



Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program

Student Handbook

Academic Year 25-26



Dear Incoming and Prospective OTA Student,

Welcome and thank you for your interest in River Valley Community College's (RVCC) Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (OTA). We are excited that you have chosen to pursue the rewarding and impactful career path toward becoming an occupational therapy practitioner. It is an exciting time to pursue this path. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, OTA is projected to grow by 23 percent from 2022 to 2032; this growth is much faster than the average for all occupations nationally (BLS, 2023). In June 2017, of the 19 best jobs for community college graduates, U.S. News and World Report ranked occupational therapy assisting as number one.

The OTA program is designed to provide students with the requisite knowledge, skills, and experiences to excel as occupational therapy practitioners in the field. Throughout your time in the program, you will engage in didactic and clinical experiences that combine theory with hands-on practice. Our goal is to prepare you for meeting the diverse needs of the individuals, groups, and populations you will serve as an OTA.

This OTA Program Handbook has been developed to provide you with essential information about the program, including programmatic requirements, policies, and resources as well as highlighting policies pertaining to RVCC. Please take your time to review it carefully as it will serve as a resource during your time in the program. The OTA Program Handbook is a supplement to River Valley Community College's Student Handbook (<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/student-handbook>) and the policies outlined by the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) (<https://www.ccsnh.edu/about-ccsnh/policies/>). All OTA students are expected to abide by all college and system policies and procedures.

We are honored to be a part of your educational journey and look forward to seeing you grow and succeed as an Occupational Therapy Assistant.

Sincerely,

Megan Nichols, MOT, OTR/L
RVCC OTA Program Director
Associate Professor
mnichols@ccsnh.edu

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About the College

Since 1968, our college has provided quality education in an academic environment small enough to allow individualized attention. Students in the college's career-oriented degree, diploma and certificate programs gain highly specialized skills and knowledge necessary to confidently and successfully enter the job market in a number of technical, business and health-oriented fields. It is the student with career goals clearly in mind who tends to excel and enjoy the educational experience at RVCC.

River Valley Community College (RVCC) is one of a system of seven community colleges in the state, collectively referred to as the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH). RVCC has campus locations in Claremont, NH where the OTA program is housed; in Lebanon, NH, and Keene, NH. The college is ADA accessible.

The College views itself as serving the needs of both the region and the state. It cooperates with local industry, business, service and health organizations to meet those needs. The college's expected outcomes are found at the following link: <https://www.rivervalley.edu/about/river-valley-principles>

System & College Guiding Statements

The OTA program supports both the mission of the Community College System, and the mission (and philosophy) of the college.

Mission Statement of RVCC:

River Valley Community College transforms lives by providing a quality and affordable education through innovative personal approaches to lifelong learning and career pathways.

Mission Statement of CCSNH:

Our purpose is to provide residents with affordable, accessible education and training that aligns with the needs of New Hampshire's business and communities, delivered through an innovative, efficient and collaborative system of colleges. CCSNH is dedicated to the educational, professional and personal success of its students; a skilled workforce for our state's businesses; and a strong New Hampshire economy.

RVCC's Educational Philosophy:

Since the College serves a diverse student population possessing a wide range of academic and physical abilities, the College is committed to providing a variety of educational approaches, instructional methods, supplementary services, and cocurricular activities to meet those diverse needs. In the context of a student-centered environment, the primary aim of the college is to assist students to become self-reliant, self-confident skilled workers and educated persons.

The College believes that the educated person is able to read critically, write clearly and comprehensively, reason analytically, and utilize mathematical and scientific skills to solve life's problems. The educated person functions as a responsible and ethical member of society,

recognizes, and copes with ambiguities of life, and appreciates diversity. The educated person moves from concrete to abstract levels of thinking, fosters integration and synthesis of knowledge, interchanges roles as both learner and teacher, and utilizes contemplative thought.

By embracing an understanding and appreciation of self in today's socially and technologically complex world, and through the stimulation of intellectual curiosity, learners will be able to improve their lives and contribute something of value to the community of which they are a part.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The OTA Program follows the Non-Discrimination policy of the CCSNH found here:

<https://www.ccsnh.edu/non-discrimination-policy>

The Community College System of NH does not discriminate in the administration of its admissions and educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, gender identity and expression, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or marital status. This statement is a reflection of the mission of the Community College System of NH and refers to, but is not limited to, the provisions of the following laws:

- Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1967 (ADEA)
- Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
- Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974
- NH Law Against Discrimination (RSA 354-A)
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

Inquiries regarding discrimination may be directed to the following:

Jennifer Cournoyer, Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs RVCC
One College Place, Claremont, NH 03743
jcournoyer@ccsnh.edu
603.542.7744 x5331

Sara A. Sawyer, Director of Human Resources CCSNH
26 College Drive, Concord, NH 03301
ssawyer@ccsnh.edu
603.230.3503

US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights
J.W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse, Room 701, 01-0061, Boston, MA,
02109-4557
ocr_boston@ed.gov
Telephone: 617.223.9662, Fax: 617-223-9669; TDD: 617.223.9695

NH Commission for Human Rights
2 Chennell Drive, Concord, NH 03301

Telephone: 603.271.2767, Fax: 603.271.6339

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

JFK Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA, 02203

Telephone: 617.565.3200 or 1.800.669.4000 Fax: 617.565.3196 TTY: 617.565.3204
or 1.800.669.6820

RVCC's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Overview

The college has been authorized by the New Hampshire General Court to provide postsecondary education. The Board of Trustees for the Community College System in the state has authorized this campus to provide the Occupational Therapy Assistant (PTA) education program.

Current Accreditation Status

The associate-degree-level occupational therapy assistant program has applied for Re-Activation of Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

ACOTE
7501 Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 510E
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 652-6611
accred@aota.org
www.acoteonline.org

The program must be granted Candidacy Status, have a re-accreditation review, complete an on-site evaluation, and be granted Accreditation Status before its graduates will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, all states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.

Questions related to accreditation can be directed to the OTA Program Director, Megan Nichols mnichols@ccsnh.edu or VPASA, Jenn Cournoyer, jcournoyer@ccsnh.edu

Licensure

To practice as an occupational therapy assistant in Idaho, you must be licensed by the state. Once you have met all requirements for graduation from the OTA program, you have the option of applying for a limited permit. This enables you to practice OT prior to passing the NBCOT certification examination. After passing the exam, you must apply for permanent licensure.

Both certification and licensure will be covered in exam prep and throughout the program. For further information, contact

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy at:

NBCOT
One Bank Street
Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Phone: 1-301-990-7979
Email: info@nbcot.org

New Hampshire Office of Professional Licensure at:

Office of Professional Licensure & Certification
7 Eagle Square
Concord NH, 03301
Email: OPLCLicensing3@oplcnh.gov

To work in the State of New Hampshire after graduation, graduates of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program need to apply for and receive licensure in the state to become a practicing Occupational Therapy Assistant. While other states may have different requirements for licensure, as an educational facility in the State of NH, we follow NH requirements. Upon application for licensure, the graduate will be required to submit responses to a variety of questions to the NH Office of Professional Licensure and Certification (OPLC). *Students are not required to submit response to these questions to the OTA Program Director for admittance into the OTA Program.*

Applicants of the OTA program at RVCC must confirm that they have read and understand the initial licensing requirements of the OPLC for Occupational Therapy Assistants which include, in part, the following:

Be prepared to respond to the following questions on your licensure application. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions, you will be required to provide a letter of explanation to the OPLC at the time of licensing.

1. Do you have any reason to believe that you will soon be the subject of a disciplinary proceeding, settlement or consent decree undertaken or issued by a professional licensing board of any state or jurisdiction?
2. Has any malpractice claim been made against you?
3. Have you, for disciplinary reasons, been put on administrative leave, been fired for cause other than staff reductions from a position at your place of employment, or had any privileges limited, suspended or revoked in any of the following settings: hospital, healthcare setting, home health care agency, educational institution, or other professional settings.
4. Have you ever been denied the privilege of taking an examination required for professional licensure?

5. Have you any physical, mental or emotional condition, or an alcohol or substance abuse problem, which could negatively affect your ability to practice the profession for which you seek licensure?
6. Do you engage in any remedial undertaking to alleviate any of the conditions listed in the question above which could itself negatively affect your ability to practice the profession for which you seek licensure?
7. Have you committed any act(s) that would violate the laws and/or rules that govern the profession for which you are applying?
8. Have you ever been found guilty or entered a plea of no contest to any felony or misdemeanor?
9. Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action by any professional licensing authority?
10. Have you ever been denied a license, or other authorization to practice in any state or jurisdiction?
11. Have you ever surrendered a license or other authorization to practice in order to avoid or settle disciplinary charges?
12. Pursuant to RSA 125:25-c do you have an ownership interest in any diagnostic or therapeutic service(s) company(ies)? If you answer Yes you must attach a list of ALL diagnostic or therapeutic services provided by each company.

