may be withdrawn from the course and/or program pending an investigation and decision recommended by the faculty, Program Director, and the Dean of the College of Health Sciences. The student's rights to due process, including appeal, will be protected in such circumstances (refer to the *Student Handbook* for the grievance process).

### **Publication of Dissemination Materials**

Dissemination materials are your work and will be credited to you in all publications, including posters, poster abstracts, and manuscripts. In accordance with the Research Intellectual Property Ownership policy in the Midwestern University Student Handbook, student projects that have been conducted as part of University

coursework are considered University intellectual property. The University, as an owner of the dissemination materials, can publish the course work through external platforms of the University, including repositories of student research or capstones. If you would like to opt out of having your work credited to you on University websites and/or social media, please write a formal letter to the course instructor that includes your name, date, and signature. Your work will still be made publicly available with authorship credits to your peer collaborators but will not include your name.

### ***Smoking***

The OT Program supports Northwestern University's commitment to a smoke-free environment in all its campus buildings. Smoking will also be prohibited in all occupational therapy related activities. There are designated smoking areas on campus.

### ***Tornado Sheltering Procedure***

The Northwestern University Safety Team has prepared a list of locations to seek shelter in the event a tornado warning is issued for our area in Illinois. The Village of Downers Grove will sound the warning siren. The emergency notification system will announce the warning in all buildings. Students and faculty should move to the lower levels of their building, away from windows or open corridors, and away from spaces with skylights or ceiling openings. Basements, small interior rooms with no windows, locker rooms or bathrooms, and hallways away from doors and windows are some of the safest locations in which to seek shelter.

### ***Transportation***

Transportation to fieldtrip sites, assigned Fieldwork Levels I and II rotations, and internship sites is the student's responsibility. At no time during clinical placement are students allowed to provide transportation for patients or clients.

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## **Appendix A**

Student Absence Notification Form

**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Student Absence Notification Form**

*This form should be used after you have notified the course director(s) of your absence and have collaborated with them on your plan for making up for missed content/assignments/exams. You have two options for submitting this form: 1) Use one form per quarter. Keep a running list of any absences throughout the quarter (add more rows as needed). It is acceptable to re-submit this form multiple times to the necessary individuals if you experience additional absences. 2) Use a new form for each absence.*

*Please submit the completed form to the course director(s) of any missed course(s) and the OT Program Director.*

**Student Name:**

**Faculty Mentor Name:**

<b>Date of absence:</b>	<b>Reason for absence (optional):</b>	<b>Missed course:</b>	<b>Missed content / assignments / exams (from syllabus weekly schedule or topical outline):</b>	<b>Plan for making up for missed content / assignments / exams (e.g.):</b>
<i>e.g., 9/1/2023</i>	<i>Sick</i>	<i>OTHEd 1501</i>	<i>Ethics Ethical reasoning Case discussions</i>	<i>review readings/ powerpoints &amp; ask a peer for notes OR meet with instructor to review missed content OR attend class virtually through Teams OR makeup exam scheduled for 9/3/2023</i>

## **Appendix B**

Professional Behavior Assessment

Professional Behavior Improvement Plan

Professional Behavior Improvement Plan Review

**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Professional Behavior Assessment**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

**Completed by (Student/Faculty Name):**

**Purpose of Use (check one):**     \_\_\_ Self-assessment for professional development / goal-setting / reflection  
   \_\_\_ Self- or faculty- assessment for mentoring purposes  
   \_\_\_ Concern identified

**Ratings:**

- Needs Improvement (N): Performance is inconsistent and opportunities for growth exist. This rating might be frequently in the beginning of the program, but less often as the student progresses through the program.
- Meets Expectations (M): Performance is good, and the student demonstrates the behavior consistently across several settings and situations. This rating should be used most often.
- Outstanding (O): Performance is exceptional and surpasses expectations. This rating should be used rarely, especially at the beginning of the program.