OTA Program Mission & Philosophy

Mission Statement

Empowering students by providing the breadth of knowledge, clinical proficiency, professional reasoning abilities, and relational skills necessary to provide holistic occupation-centered care. In fostering these aptitudes, we aim to improve the health and well-being of the individuals and communities we serve.

Program Philosophy

Participation in meaningful occupation is requisite to an actualized self existence. Occupational engagement is essential for fostering the health and wellbeing crucial for positive physical, mental, and emotional health outcomes for persons, groups, and populations. Over 100 years ago, Adolph Meyer spoke of this significance in his work “The Philosophy of Occupational Therapy,” analogizing the concept of occupation to “the use that we make of ourselves that gives the ultimate stamp to our every organ” (Meyer, 1922). This sentiment, which remains true and at the heart of the profession today, is crucial to understanding the deep-rooted view on occupational engagement. Understanding and appreciating the influence of occupation on quality of life is a cornerstone of the profession and thus must be central to the academic program. Moreover, practitioners must possess a deep understanding of how occupational engagement is situated within individuals’ contexts. Appreciation of the power of occupation and the evidence supporting this connection is pivotal to the provision of comprehensive, holistic, client-centered care in the promotion of health and wellness of the individuals and communities we serve.

OTA Program Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Faculty of the program strive to incorporate the three curricular threads throughout each course in the program. In addition, faculty of the program apply the following additional instructional approaches, concepts, and strategies throughout the curriculum.

- **Bloom's Taxonomy:** Application of Bloom's Taxonomy was applied in crafting learning outcomes for each course. The hierarchical structure to develop a basis for introductory knowledge through remembering and understanding and scaffolding that learning with increasing complexity through applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Approaching content from this perspective builds more lasting learning and develops competency for problem solving necessary for successful professional reasoning.
- **Scaffolding:** As mentioned above, many concepts will be introduced and built upon throughout the curriculum. Faculty will work together for to strategically build a supportive framework for complex concepts. Introducing components of concepts early and adding increase complexity as topics continue throughout the curriculum.
- **Andragogy:** Principles developed by Malcolm Knowles' Adult Learning Theory will drive the approach to didactic coursework and learning activities. This theory is well suited given the student population historically served by RVCC's OTA program. Students' individual differences, motivations, and life experiences will be embraced and used to tailor and individualize learning when possible. All formal assessment of learning should be strategic and thoughtfully curated to benefit the students' future practice as OTPs. When possible, this benefit should be transparently articulated to the students.
- **Occupational Therapy Practice Framework:** All OTA-specific courses will have a consistent connection to the current iteration of the OTPF. The OTPF will be continually emphasized and revisited.
- **Self-Reflection:** Students in the program will engage in self-reflection consistent with the practice of effective healthcare practitioners. Learning and applying reflective concepts as a student from start to finish is crucial to develop future reflective practitioners upon entering the workforce.

OTA Program Curricular Themes & Student Learning Objectives

Curricular Themes

1. Occupation-centered Approach
2. Holistic Scope
3. Evidence-based Practice

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the program, students will:

1. Develop and implement interventions with occupation as the focal point
2. Understand the connection between participation in occupation and health and wellbeing of individuals, groups, and populations

3. Utilize an individualized approach in assessing occupational performance and engagement needs
4. Recognize the importance of clients' unique psychosocial, cultural, contextual needs and engagement in occupation
5. Critically appraise scientific evidence to support professional reasoning processes
6. Apply evidence throughout the OT process

OTA Program of Study

Criteria for Successful Completion of the Program

The OTA program requires 69 credits for graduation. The program includes core Occupational Therapy and Allied Health credits, OTA fieldwork credits, and liberal arts core credits. The breakdown of the specific required courses associated with these credits can be found below in the program of study.

The OTA requires that all courses with the OCTA and AHLT prefix must be complete with a "B-" or better for graduation of the program. All courses that are a component of the liberal arts core must be completed with a "C" or better. More information regarding the grading policy can be found in the Grading Policy section of this handbook.

Students are required to successfully complete the full didactic portion of the program prior to starting level IIa or IIb fieldwork. Level Ia, Ib, IIa, and IIb Fieldwork courses are graded on a pass/fail basis; students are required to receive a "pass" to successfully complete the program. As a component of the Level IIa and IIb fieldwork courses, students must successfully complete the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student. Students must score 91 points or higher, with a 3 or above on items #1, #2 and #3 (Ethics and Safety items) in order to receive "pass" in the course.

Students must complete 16 weeks of Level II fieldwork within 12 months following completion of the didactic portion of the program.

Program of Study Rationale

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program at River Valley Community College is a two-year 69-credit Associate-level program designed to prepare students to become entry-level generalist practitioners. Students engage in foundational occupational therapy content early in the curriculum and each subsequent course builds upon and scaffolds in concepts from the previous coursework. The series of clinical courses are presented in a developmental sequence, from foundational to more complex. In the spring of the first year, students take (Psychosocial) and (Physical Function) to lay the groundwork in addressing clients' mental, emotional, and physical health needs. Foundational concepts from the aforementioned courses are interwoven into the Peds, Neuro, and Geriatric courses in the fall of the second year.

Additionally, the faculty believe a foundational component to becoming an effective physical and mental healthcare provider is situating the occupational therapy practitioner as a crucial member of the interprofessional team. As such, the program intersperses multiple opportunities to sit in class alongside other members of allied health programs. OTA students take allied health courses alongside physical therapist assistant students in all three didactic semesters (Clinical Conditions,

Introduction to OT & PT, Foundations for Rehabilitation, Functional Kinesiology, OT & PT Management, and Clinical Neurology). Many of the required liberal arts core courses offered on campus also include students from various allied health and nursing programs (particularly coursework in Anatomy and Physiology 1&2, Intro to Psychology, and Human Development).

Two-Year Program of Study

The following chart is called the program of study. The program of study lists all the courses, by semester, that are required for graduation from the OTA program. The program director will individualize a program map as a part of the pre-admissions advising process. The individualized program map will reflect coursework you may already have completed and your choice to complete the program either part-time or full-time. It is your responsibility to ensure that all courses have been successfully completed for graduation. You can find your progress through the program by checking RVCC Degree Works in SIS.

Traditionally, a full-time course load at the college level is 12-15 credits a full semester (and 6 credits for summer). OTA students on a standard 2-year plan may take a credit load greater than 15 credits. Taking greater than 16 credits requires a strong commitment to time management to ensure successful course and program completion. Course syllabi will outline the anticipated time outside of class that should be dedicated to homework, study, and practice of hands-on skills.

Fall Year 1 (16-17 Credits)			
Item #	Title	Pre-requisite /Co-requisite	Credits
AHLT 104R	Introduction to Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy		1
OCTA 110R	Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy	Pre-requisite: AHLT 104R	2
AHLT 112R	Clinical Conditions for Occupational/Physical Therapy		3
AHLT 135R	Foundations of Rehabilitation		3 (2 Lecture 1 Lab)
BIOL 201R	Anatomy and Physiology I		4
PSYC 101R	Introduction to Psychology		3

Spring Year 1 (16 Credits)			
Item #	Title	Pre-requisite /Co-requisite	Credits
AHLT 123R	Functional Kinesiology	Pre-requisite: BIOL 201R	3 (2 Lecture 1 Lab)
OCTA 213R	Psychosocial Function in Occupational Therapy	Pre-requisite: PSYC 101R; OCTA 110R; AHLT 135R Co-requisite: OCTA 190R	3 (2 Lecture 1 Lab)
OCTA 214R	Physical Function in Occupational Therapy	Pre-requisite: OCTA 110R; AHLT 135R, BIOL 201R	3 (2 Lecture 1 Lab)
OCTA 120R	Foundations in Professional Practice	Pre-requisite: OCTA 110R	2
BIOL 202R	Anatomy and Physiology II	Pre-requisite: BIOL 201R	4
OCTA 190R	Level Ia Fieldwork	Co-requisite: OCTA 213R	1 (Practicum)

Summer Year 1 (6-7 Credits)			
Item #	Title	Pre-requisite /Co-requisite	Credits
PSYC 114R	Human Development		3
ENGL 102R	College Comp		3-4

Fall Year 2 (17 Credits)			
Item #	Title	Pre-requisite /Co-requisite	Credits
AHLT 210R	Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy Management	Pre-requisite: OCTA 190R	2
AHLT 220R	Clinical Neurology	Pre-requisite: BIOL 201R; OCTA 214R	2
OCTA 221R	Clinical Neurology Lab for OTA	Pre-requisite: BIOL 201R; OCTA 214R	1 (Lab)
OCTA 212R	Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics	Pre-requisite: PSYC 114R; OCTA 190R	3 (2 Lecture 1 Lab)
OCTA 215R	Occupational Therapy for Aging Populations	Pre-requisite: OCTA 214R; OCTA 190R	1 (Lab)
OCTA 230R	Advanced Concepts in Professional Practice	Pre-requisite: OCTA 120R	1
OCTA 192R	Level Ib Fieldwork	Pre-requisite: OCTA 190R Co-requisite: OCTA 212R	1 (Practicum)
MATH	Math Elective		3-4
ELECTIVE	Humanities/Language/Fine Art Elective		3

Spring Year 2 (14 Credits)			
Item #	Title	Pre-requisite /Co-requisite	Credits
OCTA 290R	Level IIa	Pre-requisite: Completion of all AHLT & OCTA requirements Co-requisite: OCTA 220R	6 (Practicum)
OCTA 291R	Level IIb	Pre-requisite: Completion of all AHLT & OCTA requirements Co-requisite: OCTA 220R	6 (Practicum)
OCTA 220R	Seminar in Occupational Therapy	Co-requisite: OCTA 209R/OCTA 291R	2

*Students must complete 16 weeks of Level II fieldwork within 12 months following the completion of the didactic portion of the program.

Part-time Program of Study

Students have the option to complete the OTA program on a part-time basis. The part-time program of study extends the academic curriculum from a two-year program to three years. Based on the nature of the courses, the final year of the program, including level IIa and level IIb fieldwork must be completed on a full-time basis. A part-time program of study is available upon request and

tailored to individual student needs based on courses that may be transferred in. Please note that courses with an OCTA and AHLT prefix are only offered on a set schedule and are lockstep, meaning courses must be taken in sequences as each are pre-requisites for one another.

OTA Program Information and Policies

Admissions Policy

The OTA program admits students on a rolling basis. The program director will review applications and admit students upon submission of completed applications. The admission cycle for the following academic year begins at the onset of the preceding fall semester. The admissions cycle closes two weeks prior to the start of the upcoming semester. Applicants are not required to have any work-related experience in the field to be admitted to the OTA program.

All applicants to the OTA program must complete the following steps: complete an application to the college, then submit academic records, submit additional external transcripts, and submit additional materials for specific programs as needed

1. Complete an application to River Valley Community College and select OTA as the major on SIS.
2. Submit academic records and external transcripts, if applicable.
3. Submit supplemental program specific application materials. The supplemental packet is available on the program website.

Transfer Credit Policy

The policy for transfer of credits for matriculated students is described in the Student Handbook: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/transfer-of-credit>

Per policy, it is the students' responsibility to work with their program advisor to get applicable courses transferred. Please note that Anatomy & Physiology courses that were completed over ten years ago will not transfer and need to be retaken. Courses earning a C- or below will not transfer in.

If you feel that credit should be earned for work previously completed from other institutions, it is your responsibility to work with your program advisor to complete the "Request for Evaluation of Transfer of Credits" form that can be provided to you by your advisor. For courses to be considered for transfer; students must arrange to have official transcripts sent to RVCC.

Credits awarded through the College Board Advanced Placement Examination Program are recognized and accepted by the college. At the discretion of the program director, AP credits are reviewed for consideration toward the program map and submitted to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Official AP grade reports must be forwarded from College Board directly to the College Admissions Office for consideration.

External professional work experience cannot be applied toward credit requirements for the OTA program.

OTA Program Course Format

The OTA Program offers courses in a variety of instructional formats depending on the structure of the course. Courses may be delivered in person, in a flexible hybrid format (providing the option for online and in-person), or fully virtually through distance education platforms. Course format is determined by the curriculum plan. The delivery method of notated through the registrar and is visible in SIS when students enroll in courses for the upcoming academic year.

Student Advising Policy

Upon matriculation into the program you will be assigned an academic advisor. Student advising occurs by members of the OTA program faculty. Academic advisors will schedule individual meetings with advisees at least one time per semester to discuss academic progress and professional behaviors. Students should bring concerns or difficulties related to academic performance to the attention of their academic advisor.

Dual Degree

Those interested in information on the Dual Degree (OTA/PTA dual Associates degrees) option should speak with the Program Director. Planning is critical for appropriate scheduling of classes, particularly with regards to the planning of OTA Fieldwork experiences/PTA Clinical Practicum. Please note that scheduling of the dual degree plan should consider the implications of graduation on ability for students to sit for their national board exam. The PTA Board exam is offered on fixed-dates four times per year, the OTA Board exam is offered on an as-scheduled basis. The timing of the national boards should be considered when planning as graduation dates for each program will vary depending on which degree students plan to complete first. Students interested in the dual-degree will need to plan a three-year program if they do not have liberal arts core courses complete upon entry into the programs. This option is manageable for academically strong students.

Textbooks and Course Materials

Students can purchase books via the college bookstore or external internet sources. Some courses will require new books/materials and used materials will not be permitted for use in the course (such as Functional Kinesiology). Some books will be utilized in multiple courses and semesters in the program. This will be indicated to students in advance of purchasing the text.

Students can find the list of books and other equipment requirements for each course via the bookstore: <https://www.rivervalley.edu/current-students/bookstore/> You will need the alpha-numeric course numbers to search for books. Be sure to check both lecture and lab sections for required materials. In some cases, there will be no required textbook as the faculty works to find as many open educational resources (free/low cost) as possible to reduce costs for students.

Technology Requirements

Students enrolled in the program are not required to have their own personal computer or device; however, it is strongly recommended. Due to the frequent use of technology for accessing Canvas, submitting assignments, participating in online discussions, and engaging in courses delivered via distance learning, having reliable access to a personal computer with internet connectivity will significantly support your academic success.

For students who do not have a personal device, the library offers a limited number of surface pro devices available for student use. These may be checked out by students depending on availability.

Attendance & Leave of Absence Policies

Attendance Policy

The OTA program follows the course attendance policy as per the Student Handbook:

<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/attendance-policy> including a policy related to absence related to observations of religious holidays: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/absencedue-to-religious-observation>

The OTA program has in place additional guidelines for all OTA students which will be clearly outlined in the course syllabus. Instructors will take attendance at the start of each scheduled class or lab. Students are responsible for making up any missed material due to absence and are expected to talk with classmates to gain access to missing class notes.

The following policies relate to professional courses in the PTA and OTA programs (identified with AHLT, OTA and PTA prefixes) and will be included in each course syllabus:

- Attendance (lecture and lab attendance are combined for one course):
 - 3 points deducted for every absence from class or lab
 - 1 point deducted for every occasion of arriving late or leaving early
 - Students missing more than 20% of the course is grounds for withdrawal from the course, with an AF issued by the instructor. See the college Student Handbook. Extenuating circumstances may be discussed with the instructor.
 - Attendance in OTA Fieldwork Experiences: Students are expected to adhere to specific attendance policies for these courses. The student is directed to the program's Student Fieldwork Experience Handbook.

Leave of Absence Policy

If a student experiences a serious medical event that requires they stop attending school for a period of time, the program follows the RVCC Leave of Absence Policy:

<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/medical-leave-policy-michelles-law> Upon return, the student will meet with the program director to plan how the course work will be made up. The leave may impact timely progression through the program due to the nature of the didactic and clinical course sequence.

Dress Code Policy

Students will be introduced to the program dress code for the OTA and PTA programs during the first fall semester, program courses (AHLT, PTAC, and OCTA course prefixes). Students are given a one-month grace period in which they will not be docked professionalism points in courses. This grace period is established to help refine expectations of professional dress. By the end of September of the first year of professional courses, all PTA students will abide by this dress code below. If the PTA and OTA faculty change this date, you will be alerted. This policy is in effect for all asynchronous lecture courses as well as face to face courses. Lab courses will have their own dress code requirements as outlined in the individual course syllabus.

The program faculty endeavor to put forth a professional image and to help students learn and model what a professional image looks like for the typical therapy clinician. Therefore, it is required that PTA and OTA students appear in **business casual dress** for all professional course classroom/lecture activities, whether guests are present or not. The business casual wardrobe is the accepted form of dress in most clinical sites used for clinical education experiences/fieldwork experiences within the program.

OTA/PTA Program Dress Code

Dress code for classes should follow typical clinic dress. This includes:

1. Professional style pants that are solid color, free of rips/tears – no jeans or leggings.
2. Plain long or short sleeved t-shirts of a solid color or PTA/OTA polo shirt.
3. Hoodless sweaters, jackets or sweatshirts are allowed as long as the logo is small and contained to one chest pocket area. Jackets/sweatshirts that have “thumb holes” are not allowed.
4. Sneakers or other sturdy, close-toed/close-heeled shoes no higher than the ankle.
5. Jewelry that is small and simple and does not dangle
6. Fingernails clipped below the tops of the fingers. Nails should be natural or may be covered with unchipped regular or gel polish only.
7. Working wristwatch – Smart Watches may not be connected to email/text during class.

Dress code for labs will be at the determination of the instructor.

All clothing should cover undergarments and at no time should skin be visible from the abdominal, waist, or chest area.

Students should consider acceptable hygiene practices and arrive to classes with a clean, neat appearance; free of strong smells including body odor, perfume, or hair products. Long hair should be pulled back off the face and secured.

Policies related to dress code, as well as policies related to tattoos, jewelry and piercings will vary at each clinic; you are expected to follow those policies during clinical rotations and employment. Please also keep in mind that visible tattoos and piercings may prohibit a clinical placement or hiring.

The consequences of failure to comply with this dress code policy will result in points being deducted from the professionalism portion of the final grade.

Updated August 2024

Technology Use Policies

Technology Use and Classroom Agreement Policy

In the OTA program, we spend the majority of our time engaged in activities that depend upon you being present and attentive to the instructor, one another, and a variety of classroom materials or activities. We are all challenged these days by the ways in which our digital devices can steal or divide our attention. In our classes, we have a technology policy that is designed to support your

attention to one another and engagement with course content. We have developed this policy for three reasons.

1) A significant body of research demonstrates that when students engage in off-task behavior on their devices, it hurts the learning of the peers sitting near them. In one study, students who were not using a device in a class lecture, but were seated within view of a peer with a device, performed 17% worse on an exam based on that lecture material than students who were not within view of someone else's device. Hence the first purpose of this policy is to ensure that your devices are not harming the learning of your peers.

2) Classes in this program depend upon everyone's active engagement. Our job is to provide you with exposure to the course content as well as to organize our in-class time in a way that leads to your understanding and grasp of the content. Your ideas become richer when articulated as well as collated with the ideas of your peers. If you are focused on your device you are depriving the class of your perspectives and questions—both of which we all want to hear. Your attention contributes to *all* of our learning.

3) Finally, since so much of the program depends upon active participation, I want to make sure that we all show respect for one another by actively listening and engaging with one another. We all have likely had the discouraging experience of trying to speak with someone who was focused on their phone, and feeling hurt by their lack of attention to us. In our classes, we want everyone's voices to be respected by being present and listening to each other.

In order to achieve all of these objectives, the device policy for the course is as follows:

- You *may* use laptops to read the texts and take notes in the course as you wish and as needed. If you use a laptop, close any tabs that are not related to the course. Remember, off-task behaviors can hurt the learning of your peers.
- If you choose to read the works online and reference your laptop in class, we suggest getting an app or program that can help you take and save notes directly on the texts themselves.
 - For example, you can use the online tool Hypothes.is to do this
- You *may* have your phones out on your desk, but keep them face down or in do not disturb mode so you or your peers are not distracted by notifications.
- There will be times in class when I want everyone to put their devices away and focus on some activity: a quick writing exercise, a discussion circle, or a worksheet, etc. In those activities, we will all be device free.
- Finally, in order to show everyone that we are listening respectfully to one another, please remove any air pods or earbuds at the start of class.

If anyone has an accommodation that would make any of these policy items challenging in any way, please reach out to your instructors; modifications to this policy will be considered. In an effort to ensure that this policy supports the work and learning of all students, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please reach out to your individual instructors or advisor to discuss.

Updated August 2024

Multimedia Recordings Policy

As a part of regular coursework, students may be asked to videotape, audiotape, photograph and/or otherwise image individuals for instructional purposes. Any product of these practices is to be used

only for the purposes of healthcare education. They may not be sold, copied or otherwise distributed including uploaded to media sharing sites or social media sites. Students will give their permission if their likeness will be used for any purpose.

Professional Behaviors

The institution has policies and procedures related to the performance and conduct of students, which include, but are not limited to: attendance, classroom behavior, sexual harassment, drugs and alcohol, and computer usage. As students preparing for a career in the allied health field, you are expected to behave in a responsible and professional manner in the classroom as well as in the clinic, using the college's Student Handbook as the guide. Students in the program shall be governed by these rights and responsibilities. Please refer to the RVCC Student Handbook and/or the RVCC College Catalog for details. <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/student-handbook>

In addition to the rights and responsibilities identified by the institution, students in the OTA program shall also be governed by the following professional behavior guidelines the American Occupational Therapy Association 2020 Code of Ethics. This document can be found in Appendix I. This document will be reviewed during AHLT 104R – Introduction to Occupational and Physical Therapy.

Adherence to professional behavior standards are a graded component of each course and will be outlined in individual course syllabi.

Alcohol, Controlled Substances, & Illegal Drugs Policy

Substance abuse in the Classroom/Laboratory Setting

The program follows the RVCC Drug Free Workplace policy outlined in the Student Handbook: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/drug-free-workplace-drug-free-schools-andcommunities> If impaired behaviors are observed in the classroom setting, the procedures of the college policy related to student conduct are followed.

Substance Abuse During Clinical Education

In the event a student is intoxicated or under the influence of illegal substances during the clinical experience, policies are in place outlining the responsibilities of the college and the clinical facility (see contracts, riders and the Student Fieldwork Experience Handbook).

Prescription Medications

In instances where a student may have a legal prescription for drugs that will show up on a drug test (for example: pain medication or certain seizure medications), it is important to discuss this with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator as early as possible to ensure processes are followed prior to clinical placements. This may require students to provide proof of medication needs from their physicians and proof of a prescription prior to drug testing.

Medical/Recreational Use of Marijuana

While many states may have passed laws regarding medical or recreational use of marijuana, it continues to be illegal to possess or use on a federal level. Therefore, employers can set their own

policies on this issue. Employers have asked if they are required to accommodate marijuana use as a reasonable accommodation under disability law. Courts and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have consistently held that employers are not required to permit medical marijuana use as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. That was the same position courts had taken under state law even in states where marijuana use was legal. So, even if the student has a medical marijuana prescription, the clinical site can still prohibit the student from attending a clinical experience at that site.

CBD

While CBD is not the same as marijuana, some CBD products do have small amounts of THC (the psychoactive component of marijuana) and CBD can legally be sold even with these small amounts of THC in them. Even these small amounts of THC may cause a student to test positive on a drug test. Students need to be aware that drug tests can not differentiate between THC in their system as a result of CBD cross contamination or as a result of marijuana use.

Drug Testing

Students must be aware that clinical sites may drug test employees (and will require some of students at the clinical site, though they are not employees). Students who have a positive drug test will be denied a clinical rotation until the next time that specific Clinical Practicum course is offered, provided they can pass a drug test at that time. They may also be referred to the Judicial Committee of the college.

Additional Information Related to Substance Use

OTA students shall be aware of the following:

8. The college's Drug Free Workplace and Drug Free Schools and Communities statement (see college Student Handbook).
9. The legal use of medications or drugs prescribed by a licensed practitioner is permitted provided that such use does not adversely affect the student's performance or endanger the health and/or safety of others.
10. The school will maintain the confidentiality of all records and information related to the student's suspected abuse.
11. The PTA faculty will assist students desiring to address a substance abuse problem.
12. A student who refuses to comply with substance abuse policy/procedure will be subject to dismissal from the PTA Program

Grading Policy

The college's Student Handbook <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/student-handbook> has information regarding college grading policies under the tab titled "Grading." In this section, students can find information on grading systems, the grade appeal process and academic standards. Additionally, this section outlines further detail regarding "in good standing", "probation", "suspension" and "dismissal". Students in the PTA program are subject to that policy.

OTA students are subject to additional grading and academic probation policies set forth by the program to ensure the highest quality of graduates. Grades within the OTA program are obtained

through quizzes, exams, laboratory exercises, homework assignments, practical tests of technical performance, and clinical educational experiences, in addition to attendance, participation, and professional behavior. Course syllabi outline specific policies for each course. The core liberal arts and program specific courses within the program are graded on the traditional ten-point scale.

Failed Grade Policy for OTA and PTA Programs

1. The PTA and OTA programs use a 10-point scale when assigning grades in all professional courses in the PTA or OTA programs. These courses are identified with an AHLT, PTAC or OCTA prefix. The 10-point scale used:

A 93-100	B- 80-82	D+ 67-69
A- 90-92	C+ 77-79	D 63-66
B+ 87-89	C 73-76	D- 60-62
B 83-86	C- 70-72	F Below 60

2. To remain in good standing in the college, the student must not be on academic probation or academic suspension. The Student Handbook explains the college's academic standards.
3. There are further expectations of students in the OTA or PTA program. To remain in good standing in the OTA or PTA program, students must demonstrate success in all coursework as defined by the following criteria:
 - a) **Students who earn less than a "B-" grade for any professional course (OTA, AHLT prefixes) must repeat that course.** Students who repeat the course for the second time and earn less than a "B-" grade will be suspended from the program for one semester
 - b) **Students who earn less than a "C" grade for any liberal arts course must repeat that course.** Students who repeat the course for a second time and earn less than a "C" grade should refer to the Student Handbook policy. See information below regarding reinstatement.
 - c) **Students who earn less than a "C" for any two courses during the same semester will be suspended from the program for one semester.** See information below regarding reinstatement.
 - d) Within the professional courses, students may be required to complete hands-on practical examinations to demonstrate competencies. Students must pass each practical exam as defined by the instructor. Students who fail a practical examination must practice, come back and re-test. Failure of a practical examination includes any grade less than 80%.

When the student repeats a practical the exam and successfully completes it, the recorded grade will be an average of the failed and successfully completed practical exam scores.

If the student is unable to successfully complete a practical exam after 2 attempts, the student will need to complete a 1:1 review with the instructor. The

amount of review time will be determined by the instructor, not to exceed two hours. A student who is unable to successfully complete a practical exam after 3 attempts will earn a 69 (= F) for the course and will need to repeat the course.

An OTA student who is not successful on the third re-test of the comprehensive practical exam will receive a 69 (= F) grade for the applicable course (OCTA214R), and will have to retake the course the next time it is offered. The student will not progress, nor be able to register for OCTA290R, OCTA291R or OCTA220R.

A PTA student who is not successful on the third attempt of a comprehensive practical will receive a 69 (= F) grade for the applicable course (PTAC122R or PTAC211R), and will have to retake the course the next time it is offered. The student will not progress, nor be able to register for PTAC190R or PTAC292R.

4. **Reinstatement:** As per the college Student Handbook, students suspended from the PTA or OTA program:
- a) May continue to take non-PTA or OTA professional courses outside of the program, as non-matriculated students.
 - b) Must show evidence of having successfully completed 2 three-credit courses with a “C” or better grade before reapplying for matriculation into the PTA or OTA program.
 - c) As per the college Student Handbook, suspended students can re-apply to the PTA or OTA program after 1 semester. Reinstatement is not automatic and is based on space availability. The applications from suspended students will be managed by the same deadline and/or selection process as all applicants to the OTA or PTA program.
 - d) The re-testing of competencies is required after a leave of absence. Students matriculated back into the PTA or OTA program will be required to repeat all practical tests from successfully completed professional courses (designated with AHLT, and PTAC or OCTA prefixes) before registering for other professional courses
 - e) A student who withdraws or is suspended/dismissed from the program may request reinstatement only once. A student suspended/dismissed from the program or withdrew for academic reasons a second time, may not return to the program.
 - f) Students will be dismissed from the OTA or PTA program if the student has been found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Students dismissed from the program for these behaviors may not re-apply to the program
 - g) The policy for reinstatement to the PTA or OTA program will include conditions for reinstatement that will be determined by program faculty at the time a student is dismissed from the program. The student will receive a letter from the Program Director outlining the conditions and procedures for reinstatement to the program. The student will be required to sign a statement of understanding of the conditions. Prior to reinstatement, the program director will determine if

the conditions for reinstatement were met. Students satisfying the conditions for reinstatement will be allowed to return to the program if or when space is available. If the conditions are not satisfied, the student may not be permitted to return.

(revised June 2017 for implementation Fall 2017) (revised January 2018 for implementation in Spring 2018) (revised January 2019 for implementation in Spring 2019)

Academic Integrity Policy

The OTA and PTA Programs follow the College's policies on academic integrity, including but not limited to plagiarism and cheating. All students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and ethical behavior in their work. For details on the College's Academic Integrity Policy, please refer to the following link: <http://catalog.rivervalley.edu/academic-integrity>

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity Policy

The public expects its healthcare workers to be competent in their jobs and ethical in their approaches. Faculty in the rehabilitation services department expect all students to live up to those ideals. Students are expected to complete all assignments, projects, exams, and other assessments using their own knowledge and skills.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as chatbots, text generators, or other generative AI-assisted technologies) to complete or generate any part of coursework, unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, constitutes academic dishonesty and will be addressed according to the college policy for cheating and plagiarism. If a student presents AI-generated content as their own original work, it will be treated as plagiarism. Tools that simply identify errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure without automatically changing the content of the paper are generally acceptable.

Examples of prohibited use of AI includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting AI-generated work as one's own
- Submitting AI-generated work without citation
- Using AI to generate any or all components of assignments, essays, or projects that are presented as the students' original student work.
- Using AI to circumvent other learning or assessment processes.

Resources to guide students in this area:

- College Student Handbook: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/academic-integrity>
- Student Code of Conduct Section C: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/studentcode-of-conduct>
- American Occupational Therapy Association 2020 Code of Ethics (Appendix I)
- Standards of Ethical Conduct for Physical Therapist Assistants (Standard 4A)

Instructors in your courses may utilize Turnitin. Turnitin is a tool approved by the Community College System and is integrated into Canvas. Turnitin checks submissions for originality by comparing against a database of web content, student work, and other publications. It checks content to determine whether it appears to be human versus AI generated.

By checking the “end-user license agreement” box when submitting assignments in Canvas, you are consenting to the inclusion of your work in Turnitin’s database. If you do not consent you must contact your instructor to discuss the potential for alternative arrangements.

Students may also be asked to comply with a specific set of directions for the type of documents required for submission. Different instructors may have different requirements. For example, some instructors may require .docx, .pdf etc. It is the students’ responsibility to check the assignment requirements and submit in the correct document format.

Safety

Infectious Disease Policy

Students in the PTA and OTA programs will adhere to Universal Precautions, CDC guidelines, and facility policy on infectious diseases when out on clinical fieldwork experiences. Instruction in these topics will be covered in the program. Additional instruction may occur as part of orientation to fieldwork experiences. As future healthcare workers, students understand that exposure to infectious disease is possible in their clinical fieldwork experiences.

Potential Hazards in the Profession

As you begin your training for this profession, it is important to remain aware of the potential risks and hazards of the occupation. OTAs spend a considerable amount of time standing. Other occupational duties may include moving or lifting people. There is a risk of physical injury during these activities. Attention to appropriate body mechanics and use of assistive devices can help, but does not completely eliminate risk of injury. Use of good judgement is important in deciding whether to participate.

Students in the OTA program must also recognize that OTs and OTAs working in a variety of occupational therapy settings are at risk for exposure to blood and other body fluids or a work environment that could lead to injury (e.g. slips, falls).

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) recognizes that OTs and OTAs may be exposed to these potential hazards in the workplace:

- Increased risk of work-related musculoskeletal disorders
- Exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- Exposure to bloodborne pathogens such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and C.
- Exposure of eyes or body to injurious corrosive materials.
- Exposure to wet surfaces and potential slips and falls.
- Exposure to hazardous equipment
- Lack of Personal Protective Equipment

All students will be introduced to OSHA blood and body fluids safety standards. In addition, any clinical site will orient the student to specific policies and procedures regarding workplace safety. The student is also referred to the following website for more information:

http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/expert/ex_pt.html

General Safety Information

The college's Student Handbook covers general safety topics listed below. Students are responsible for reading this information and abiding by the information.

- Parking & Traffic Regulations: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/parking-trafficregulations>
- Campus Security: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/campus-security> • Incident Reports: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/incident-reports>
- Clery Act: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/clery-act-crime-statistics-reporting-a-crime-or-incident-on-campus>
- Drug Free Workplace: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/drug-free-workplace-drugfree-schools-and-communities>
- Codes of Conduct, Including Harassment: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/studentcode-of-conduct>
- Safety and Fire Regulations (including fire drills): <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/safety-and-fire-regulations>
- Unattended Children: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/unattended-children-on-campus-policy>

In addition to the college's regulations, students in the OTA program are also governed by safety regulations in the program. Students in the OTA program should be aware of/follow these regulations identified below:

- General Environmental Safety
 - Walking areas will be uncluttered. Book bags, backpacks, etc. should be stored out of the travel areas.
 - Treatment tables, chairs and equipment will be returned to their positions at the end of class/lab.
 - Floors will be dry, and will be maintained with a non-skid wax.
 - Emergency/evacuation plans will be posted by doors leading to hallways.
 - All cleaning solutions will be appropriately labeled, including:
 - Name o Concentration
 - Date of expiration, if applicable
 - Manufacturer (if commercially purchased)
 - First Aid Kit: A first aid kit is located in the OTA lab (room 214). The kit is inspected and restocked by a vendor company every three months. If additional supplies are needed, please go to the front office.
- Lab Equipment Safety
 - MSDS forms for commonly used substances within PTA program are available on the college's RVCC 100% Online MSDS desktop information link: <https://msdsmanagement.msdsonline.com/ebinder/?SearchTerm=W&UserSearchSuggestID=0&DocumentSourceTypeID=0&DocumentApprovalTypeID=0&ArchivedStatus=A&LocationLevel=0&LocationID=0&LocationStatus=0&GroupID=0&IndexedDataTypeID=0&IndexedDataID=0&QuickFilterTypeID=0&ReturnNarrowResults=false&SmartSearchTermID=0&PageSize=100&PageNumber=1&SortFieldID=0&SortHow=de>

[sc&CustomSearchTerm](#) The Maintenance department and program faculty can obtain other substances MSDS forms via www.MSDSonline.com. or www.ilpi.com.

- Linens will be folded neatly and stored in the store room.
- Plinths will be wiped down at the end of each lab session with a spray bottle of commercially available solution or hard surface cleaner.
- Soiled linens will be placed in the laundry hamper.
- All electrical treatment equipment will be maintained in safe operating condition and tested annually for safety.
- Any faulty electrical equipment will be set aside, a note placed on it stating “Do Not Use”, and will be repaired as soon as possible.
- Electrical equipment will be unplugged when not in use.
- Equipment manuals will be available for use in the PTA lab file drawer labeled “Modality Manuals”.
- The hot pack machine will be emptied and cleaned each summer (more often as needed).
- All equipment parts, lead wires, electrodes, etc. will be stored neatly near the appropriate machines.
- Extension cords will not be allowed for patient-related interventions.
- Food and drinks will not be allowed on any equipment.
- All electrical wires will be inspected for cracks, broken plugs, etc.
- All containers (lotion, etc.) are closed and safely stored
- Safety in the Laboratory
 - OTA students in the program will have the opportunity to perform actual interventions on fellow classmates. This practice is necessary to gain competency in most didactic concepts. During such interactions, students shall conduct themselves in an appropriate and safe manner. All students shall receive proper education from faculty or staff prior to use of laboratory equipment.

Healthcare education is enhanced by the active participation of all students in the classroom and laboratory. It is expected that all students will volunteer to participate in both the OTA role and the mock patient role. If religious or ethical beliefs and/or medical conditions preclude a student from doing so, that student must inform a member of the PTA program faculty.

When performed improperly, interventions (such as manual therapies, modalities, procedures etc.) may cause harm to one’s health. OTA students should not perform any intervention without proper faculty instruction and supervision in the classroom and laboratory settings. Students shall always act in a safe, responsible manner and immediately alert a faculty member if an injury or unsafe situation arises.

- Students Participating as Mock Patient
 - Students who are participating as mock patients during laboratory and clinical experiences are to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity. If medical conditions preclude a student from participating as a mock patient, that student must inform a member of the OTA program faculty. Regardless of setting, subjects

and evaluators must never jeopardize the safety of themselves or others. All laboratory and clinical site rules must be adhered to. All OTA program students shall be made aware of this policy.

- Non-students Participating as Mock Patient
 - Non-students who are participating as mock patient during laboratory and clinical experiences are to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity. Regardless of setting, subjects and evaluators must never jeopardize the safety of themselves or others. It shall be the policy of the program that non-students sign a waiver outlining their rights and responsibilities as a mock patient.
- Supervision in the Laboratory
 - The OTA faculty will make every effort to provide opportunities for students to practice skills related to course work outside of regularly scheduled lab times. Generally, these are during normal business hours when other OTA classes are not scheduled. Students are directed to the “room in use” schedule outside the lab door, room 214. The presence of the OTA program faculty (licensed PTs) during practice of skills, and the ability of a student to practice skills is dependent upon the following guidelines.
 - Students may never use equipment in the laboratory that has not been included in a lecture or laboratory session.
 - Students are never permitted to use physical agent modalities outside of dedicated laboratory experiences. The independent use of physical agent modalities in the clinical practice of occupational therapy requires additional training outside the scope of this program.
 - The OTA faculty do not need to be on site or give permission to students for the practice of activities listed below. Students must exercise sound judgement and safety precautions when engaging in independent practice as needed (for example, use of gait belts, guarding, use of safety equipment like gym mats etc.)
 - Students practicing goniometry, bed mobility, manual muscle testing, transfers, facilitation of vestibular or proprioceptive input, use of available adaptive equipment, or administration of standardized assessments.
 - Students utilizing the space for study purposes.
- Off Campus Educational Experiences
 - On occasion, students may be scheduled to attend off-campus educational experiences, such as off-campus laboratories, observation experiences, or field trips. Students are expected to represent the OTA program and the college with professionalism in both appearance and behavior. The instructor for the off-campus activity will assure that all students have read and signed the required form: *“Assumption of Risk and Liability Release for On or Off Campus Activity”*
 - Students engage in a total of four fieldwork experiences while matriculated in the OTA program. Contractual agreements between the clinical site and the college are completed before the fieldwork experience. These contracts identify who is responsible for student safety during the fieldwork experience. Off-campus clinical sites shall be screened by the faculty/staff to attempt to ensure that off campus environments are safe. All students will also be covered by a blanket malpractice

liability policy. Students are encouraged to report any witnessed unsafe behaviors at an off-campus clinical education site to any member of the OTA program faculty. Students are expected to abide by all safety policies specific to the fieldwork site.

- Students have the right to expect the same level of safety they would find in on-campus educational experiences, regardless of whether they are clinical education courses or field trips. If a student feels at any time that he or she has been placed in an unsafe situation in an off-campus environment, that student has the right to remove himself/herself from that location. The student then has a responsibility to inform a member of the program faculty of the unsafe situation.
- Students are required to familiarize themselves with the Student Fieldwork Experience Handbook prior to engaging in fieldwork experiences.
- Access to Emergency Services
 - Students in off-campus educational experiences have the right to access emergency services if necessary. The student shall be responsible for the cost of emergency services.

Medical Care

Though there is no formal health system within the college, there are many resources available in the area. Costs and eligibility requirements vary, so you are urged to call for this information in advance, if possible. Students are responsible for any costs incurred for medical transportation or medical services.

The College is located approximately one mile from a medical facility, Valley Regional Hospital. This facility is utilized for any emergency medical problems during the day or evening hours. The College is not responsible for the physical welfare of the student off-campus except as outlined in the Clinical Education Student Handbook.

Withdrawal & Reimbursement Policy

Students who wish to withdraw from the program must follow the official college withdrawal procedures. All requests for withdrawal, including any eligibility for tuition or fee reimbursement, will be handled in accordance with the college's published policies and deadlines.

It is the student's responsibility to review and comply with the college's withdrawal and refund policies, which can be found in the College Catalog and on the college website.

College policies can be found here:

- <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/college-withdrawal>
- <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/dropping-or-withdrawing-from-a-course>

Medical Leave Policy

Students who need to take a medical leave of absence must follow the college's official medical leave procedures and meet all related documentation and deadline requirements. All requests for

medical leave will be handled in accordance with the college's published policies, which can be found in the College Catalog and on the college website (<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/medical-leave-policy>).

Students approved for medical leave must understand that taking leave does not waive any program requirements. All required courses must be successfully completed in accordance with program sequencing to remain eligible for fieldwork placement and graduation

Complaints & Grievance Policy

In the event that a student has a grievance against the OTA program or faculty, they will follow the Grievance Procedures (<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/student-rights-grievance-procedures>) or the Grade Appeal process (<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/grade-appealprocess>) as outlined in the college's Student Handbook.

Complaints from the community about the OTA program, the general quality of the curriculum, the general performance of students or faculty, and practical preparation of the student should first be addressed to the OTA Program Director.

Should the complaints include the behavior or performance of the Program Director, the complaints should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Rehabilitation Services department or alternately, the Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs.

The person receiving the complaint will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation of the complaint and evaluation of the problem as it has been described. Any personnel on campus will be involved in this process to the extent that their input would aid in the resolution of the concern. The complaining party will be kept apprised of the process as it evolves and will be notified of the ultimate resolution of the concern in a timely fashion (excepting in cases of confidentiality). A record of the complaint, the ensuing evaluation and investigation process and the ultimate resolution of the complaint will be retained in the Program Director's files with a copy sent to the Chairperson of the Rehabilitation Services Department.

OTA Lab Space Policies

Classroom Space

The OT Lab (room 214) is available for your study, eating, or meetings when classes or meetings are not scheduled. There are availability and sign-up sheets for the space outside the door. Kitchen facilities in the OTA Lab (214) may be used for personal use at the discretion of the program director. All food placed in the refrigerator must be marked with name and date and removed on Fridays. The kitchen and refrigerator space must be left clean for continued personal use by students. Unmarked items in the refrigerator will be discarded on Fridays. Students are not permitted to enter the lab space to obtain food from the refrigerator or other items left in the space if a class is in session unless permission is granted by the faculty.

Telephone Use

Office phones are for college business and college personnel only, except in the case of emergency.

OTA Program Fieldwork Overview

General Overview

The OTA Program provides Fieldwork Level I and Fieldwork Level II Fieldwork experiences to offer students hands-on clinical exposure to clients and community settings. Level I fieldwork is separate and distinct from Level II fieldwork and the goal is to introduce the student to the fieldwork experience for the student to develop a basic understanding of clients' needs and hone observation and client interaction skills. Level I Fieldwork is designed to complement and enrich didactic coursework through direct observation and participation in selected aspects of the occupational therapy process. Level I fieldwork experiences are provided in the spring of year one and fall of year two in the OTA program.

Level II fieldwork is scheduled for the spring of the second year of the program. Students must complete two level II fieldwork experiences in two distinctly different practice settings. Students work with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) to identify two practice settings that align with their future career goals. Students will be placed into fieldwork experiences based on availability of community clinicians. Each fieldwork experience is 8-full time weeks. Some settings may require evening, weekend, and/or holiday hours. The purpose of level II fieldwork is to prepare students to become competent entry-level generalist occupational therapy practitioners (AOTA, n.d.).

Criminal Background Check and Drug Testing Policies

Background check and drug testing are required by many facilities prior to Work Based Learning (WBL) experiences. Failure to undergo a background check/drug testing prior to an assigned work-based learning experience may result in inability to progress in a program. Should an agency refuse to place a student based on the outcome of the background check, the college/program shall have no responsibility for arranging an alternate clinical/ fieldwork or practicum placement. Students may appeal the decision and will be given the opportunity to present information to dispute the background check. Students must agree that all results will be available to the program and the sites associated with the program. The background/drug check may be required several times during a two-year program and may be required for employment and/or licensure and/or certification. Cost for the background/drug check will be the responsibility of the student. Students should work with their Program Directors or the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education for assistance. Note: some agencies require both a state and federal background check.

Conviction of a crime does not automatically disqualify a student from the OTA program; however, certain crimes may jeopardize one's ability to be licensed at the state level or sit for the NBCOT exam. For more information, review your state's Occupational Therapy Practice Act or www.nbcot.org

Costs associated with background checks and drug testing are the responsibility of the student and will not be paid by the program.

Immunizations for Fieldwork

The RVCC Immunization policy is found in the Student Handbook. Students should be aware that each clinical site may have their own immunization policy that varies slightly from the RVCC list of recommended vaccines. No later than six months prior to the first level II fieldwork students should review the immunization requirements with their physician and make plans for ensuring they are fully immunized.

Students are responsible for keeping multiple copies of their current immunization records and will provide a copy to any clinical education site that might request it. Clinical education sites have the right to refuse admission to any student who does not provide a current copy of their immunization record in a timely manner. Clinical education sites have the right to refuse admission to any student who chooses not to comply with vaccinations required by the site. Failure to complete vaccinations in a timely fashion may preclude a student from attending a clinical education course at the regularly scheduled time which could impact a timely completion of the program.

Hepatitis B - All students will be educated about the Hepatitis B vaccine series, which can take multiple months to complete; and are required to begin the vaccination series, or sign a waiver stating their decision not to do so as part of current immunization records provided to the clinical site.

Influenza - Many clinical sites will require students to have the current flu (Influenza) vaccine. Getting vaccinated during flu season (September – February) will make it easier to ensure that there is vaccine available for students attending fieldwork.

Covid-19 - Individual clinical sites may require a COVID-19 vaccination in order to participate. As with all clinical program requirements, the site reserves the right to deny participation to any student who does not meet basic eligibility criteria.

Vaccine refusal or declination - CCSNH students who do not meet eligibility criteria for clinical programming may be required to select an alternate course of study in the event that the student cannot obtain the required clinical experience for their chosen course of study. Individual programs of study are not required to secure clinical experience for students who do not meet eligibility criteria.

Professional Behavior on Fieldwork

During the fieldwork experiences, students are expected to be ambassadors of River Valley Community College (RVCC), the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program, and the profession of occupational therapy at all times. You are expected to uphold the ethical standards of the profession (Appendix I) and behave lawfully at all times. Students are expected to follow both the academic policies of RVCC as well as the policies and procedures of your clinical site while on fieldwork. This experience should be treated as a job and therefore students are expected to be on time, dress appropriately, behave in a professional manner, and respect those around you.

Assignment to Clinical Sites

Students are placed at assigned clinical sites based on several factors, including availability of facilities, the student's academic and interpersonal abilities and lastly, a student's personal needs.

Clinical sites are selected based on adequate qualified personnel, willingness to engage in student mentorship, adequate caseload, type of setting, geographic location, past history with OTA students, contract status, and other variables. Every attempt is made to place students in a variety of settings, in locations that are convenient for the student, and with supervisors that match the student's learning style. Students can discuss preferences for clinical site work and whenever possible these preferences will be considered. Specific sites are not guaranteed and there is not guarantee students will be placed in their top choice of site. It may be necessary for students to travel 90 minutes one way.

To meet requirements of the program, students must be able to provide own transportation to and from clinical sites, and/or relocate if necessary (at their own expense), have current immunizations and American Heart Association CPR certification, and hold personal health insurance. Many sites may have additional requirements including, but not limited to, criminal background checks, drug testing, and worksite training. The OTA program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) will work with each student individually to ensure they are aware of site-specific requirements, but it is the responsibility of the student to comply with all requirements. Failure on the part of the student to have all requirements completed prior to beginning their clinical experience may result in dismissal from the site. It cannot be guaranteed that another site can be found in a timely manner.

Conflict of Interest

To effectively engage in a supervisory relationship and to be able to openly receive and give feedback it is important that your relationship with your supervisor not be impacted by a conflict of interest. Past and present relationships with the site or the supervisor may influence the supervisory relationship. We discourage students from a clinical education site where they have friends or relatives or where they have been previously employed in a different capacity. Some examples of situations that may present a conflict of interest include sites where:

- A family member is a client or employee in a department that has close professional contact with your supervisor and/or a position of power over your supervisor
- You presently work or have worked within the past two years
- You have a friendship, romantic, or other relationship with the person who may be your supervisor or with someone in the department
- You have had a supervisory role over people who may supervise you
- You have been a patient in the OT or PT department or another department that you will have close contact within the past one year

When a potential conflict of interest exists, it is expected that the student notify the AFWC of the potential conflict of interest. The AFWC will explore with both the student and the site their perception of the previous relationship and any power imbalances that may hinder the honest exchange of feedback and evaluation of the student's performance. The OTA faculty will make the final determination regarding the appropriateness of placing the student at the fieldwork site.

Determination of Clinical Site Placements with OTA/PTA Dual Student

For dual degree students, the above policies regarding determination of site will remain the same; however, where students are dual OTA / PTA, the OTA Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) will

meet with PTA Director of Clinical Education and the student prior to placement to discuss which degree the student plans to complete first. Students will be scheduled for the full time under that degree including seminar completion, prior to starting other half of dual degree. Students will be made aware of the increased time and credit requirements when signing off on plan of study with their academic advisor.

Accessibility Services and Essential Functions

Accessibility Services at RVCC

River Valley Community College, in compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is committed to providing equal access to academic programs, services, and its facilities. To receive reasonable classroom or program accommodations, a student must complete the Accessibility Services process, including completing the application, submitting documentation, and meeting with the Accessibility Services Coordinator. Please note that accommodation requests made must not create undue financial hardship or require fundamental alternations of class and program expectations, including program Essential Functions lists and course competencies. Students in programs that require successful completion of clinical placement should be aware that accommodations provided will align with expectations of student performance in the clinical setting and may not be the same as what is provided in the classroom setting. Students are encouraged to connect with Accessibility Services early to determine reasonable accommodations.

Pregnancy & Parenting-related Accommodations

The OTA Program follows the RVCC policy related to pregnancy and parenting for didactic courses: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/pregnancy-and-parenting-accommodations> Pregnancy accommodations related to clinical practicum courses will be discussed later in this handbook.

Essential Functions

The following information was provided to you as part of the OTA Program application process. At that time, you signed and returned the “Essential Functions” form. If anything has changed since the initial signing of the Essential Functions form, please meet with the program director to update.

RVCC Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Essential Functions

Becoming an occupational therapy assistant requires completing an academic program that is intellectually and physically demanding. The student will be expected to acquire knowledge, motor skills, behavior, and attitudes necessary to provide safe and effective occupational therapy services. The purpose of this document is to inform students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program of the demands that they will be expected to meet, with or without reasonable accommodation, while participating in the program. These essential functions reflect the essential skills required for a career as an occupational therapy practitioner. The ability to meet these standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, does not guarantee employment upon graduation. Students who feel they may require reasonable accommodation to meet one or more of these standards should contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator at RVCC.

Motor: The candidate and students must have sufficient gross and fine motor capabilities to execute the movements and skills required to provide safe and effective occupational therapy services. This treatment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Sufficient coordination, speed, strength, and agility to assist and guard (protect) clients who are walking, exercising or performing other activities.
2. Ability to adjust, move, and position clients and equipment which involves bending, twisting, pushing and pulling, and reaching to guide, transfer and lift equipment and individuals.
3. Ability to guide, resist, and assist clients, and to provide emergency care, which may involve activities including standing, kneeling, sitting, walking and crawling.
4. Ability and dexterity to fabricate, apply, and monitor adaptive equipment. Ability to perform and demonstrate functional activities and administer components of sensory, motor, and other assessments.
5. Sufficient endurance to move about a classroom or clinical environment steadily throughout the day. This includes movement across distances, movement from one floor to another, movement in a variety of planes/axes, and negotiation of small spaces.

Behavioral and Interpersonal Skills: Candidates and students must exercise self-control, respect, emotional regulation, time management, cultural humility, and professionalism necessary for a career as an occupational therapy practitioner to qualify for fieldwork placement and continue in the didactic portions of the program. Students may be removed from the program if they engage in behaviors not aligning with the qualities listed above.

Sensory: Candidates and students must have sufficient sensory abilities to assess and monitor clients, observe physical features and movements, participate in physical measures, and recognize and respond to client needs and unsafe situations. Students must be able to obtain information in classroom, laboratory, or clinical settings through observation, auscultation, palpation, and other measures. Required abilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Visual ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language, to observe client performance in therapy, to read or set parameters on occupational therapy equipment, and to interpret and assess the environment.
2. Auditory ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize and respond to verbal directions and requests, to be aware of safety mechanisms in the environment, and for effective communication between clients/families/co-workers.
3. Tactile ability to palpate muscle contractions, to discriminate hot and cold modalities, to exert the necessary pressure to fabricate splints, and to identify joint articulations

Cognitive: Candidates and students must have sufficient cognitive abilities to execute the thought, attentional, processing, and memory-related demands required to provide safe and effective occupational therapy services.

1. Problem solving abilities to interpret, integrate, and respond to complex situations.
2. Learning ability to acquire, interpret, and apply information from written, visual, and/or auditory sources.
3. Working memory ability for mental retrieval of information applicable to a variety of clinical scenarios.

4. Sustained attention ability to continue task from initiation to termination.
5. Measure, calculate reason, analyze, judge, and synthesize, as needed, in the academic and clinical settings.
6. Sequencing ability to perform tasks in logical order to ensure effective client outcomes and safety.

Applicants to the OTA Program who have questions or concerns about the above requirements are encouraged to contact the Program Director of the OTA program of the RVCC Accessibility Services Coordinator.

Other Services and Wellbeing Resources

English as Second or Other Language (ESOL) Support

ESOL resources are found on the RVCC webpage under “Student Support” <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/esol/>. Additionally, free ESOL tutoring is available in Canvas through Brainfuse. For questions about ESOL support at RVCC, please contact Aimee Jahn, Professor & Department Chair, Professional Studies by email at ajahn@ccsnh.edu or by phone at 603-542-7744, ext. 5404.

Student Success Coaching

RVCC offers student success coaching to any student enrolled in a course through the college. Student success coaching provides students with personalized support to help achieve their educational goals. Success coaches work collaboratively with students to offer guidance, encouragement, and practical strategies. Coaches can assist with time management, note-taking strategies, understanding learning styles, reviewing syllabi, navigating online course platforms, and connecting students to additional resources. Students are encouraged to take advantage of student success coaching to help manage challenges and stay on track throughout their academic program.

Library Services

The Charles P. Puksta Library features an instructional classroom, group and individual study rooms, a parents’ room, treadmill desks, six desktop computers, color printing, copying and scanning, and WiFi. Students are encouraged to use the library’s campus space, borrow physical materials, and utilize our Interlibrary Loan service to request books and articles not already in the collection.

Students may also request any library services or resources at RVCC’s academic centers in addition to the College’s main campus location. Moreover, Puksta Library’s digital collection containing more than 1.5 million ebooks, articles, films/documentaries, interactive study resources, and more is available 24/7 online! Research appointments are available to students to assist them in accessing library resources and conducting effective research. Drop-in assistance is available during regular hours of operation. The library is open Monday – Friday, from 8 AM to 4 PM. Visit the RVCC Puksta Library Webpage link for more information or to access our online resources.

Please direct questions about library services to library staff at RVCCLibrary@ccsnh.edu, or call the library at 603-542-7744, ext. 5465

Counseling

Students enrolled in the program have access to free virtual counseling sessions through BetterMynd. This service connects students with licensed mental health counselors for confidential support, helping them manage stress, personal challenges, and academic pressures. For more information or to register for services, please visit <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/on-campus-resources/counseling>

Transportation

Students may ride for free with their student IDs on the Southwestern Community Services (SCS) bus. RVCC is a regular bus stop with SCS. Students may also request a ride or a route deviation by calling 603-542-9609 24-hours in advance.

Parents' Room

RVCC offers a parents' room equipped with a hospital grade breast pump and kit, a glider chair, refrigerator, microwave with sterilizing bags, sink access, calming lighting, mirrors, and informational resources.

Tutoring

RVCC offers free tutoring to all students through the library. The tutoring team includes faculty members, professional tutors, and peer tutors. Tutors can answer questions, review course material, and provide writing assistance. Tutors are available for one-on-one sessions as well as tutoring groups.

RVCC also offers 24/7 virtual tutoring services through Brainfuse. Brainfuse offers a writing lab services as well as chat-based tutoring with audio and visual options.

More information on accessing either tutoring option is available here:
<https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/library/tutoring/>

Career Services

RVCC offers dedicated Career Services to help students prepare for employment during and after their program. Services include assistance with resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, and interview preparation. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these resources to support their career goals.

Campus Food Pantry

River Valley provides a free, on-campus food pantry to support students experiencing food insecurity. All enrolled students are welcome to access nutritious food and necessities at no cost.

Student Clubs

River Valley boasts a variety of clubs for students to join. Students may create their own clubs if their desired club is not currently offered. Getting involved on campus is a great way to connect to the college community.