**Extrinsic Behaviors (for peer- and self-assessment)**

Ethical Conduct	Rating	Comments
Upholds the AOTA Code of Ethics and the Code of Rights and Responsibilities of Students of Midwestern University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts responsibilities for actions and outcomes</li> <li>• Exhibits confidence in their abilities, knowledge, and skills</li> <li>• Always adheres to the student code of conduct, OT program conduct, and AOTA Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Upholds confidentiality</li> </ul>	N / M / O	

Time Management, Adaptability, & Organization	Rating	Comments
Arrives on time for and attends the entirety of all classes, fieldwork, capstone, and other required program-related activities	N / M / O	
Communicates unexpected emergencies or schedule conflicts to course instructor and/or group members as soon as possible	N / M / O	
Utilizes effective time management skills so that obligations to graduate school are consistently met	N / M / O	
Meets deadlines for all assigned work and activities	N / M / O	

Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, & Conflict Management	Rating	Comments
Communicates verbally, in writing, and through actions respect for diversity, alternative viewpoints, and individual differences	N / M / O	

<b>Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, &amp; Conflict Management</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Modifies non-verbal communication (affect, body language, voice) as needed to improve communication and understanding	N / M / O	
Is a reliable team member who meets deadlines, maintains continuous communication, and contributes actively and substantively to group learning activities and projects	N / M / O	
Demonstrates empathy for and interest in others by communicating in a respectful manner, respecting individual viewpoints and opinions, and refraining from personal judgement	N / M / O	
Demonstrates concern and takes action to support the physical or emotional safety and well-being of others	N / M / O	
Speaks only for themselves, using "I" statements (e.g., "I think...", "I felt..."; refrain from speaking on behalf of an entire group/cohort)	N / M / O	
Actively participates, proactively initiates, and responds in all mentor-mentee relationships	N / M / O	
Utilizes effective strategies to address interpersonal conflicts and frustrations directly (face to face) with the involved person or persons in a respectful and constructive manner	N / M / O	
Respectfully and tactfully gives, receives, and responds to feedback from peers, instructors, fieldwork educators, and mentors	N / M / O	
Follows proper authority channels to communicate or address concerns	N / M / O	

<b>E-professionalism</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Upholds program expectations pertaining to social networking	N / M / O	
Respects email etiquette by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying intended recipient's name and appropriate title in the greeting;</li> <li>• keeping emails concise and to the point;</li> <li>• not overusing "reply all";</li> <li>• avoiding profanity or offensive language;</li> <li>• using email to convey information rather than strong emotions; and</li> <li>• responding to emails within 48 hours</li> </ul>	N / M / O	
Communicates respectfully in all forms of virtual communication	N / M / O	

**Intrinsic Behaviors (For self-assessment only)**

<b>Self-Management, Problem Solving, &amp; Critical Reasoning</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Evaluates their professional behavior as needed, modifying behavior based on self-evaluation and feedback from others	N / M / O	

<b>Self-Management, Problem Solving, &amp; Critical Reasoning</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Seeks and uses a variety of resources to solve problems related to academic performance, fieldwork/capstone performance, and professional behavior	N / M / O	
Persists in learning and mastering challenging concepts and skills, including identifying own learning needs and pursuing and using resources as needed	N / M / O	
Applies full attention to available learning opportunities, without distracting behaviors or inappropriate multitasking (e.g., emailing or texting during class; holding “side bar” conversations with other individuals during group discussions; engaging in personal cell phone use during class or on fieldwork)	N / M / O	
Proactively seeks support, assistance, guidance, or training when necessary	N / M / O	
Respectfully advocates for self and others as needed	N / M / O	
Manages multiple time and task demands	N / M / O	

<b>Integrity, Honesty, Dependability, &amp; Reliability</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Maintains confidentiality at all times, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not share with others information discussed during instructor/mentor meetings</li> <li>• Does not share with others private information of peers, instructors, and guests from classes or discussions</li> <li>• Does not share course, assignment, or exam information with other students</li> </ul>	N / M / O	
Accepts consequences of their actions or lack of action	N / M / O	
Comes to all classes, fieldwork/capstone experiences, and other learning opportunities fully prepared	N / M / O	
Independently initiates and completes any missed work or activities in a timely manner or as negotiated with the instructor	N / M / O	
Adheres to and meets deadlines for all University requirements regarding immunizations, health records, drug tests, and trainings/certifications	N / M / O	
Follows through with responsibilities and commitments	N / M / O	

<b>Cultural Humility &amp; Sensitivity</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Actively practices cultural humility and sensitivity	N / M / O	
Listens with an open mind to accurately understand others' viewpoints and perspectives	N / M / O	

***This tool has been adapted from the following sources through a collaborative process involving MWU OT faculty and the OTD Class of 2026:***

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**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Professional Behavior Improvement Plan**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

*The following should be completed during a meeting between a student, their faculty mentor, and any other faculty members as indicated once an ongoing concern regarding the student's professional behavior has been identified.*

1. Student strengths:
2. Area(s) of concern:
3. Targeted outcome (start with the end in mind):
  - a. What are the targeted student behaviors (observable, positive, sustained) that will be observed/ documented by more than one faculty member or fieldwork supervisor using the professional behavior assessment form?
  
  - b. What other evidence indicators will be present that can document sustained change and improvement (e.g. reports from fieldwork educators, work samples, artifacts)?
4. Action plan (what steps do the student and relevant faculty members need to take to reach the targeted outcome?):
  
5. Timeline:
  - a. How often will progress be monitored (and by whom)?
  
  - b. By when does the targeted outcome need to be achieved (identify a specific date)?

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Professional Behavior Improvement Plan Review**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

At the end of the established timeline, the OT student has...

Not improved

Partially improved

Fully addressed all concerns

Comments:

Recommended Next Steps:

Success- No further action needed

Continue current professional behavior improvement plan and extend timeline

Insufficient progress – refer to Student Services

Revise plan

Develop new plan for a new area of concern

Comments:

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C**

Academic Performance Improvement Plan

Academic Performance Improvement Plan Review

**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Academic Performance Improvement Plan**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

*The following should be completed during a meeting between a student, their faculty mentor, and any other faculty members as indicated once an ongoing concern regarding the student's academic performance has been identified.*

1. Student strengths:
2. Area(s) of concern:
3. Targeted outcome (start with the end in mind):
  - a. What are the targeted student behaviors (observable, positive, sustained) that will be observed/ documented by more than one faculty member or self-reported by the student regarding their academic performance?
  
  - b. What other evidence indicators will be present that can document sustained change and improvement (e.g., grades on exams, work samples, artifacts)?
4. Action plan (what steps do the student and relevant faculty members need to take to reach the targeted outcome?):
  
5. Timeline:
  - a. How often will progress be monitored (and by whom)?
  
  - b. By when does the targeted outcome need to be achieved (identify a specific date)?

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Academic Performance Improvement Plan Review**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

At the end of the established timeline, the OT student has...

\_\_\_ Not improved

\_\_\_ Partially improved

\_\_\_ Fully addressed all concerns

Comments:

Recommended Next Steps:

\_\_\_ Success- No further action needed

\_\_\_ Continue current academic improvement plan and extend timeline

\_\_\_ Insufficient progress – refer to Student Services or Academic Review Committee

\_\_\_ Revise plan

\_\_\_ Develop new plan for a new area of concern

Comments:

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D**

### Student Attestation

*\*Upon receipt and review of this Program Manual and the policies reflected within, the student will sign and date the attestation form on the following page and submit it to the OT Program office, Alumni Hall North, Suite 330.*

**MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**  
**Student Attestation**

*Upon receipt and review of this Program Manual and the policies reflected within, the student will sign and date this attestation form and submit it to the OT Program office, Alumni Hall North, Suite 330.*

**Student Name:**

**Attestation:** I attest to having read and understood the Midwestern University Occupational Therapy Program Manual. I agree to abide by the policies as written in this Program Manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*To be completed by the OT Program Administrative Staff:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date submitted to Program office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials