



**Samuel Merritt
University**

Department of Occupational Therapy

**DOCTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM
MASTER OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2022 - 2023

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WELCOME

On behalf of the Department of Occupational Therapy, I welcome you to the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) Program or Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program at Samuel Merritt University (SMU). As you begin your professional and graduate education, you will soon view the world in a new and different way. You will find that occupational therapy is not just a profession, but also a commitment to excellence and a way of life.

To help you effectively progress through the professional coursework, this *Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program Student Handbook* has been compiled to present information and policies relevant to you as a Doctor of Occupational Therapy student. This handbook is a companion to the *Samuel Merritt University Catalog and Student Handbook*. Because you are responsible for knowing and understanding the policies and procedures found in this handbook, as well as the *Samuel Merritt University Catalog and Student Handbook*, please ask for clarification if you have any questions about the information. We also welcome your suggestions for inclusion of additional information that would be helpful to you. The faculty reserves the right to revise policies and procedures found in this handbook at any time it is deemed necessary. We will distribute written revisions to you when changes are advisable.

Congratulations on your selection of occupational therapy as a career. You have chosen wisely. The occupational therapy profession is a growing and dynamic field. Occupational therapy is a well-respected discipline with many opportunities available for growth, advancement, and achievement. We hope you will enjoy becoming a member of this very special community. We look forward to the opportunity of getting to know you.

Kate Hayner, EdD, OTR/L

Associate Professor and Chair

Department of Occupational Therapy



**Samuel Merritt
University**

SAMUEL MERRITT UNIVERSITY VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

Mission

Samuel Merritt University educates students to become highly skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals who positively transform the experience of care in diverse communities.

Vision

Samuel Merritt University is recognized as a premier health sciences institution. Expert faculty and staff shape an inclusive learning environment where students experience best teaching practices and state-of-the-art learning approaches. The University selects and supports students who flourish in its rigorous academic programs, learn to practice expertly, and pass licensure or certification examinations on first attempt.

Values

At Samuel Merritt University, we value...

- A learning environment where we challenge ourselves and our students to think critically, seek mastery, and act compassionately;
- A collegial environment where we are fair, respectful, and behave with integrity;
- A collaborative environment where we partner with one another and with others in the community;
- An innovative environment where we take reasoned risks and move nimbly;
- A results-oriented environment where we provide and expect exceptional performance and service.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY GRADUATE PROGRAMS

VISION & MISSION

Vision

We will be an innovative graduate level program preparing students to provide exceptional, holistic occupational therapy to meet the evolving occupational needs of society.

Mission

Our mission is to provide transformational professional education that prepares students to provide holistic, client-centered, and evidence-based occupational therapy to diverse communities in a continuously evolving healthcare environment.

Aims of Our Graduate Programs:

- Provide a creative and innovative graduate occupational therapy program that meet and exceed professional standards of excellence;
- Educate occupational therapy students to meet the societal needs for service provision;
- Provide an educational environment that fosters personal and professional freedom and responsibility, conducive to intellectual, social and cultural development;
- Educate qualified students from diverse backgrounds who have the potential to become competent, compassionate and contributing health care professionals;
- Offer curricula designed to prepare graduates who have the ability to think logically, critically and independently; who demonstrate competence in the application of knowledge and skills; and whose behavior is guided by professional, humanitarian and ethical values;
- Pursue its primary role as an educational program while facilitating the participation of its faculty, staff and students in community service, research, scholarly and professional activities;
- Service the community of health care practitioners by providing timely, relevant, and quality continuing education in occupational therapy;
- Engage in activities that contribute to the health and well-being of the community;
- Institute a caring atmosphere in which occupational therapy students, faculty, and community service providers work together to optimize their personal and professional development.

Philosophy

Occupational therapy is the use of purposeful activity – a unique feature of the profession -- or adjunctive interventions to promote health and achieve functional outcomes. Achieving functional outcomes means to develop, improve, or restore the highest possible level of independence of any individual who is limited by physical injury or illness, cognitive or intellectual impairment, psychosocial dysfunction, developmental or learning disability, or adverse environmental conditions. Evaluation is a process that is “focused on finding out what the client wants and needs to do; determining what a client can do and has done; and identifying supports and barriers to health, well-being, and participation” (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2020, p. S21).

The philosophy of the Department of Occupational Therapy is based upon the premise that the process of "occupation," has a restorative or normalizing effect. The ultimate goal of occupational therapy is to enable individuals to assume an optimal level of independent functioning and sustain the highest quality of life so they can be productive, contributing members of society.

Within the context of this philosophy, the faculty of the Department of Occupational Therapy believes each individual is unique and is best understood as a "biopsychosocial" human being. Each person is a unified whole who operates in a variety of roles and lives in continually developing, mutual relationships with others and with their environments. These environments consist of the aggregate of physical, psychosocial, cultural and spiritual realms within which persons and society interact and engage in purposeful occupations. The ultimate goal of occupational therapy practice is to assist individuals, families, and communities to achieve health and meaningful occupational function within the individual, situational and cultural realms.

The development of values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to competently serve diverse cultural populations is required in post-baccalaureate preparation. The balanced study of the natural and social sciences and the humanities provides a foundation that promotes critical judgment, respect, and concern for individuals, communities, and society. A broad education in the liberal arts and sciences is requisite for the development of knowledge, skills, and inquiry essential to professional occupational therapy practice. Occupational therapy upholds and draws upon the tradition of scientific inquiry while contributing to and disseminating the body of knowledge in health care.

We strive to best serve each new generation of students by fostering an educational and social milieu that allows optimum learning. We recognize our students as adult learners who must also cooperate with each other. Teaching and learning are shared processes that best occur in an environment that stimulates inquiry; promotes critical and independent thinking; and supports personal and professional development based on past experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes. The faculty recognizes the uniqueness of the individual learner and implements a variety of teaching strategies to liberate the full range of individual potential. The changing health care delivery system of the future will rely more and more on the cooperation and interdependence of individuals in intervention teams for higher productivity and effective intervention.

The epistemological underpinnings of occupational therapy practice lie in the concept of treating the "whole person," rather than one segment of their being. The Mind-body Model views the mind and body as one entity and derives its scientific support from research in neuroscience, health psychology, and psychoneuroimmunology. These evolving scientific disciplines provide the foundation to understanding the therapeutic value of occupation as we apply it in our study of occupational therapy.

In keeping with the historical philosophy of Adolph Meyer (1922), one of the founders of occupational therapy, the whole of human organism has its shape in a kind of rhythm. In addition to the biological rhythms of life, work, play, rest and sleep constitute rhythms that bring the organism into balance. It is through this process of occupation that one learns to attain balance that brings orderly rhythm to life. We are committed to the ongoing development of research on the concept of occupation and its importance in therapeutic intervention. Human occupation provides a vehicle for the interconnectedness of the person's daily life, their perceptions, values, habits and adherence to community, ritual and culture (Meyer, 1922).

CURRICULUM DESIGN

In 2007, the AOTA developed a *Centennial Vision* and proposed occupational therapy to be “a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and evidence-based profession with a globally connected and diverse work- force meeting society’s occupational needs” (AOTA, 2007, p. 614). In keeping with the *Centennial Vision*, the curriculum emphasizes evidence-based practice. Evidence based practice has been defined as “the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of the individual patient. It means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research” (Sackett, 1996, p. 71).

In accordance with the *Centennial Vision*, the curricular design of our graduate programs is a progressive, evidence-based education of knowledge and skills, and application of both, using a Mind-body Model. The themes or threads of our graduate programs are: evidenced-based practice, foundational knowledge, critical analysis and problem solving, occupational therapy theoretical tenets, occupational therapy processes, professionalism, clinical reasoning, and scholarship. Within these themes, students develop understanding of and skills in program development and implementation, research processes, advocacy and leadership.

The Mind-body Model is infused throughout the graduate curriculum. The science curriculum in our graduate programs is fully complimented by the holistic fundamentals that inculcate students to recognize the whole person in the context of his or her physical, psycho-social, cultural, and spiritual realm. The rigorous science curriculum is seamlessly woven with a mind-body philosophy. Occupational therapy is strongly influenced by medicine, and functional problems fall neatly into the biomedicine model (treating physical injuries or symptoms of illnesses with specific intervention techniques); however, occupational therapy practice goes far beyond the realm of the physical body. The occupational therapy process addresses the individual clients and their occupations as well as the context and environment in which those occupations are performed (Christiansen, Baum, & Bass-Hagen, 2005).

In addition to developing the competencies to become a "generalist" practitioner, the curriculum will provide a sequential and developmental progression with the following themes:

Evidence-based Practice

As stated in our philosophy, the Occupational Therapy Department believes in educating students on the essentials of evidence-based practice, which include researching, identifying, and deciphering existing evidence that may or may not support many interventions used by occupational therapy practitioners. Throughout the curriculum, students are frequently expected to locate and report on supporting evidence when completing scholarly papers and developing intervention plans. Students will develop clinical judgment, by incorporating credible evidence and recognizing absence of evidence, when making decisions about intervention strategies.

Foundational Knowledge

Early coursework aims to facilitate students' understanding of the human anatomy and physiology, neuroscience, kinesiology, and biomechanics. In addition, literature search, review and synthesis; professional writing; and oral communication prepare students to meet literary, scientific, academic, and practice expectations of the profession. For example, prior to delving into occupational therapy practices, students learn about common human conditions that affect a person's occupation performance. Problem-based learning is introduced in the first simulation course to encourage students to apply knowledge and to develop skilled inquiry.

Critical Analysis and Problem Solving

The process of critical analysis begins in the first semester when students have the opportunity through the foundation course, the therapeutic media course, and the first integrative seminar course to learn to analyze human factors that enable occupational performance. As students have acquired these basic skills, case studies of individuals with disabilities and occupational performance deficits are used to further develop critical analysis and problem-solving skills.

A course offered in the second semester aims to develop students' knowledge and skills for clinical research through active participation in statistical procedures, and quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The three-semester series of research inquiry affords students a rigorous acquisition of research skills (applied in occupational therapy relevant contexts) and concepts, which culminate with a systematic review of research.

The students' participation in guided clinical experiences, which include serving adults with psychosocial dysfunction, children with developmental delay or learning impairment, and adults with physical disability; and three additional sequential integrative seminars utilizing both problem-based learning and simulation, demands the synthesis of skills in research, critical

analysis, and problem solving in order to address occupational performance issues that are facing real and simulated clients. When students return from Fieldwork II and are entering the final semester of the program, they complete their capstone project, which also requires synthesis of skills in research, critical analysis, and problem solving.

Occupational Therapy Theoretical Tenets

The fundamental occupational therapy theoretical concept of occupation in relationship to human development, health, life's purpose and meaning, and existence is presented in the first semester and reiterated and emphasized throughout the curriculum. Through knowledge and understanding of the history, philosophy, beliefs, principles, values, and ever evolving theory and ideolog of occupational therapy, students are expected to understand the intricacy of how human beings utilize occupations to define their lives through the selection of occupation, performance pattern, and performance context. Students understand that occupation is a driving and organizing force in human life. Occupational therapy theories and frames of reference are introduced to students in the first semester with more neurorehabilitation frameworks introduced in the last semester. All theories and frameworks are re-visited in courses offering a clinical laboratory and the theory of practice courses that require students to critically select and apply appropriate occupational therapy theories, perspectives, and frames of reference as a foundation for clinical evaluation and intervention to case studies and real-life clients.

Occupational Therapy Processes

The fourth edition of the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework* [American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), 2020] is introduced to students at the start of the program. In order to assure comprehension of this basic yet complex occupational therapy conceptual and practice framework as a fundamental tool for evaluation and intervention with individuals, groups, and communities with a wide range of sociocultural needs, this introductory courses promotes the students' ability to self-analyze their occupational performance area, skills, pattern, and context. The skills for activity/task analysis needed to understand occupation in relationship to the whole human being, mind, body, spirit, and context is constantly reinforced throughout the program. Additionally, students are guided to acquire the basic skills of relating to and understanding the wholeness of their clients through effective communication and analysis of client factors and performance skills.

Having acquired the concepts, knowledge, and skills needed to view human beings and their occupations through the lenses of a competent occupational therapy practitioner, students begin the journey of applying theories to practices while specific skills are learned and practiced throughout the last two semesters of coursework. Although occupational therapy practice for children with developmental or learning disorders, adults with physical disability, and adults with psychosocial dysfunction are explored in three separate courses, the learning experiences for students are consistent in order to establish a standard strategy, shown to be effective, for students' learning. The combination of didactic and hands-on learning bridges the gap between theories and practice. For each of these courses, the content emphasizes use of occupations, tasks, and activities to promote health and competence, while addressing the wholeness of a human being.

Consistent with the mission and philosophy of the Department of Occupational Therapy of emphasizing a holistic approach, in the last year of the program students are exposed to various complimentary interventions to augment traditional occupational therapy services.

Professionalism

In order to fully embrace the holistic concepts stated in mission and philosophy of the Department of Occupational Therapy, students are deliberately exposed to the complex environment of health care in order to understand how our profession is situated in that environment. Students will explore the roles and responsibilities of occupational therapy practitioners in the healthcare environment, administration and management, and professional development. Students will learn the importance of clinical competence and promoting the profession in context. The professional roles that students will be progressively exposed to are intended to express the continuous development of a professional as well as the potential growth of the profession.

Concepts of professionalism are introduced at the beginning (during pre-semester orientation) and throughout our graduate programs. We have adopted a department philosophy of rapidly addressing concerns regarding professional behaviors and assisting students to develop strategies to bring about professional behavior.

Students will have numerous opportunities to practice and demonstrate professionalism throughout the program and in various contexts including large and small group work and interaction, faculty interaction, and faculty supervised clinical practice. In the second semester, students will have opportunities to work with Doctor of Physical Therapy students in the communications course, allowing further practice in inter-professional communication. We expect professionalism during

the fieldwork experiences and plan to further shape student skills by building confidence in leadership, advocacy and --for OTD students-- the implementation of the capstone project.

Mind-body

The Mind-body philosophy is infused into the OT curriculum throughout didactic coursework and laboratory experience, such that students have incorporated this philosophy into their thinking as they enter Fieldwork Level II. Our program's solid science curriculum is fully complimented by the holistic fundamentals that inculcate students to recognize the whole person in the context of their physical, psycho-social, cultural, and spiritual realm. The rigorous science curriculum is seamlessly woven with the Mind-body philosophy.

Clinical Reasoning Skills

Assisting the student to develop sound clinical reasoning skills is an important goal for the curriculum design. Foundational knowledge and skills are first instructed to the student, followed by evaluation of his or her comprehension of knowledge and ability to demonstrate skills. Throughout the didactic coursework, students are constantly challenged to apply learned knowledge in case studies and class discussions. We have developed three sequential problem-based courses that utilize our simulation center to allow students to apply their knowledge and to demonstrate use of clinical reasoning skills. By the second year, students must apply clinical reasoning in all three community participant laboratories during evaluation, intervention planning, and faculty-supervised provision of occupational therapy intervention for clients. Having students implement intervention strategies, analyze outcomes, and determine efficacy of applied interventions provides for continual practice of clinical reasoning.

Scholarship

We develop the skills of scholarship by engaging students in information-seeking activities, critically analysis of found information, and synthesis of obtained information in clinical reasoning processes. In the first semester, students are introduced to types of research, critical analysis of published research, and scholarly writing. Following this introductory course is a second research theory course that serves to develop advanced skills in statistical procedures, data analysis and data interpretation.

Two important documents have informed our curriculum design: *Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist* (Accreditation

Council for Occupational Therapy Education, 2018); and *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process, 4th Edition* (AOTA, 2020). These documents have provided the guide posts necessary to develop a viable entry-level doctoral program in occupational therapy.

CURRICULUM

| Year One | |
|---|---|
| Fall Semester (15.5 Units) | |
| OT 601/701 | Integrative Seminar in Occupational Therapy Practices I(1) |
| OT 605/705 | Culture and Occupations (1 unit) |
| OT 610/710 | Anatomical and Physiological Basis for Human Occupation (4.5) |
| OT 611/711 | Foundations of Occupational Therapy (3) |
| OT 612/712 | Theories of Inquiry and Research Methodology (3) |
| OT 619 719 | Human Occupation Throughout the Life Span (3) |
| Spring Semester (14 units) | |
| OT 613/713 | Introduction to Psychopathology (1) |
| OT 616/716 | Therapeutic Media, Materials and Processes (2) |
| OT 617/717 | Interpersonal and Interprofessional Communication (2) |
| OT 618/718 | Functional Neuroscience (3) |
| OT 720 | Theories of Inquiry and Research II (2) |
| OT 627/727 | Kinesiology and Biomechanics (4) |
| Summer Semester (11 Units) | |
| OT 602/702 | Integrative Seminar in Occupational Therapy Practices II (1) |
| OT 609/709 | Introduction to Professional Documentation (1) ONLINE |
| OT 615/715 | Scholarly Writing (1) |
| OT 621/721 | Introduction to Fieldwork I (3) |
| OT 628/728 | Administration and Management (3) |
| OT 633/733 | Health Promotion and Wellness (2) |
| Year Two | |
| Fall Semester (15.5 Units) | |
| OT723 | Capstone Project Exploration (2) |
| OT 624/724 | Conditions of Human Dysfunction (3) |
| OT 626/726 | Theory and Practice in Psychosocial Dysfunction (4) |
| OT 632/732 | Advanced Clinical Practice (pediatrics) (4) |
| OT 652/752 | Advanced Leadership (2.5) |
| Spring Semester (14 Units) | |
| OT 604/704 | Integrative Seminar in Occupational Therapy Practices III (1) |
| OT 631/731 | Occupational Adaptations and Introduction to Modalities (3) |
| OT 636/736 | Advanced Clinical Practice (Adults) (4) |
| OT 629/729 | Theory and Practice in Physical Dysfunction (4) |
| OT 635/735 | Capstone Planning (2) |
| Summer Semester (6 units) | |
| OT 640/740 | Fieldwork Level II (6) |
| Year Three | |
| Fall Semester (6 units) | |
| OT 641/741 | Fieldwork Level II (6) |
| Spring Semester (9) | |
| OT 754 | Capstone Experience Project (6) |
| OT 755 | Capstone Experience Project Report (3) |
| Total OTD Units = 92, Total MOT Units = 76 | |

Course highlighted in yellow are OTD only courses.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is the regional accreditation agency responsible for the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of institutions offering the baccalaureate degree and above in California, Hawaii, Guam and the Pacific Basin. Samuel Merritt University has been reaccruited until Spring 2031. The core purpose of WASC accreditation is to assure the educational community and general public that an institution meets the Standards of Accreditation, and the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Education Effectiveness. Student learning is at the heart of the review process.

The OTD Program has been granted full accreditation until 2023-2024 by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449. The phone number for AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA.

The Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) at SMU was re-accredited for 8 years until July 1, 2027.

The American Occupational Therapy Association is located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449. The telephone number for ACOTE is 301-652-6611 x2042. The telephone number for AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA.

Graduates of the MOT or OTD Programs will be able to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapist administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) (www.NBCOT.org). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). The credential will qualify the individual for state licensure in California.

The United States Department of Education recognizes ACOTE as the accrediting agency for professional programs in the field of occupational therapy. To be in compliance with accreditation, educational programs in occupational therapy must meet or exceed the minimum standards outlined in the 2018 STANDARDS FOR AN ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST OR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT. The standards document describes the minimum

standards of quality used in accrediting programs that prepare individuals to enter the occupational therapy profession. The extent to which a program complies with these standards determine its accreditation status.

FACULTY AND STAFF

- Kate Hayner EdD, OTR/L, Chair, Department of Occupational Therapy
- Jena Bischel, Administrative Assistant
- Alondra Ammon, MOT, OTR
- Marci Baptista, OTD, MOTR/L, CHT, CEAS
- Donna Breger Stanton OTD, OTR/L, CHT, FAOTA
- Nancy Chee OTD, OTR/L CHT
- Beth Ching OTD, OTR/L
- Ciara Cox PhD, OTR/L
- Nandini Dasguta MS
- Dominique Embry MS, OTR/L
- Kristina Fuller MOT, OTR/L
- Leila Gabriel EdD, OTR/L
- Ginny Gibson OTD, OTR/L, CHT
- Gordon Giles PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
- Goli Hashemi MPH, OTR/L
- Stephen Hill, PhD
- Elizabeth Kliene MOT, OTR/L
- Karissa Legleiter, MA, BS
- Scarth Locke MOT, OTR/L
- Linda Monroe MPT, OCS
- Tiana Nguyen, OTD, OTR/L
- Barb Puder PhD
- Chi Kwan Shea PhD, OTR/L
- Jennifer Tobin, OTD, OTR/L
- Andrew Ward Smith – PhD
- Diane Tom, OTD, OTR/L
- Robyn Wu OTD, OTR/L

FACULTY AND STUDENT COMMUNICATION

For full-time faculty, response time to electronic communications from students will be within 48 hours of the initial posting on weekdays. Weekends and holidays will not be counted in the 48-hour period. Faculty who are away from campus for an extended period of time and not able or not

expected to respond to e-mail will provide an automated response informing students when they may expect a response.

STUDENT PROGRESS

The faculty in the department recognizes that student success is dependent on several factors and can change throughout the program as life circumstances may change. In order to support the students, during bi-monthly faculty meetings, time is set aside for faculty to discuss student's performance only on an as needed basis, while maintaining confidentiality regarding personal aspects of students' life. This allows the faculty to identify ways of supporting students on an individualized basis such as identifying additional supports or other recommendations to optimize student success in the program. Whenever possible, based on departmental resources, the support will be provided to the students internally within the department but at times students may be advised to seek support at the university level.

Examples of challenges faced by students may include identified learning differences; coping with life events such as illness, injuries, loss of a loved one; and difficulties in completing course and program expectations related to writing skills, and/or professional behaviors and accountability. Examples of recommendations may include referring students to the university Disability Resource Center (DRC), The Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC), use of peer tutoring, and additional meetings with program faculty and advisors.

It is important to note that students achieve a passing grade in a course only when minimal course expectations as stated in the course syllabus are met. Students with identified challenges must take full responsibility and autonomy to assure academic success by adequately respond to recommendations and/or additional supports provided by the faculty.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In addition to the content below, a university-wide Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog and Student Handbook. Every student is responsible to review, and become familiar with, the Academic Integrity Policy as presented in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog and Student Handbook. <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>
<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not acceptable and may result in a number of consequences. Most people understand plagiarism to be the action of copying someone else's work, words, or ideas without giving proper credit. Sometimes plagiarism is evident and other times it is not as clear to students. There are degrees of plagiarism, from outright copying written material without quotations or citation, to copying a small phrase or statistic without properly quoting or citing the source. We assume all graduate students understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. If you do not feel you understand plagiarism please seek out help. Many sources are available in the library and on-line.

If a faculty member believes plagiarism has occurred on an assignment in his or her course in the OTD or MOT program, the faculty member may do any of the following, depending on the extent of plagiarism:

- Counsel the student on plagiarism with a notice of this occurrence placed into the student's file.
- Give the student a failed grade on the assignment and require the student to complete the assignment again for the minimum possible passing points of 70%. A notice of this occurrence will go into the student's file.
- Fail the student's assignment without the option of redoing it. A notice of this occurrence will go into the student's file.

If a student has record of prior counsel regarding plagiarism the second occurrence will be sent to the Chair of the department for determination of severity and consequences. Or, if the plagiarism is deemed to be so egregious on the first occurrence the faculty member may inform the Chair of the department for possible further actions. The chair will make a determination after counsel with two uninvolved faculty members

The determination will take into account the following:

- The quantity of plagiarism in an assignment
- The number of prior occurrences
- The student's feedback on the occurrence
- The assignment instructions that were given to the student
- The involved faculty member's statement and suggested outcome
- The level of plagiarism (from citing the wrong source or poor paraphrasing to copying a full paragraph or paper)

Faculty recognizes plagiarism is often unintentional. Whether or not the student did or did not intend to plagiarize is considered but the extent of the infraction will determine the outcome versus the student's reported intent. When the plagiarism is minor, such as giving the wrong citation, the student will be counseled. Further consequences may be failing the assignment, receiving a D in the course, or failing the course and subsequently being dismissed from the program.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

Professional behaviors in occupational therapy practice are essential for establishing respectful relationships with clients, families, colleagues, and other professional contacts. Our communication, language, and appearance can greatly affect interactions, relationships and outcomes. The Department of Occupational Therapy utilizes a self-assessment process to support the development of students' professional behaviors. Students will complete this self-assessment during the fall semester of the first and second years of the program. Each student will meet with their respective faculty advisor to review the self-assessment and set goals for a professional development plan. Each student's plan will be unique and will address the areas of growth and development based on their individual needs. Throughout the program, all faculty will provide students with feedback regarding professional behaviors observed in the classroom and other school-related activities. If there are professional behavior concerns regarding a specific student, the concerns may be directed to the faculty advisor, who may follow up with additional remediation support.

There is an expectation that all students will behave in a professional manner at all times (whether face-to-face or online). Please refer to the SMU Catalog.

Professional behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in responsible and courteous communication;
- Maintaining a professional tone of voice in all communications;
- Listening to and acknowledging feedback from peers and faculty;
- Choosing appropriate dress for class and clinical activities;
- Participating actively in course activities and maintaining attention in class;
- Following directions during program activities including classroom and clinical settings.
- Avoiding inappropriate or controversial screen backgrounds that could be distracting in the

online environment.

- Speaking clearly and slowly during an on-line presentation/discussion

Some examples of unprofessional behaviors:

- Tardiness;
- Side-talking in class;
- Eating in class (by permission only);
- Putting one's head on the desktop during lecture;
- Absence from class without notifying the professor prior to class;
- Walking away from a faculty member or peer during the course of a conversation;
- Using computers and electronic media during class for non-class related activity;
- Refusing to meet with a faculty member or the department Chair upon request of the faculty member or department Chair.

Faculty will track all unprofessional behaviors (as noted, in part, above) and will address these with the student as appropriate. If three occurrences of the same behavior occur, the student will be required to meet with the department Chair. A mutual plan of resolution will be determined and a record will be placed in the student's file.

ACADEMIC CLINICAL EXPECTATIONS

In the clinical setting, observations and fieldwork experiences are designed to complement and reinforce the academic course work. The University expects students and faculty to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with federal and state law, and ethical practice, and to observe and honor patient's rights, privacy, informed consent and dignity.

In the clinical setting, the fieldwork educator is authorized to dismiss a student for cause without notice. Situations in which this action is justifiable include, but are not limited to: behavior that seriously jeopardized the safety of others; substance abuse; insubordination; or violation of federal law, state law and ethical practice. Such dismissal from a clinical site is automatically referred to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and the Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy. The student may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Due to the increasing number of occupational therapy students in California and the decreasing number of fieldwork sites, there is no guarantee of geographical placement or a specific practice area. Flexibility and a willingness to learn in any environment will provide students with the best experience.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

University-wide policies are fully addressed in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog. Every student is responsible to review, and become familiar with, the policies and procedures of Samuel Merritt University as presented in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog and Student Handbook.

Academic Advising

In addition to the information below, refer to the section on Academic Advising in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Each student will be assigned to an academic advisor. This faculty member will remain the student's advisor throughout the academic course work. When beginning Fieldwork II, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will assume the role of student advisor for all students. The academic advisor is responsible for consultation or guidance with respect to courses and program requirements as well as individual problems that impact students' educational endeavors. Students are encouraged to meet with the assigned advisor once a semester to review their progress through the program.

Access to Records

Refer to the section on Academic records in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Attendance

In addition to the information below, refer to the section on Attendance in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Regular classroom attendance is expected and essential to successful academic achievement in the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program. Students are responsible for all work missed due to

absences and must make arrangements with their instructors to make-up work. Make-up work for unexcused absences, including missed examinations, is at the discretion of the faculty member. All classes will have sign-in sheets. It is the responsibility of each student to sign in. No student may sign in for another student unless the professor provides explicit permission.

Award of Academic Credit

Refer to the section on Award of Academic Credit in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.
<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Advanced Standing Credit for Post-Professional Graduate Programs

Refer to the section on Advanced Standing Credit for Post-Professional Graduate Programs in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.
<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Transfer Credit

Refer to the section on Transfer Credit in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.
<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Challenge Credit

Refer to the section on Challenge Credit in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.
<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Grading policy

In addition to the information below, refer to the section on Grading in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog. <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Plus or minus grades will not be offered in the Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program. Refer to each course syllabus for the grading criteria in each course.

Graduation and Credentialing Requirements

Refer to the section on graduation and credentialing in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.
<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Audit

Refer to the section on Audit in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Repeating a Course

Refer to the section on Repeating a Course in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Pass Fail Grading

Refer to the section on Pass Fail Grading in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

In Progress Grades

Refer to the section on In Progress Grades in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Withdrawal

In addition to the content below, refer to the section on Withdrawal in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

In the OTD or MOT program, if a student withdraws from a course then the student may become a part-time student and consequently may be subject to a change in tuition. Additionally, the student may be restricted in progressing to fulltime status in subsequent semesters.

Scheduling of Classes

Refer to the section on Scheduling of Classes in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Registration

Refer to the section on Scheduling of Classes in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Class Lists

Refer to the section on Class Lists in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Disclosures

Refer to the section on Disclosures in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Drop/Add

In addition to the content below, refer to the section on Drop/Add in the Samuel Merritt University

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

In the OTD or MOT Program, if a student drops a course during the add/drop period that student will become a part-time student and consequently will be subject to a change in tuition and may be restricted in progressing to fulltime status in subsequent semesters.

Transcript Requests

Refer to the section on Transcript Requests in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Clinical Requirements

Refer to the section on Clinical Requirements in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Client/Patient Participation in Course-related Activities

Refer to the section on Client/Patient Participation in Course-related Activities in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Participation in Course Activities

Refer to the section on Participation in Course Activities in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Liability and Malpractice

In addition to the content below, refer to the section on Liability and Malpractice in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Samuel Merritt University provides professional liability coverage for students and faculty as it pertains to fieldwork and other educational experiences. The acquisition of additional coverage is an individual decision based upon individual circumstances. Specific information about malpractice insurance is available upon request.

Safe and Professional Practice in Clinical Settings

Refer to the section on Safe and Professional Practice in Clinical Settings in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Licensure Requirements/Denial of License

Refer to the section on Licensure Requirements/Denial of License in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Evaluations

In addition to the content below, refer to the section on Evaluations in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

All instructors and courses are evaluated each semester. Students are encouraged to provide constructive feedback and criticism of the courses and faculty for continuous improvement of curriculum and teaching skills. The results of these evaluations will be anonymous. Students are encouraged to provide feedback and input. The intent of the course evaluation is to improve classroom and laboratory instruction. Comments of a personal nature concerning the instructor are not appropriate on professional evaluations. Students should seek out the instructor during the instructor's office hours to discuss concerns about the instructor's teaching methods.

For many students, the adjustment to a problem-based learning and adult learning model is a difficult transition. Graduate students learn best when they are stakeholders in the learning process and when students take responsibility for their own study habits and behaviors.

Finals Week

Refer to the section on Finals Week in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Forms and Petitions

Refer to the section on Forms and Petitions in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Independent Study

Refer to the section on Independent Study in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Clinical Readiness

Refer to the section on Clinical Readiness in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Leave of Absence

Refer to the section on Leave of Absence in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Student Classification

Refer to the section on Student Classification in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Student Research Degree Requirements

Refer to the section on Student Research Degree Requirements in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Graduate Progression and Graduation

In addition to the content below, refer to the section on Graduate Progression and Graduation in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Students are expected to maintain current CPR certification, provide evidence of successful completion of a tutorial on blood-borne pathogens, and maintain updated required immunizations and TB tests prior to progressing to fieldwork.

Graduate Probation and Dismissal

Refer to the section on Graduate Probation and Dismissal in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Graduate Dismissal

Refer to the section on Graduate Dismissal in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Graduate Procedures

Refer to the section on Graduate Procedures in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Eligibility to Participate in Graduation

Refer to the section on Eligibility to Participate in Graduation in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

Dates of Degree Conferral

Refer to the section on Dates of Degree Conferral in the Samuel Merritt University Catalog.

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>

PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

American Occupational Therapy Association

The national organization for the occupational therapy profession is the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). The Association is responsible for developing standards for education and practice, for promoting the profession in important political issues and marketing the profession to the public and to other professional organizations. Membership in AOTA is mandatory for students in the OTD or MOT program at Samuel Merritt University. Benefits include receiving The American Journal of Occupational Therapy and OT Practice (a monthly newsletter that includes employment notices). Additionally, membership with AOTA provides access to important information via online resources as needed for classes, and discounted continuing education opportunities. Website: www.aota.org

Occupational Therapy Association of California

Every state has professional association for occupational therapy. In California, this association is called the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC) and is one of the largest in the nation. The annual OTAC conference is well attended and takes place in either Northern or Southern California. Membership includes a newsletter and reduced rates for conferences and workshops. Information on state membership other than California may be obtained from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Membership in OTAC is mandatory for students in the OTD or MOT program at Samuel Merritt University. Website: www.otaonline.org

Student Occupational Therapy Association

The Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) is the official organization for educational programs. The purpose of the SOTA is to promote greater unity and understanding among occupational therapy students and to present educational material that is of particular interest. The student association also serves as a community of support, is active in fund raising, and acclimates the student with the organizational structure and decision-making process of the profession. Students elect their own officers and send representatives to local chapter meetings.

American Society of Hand Therapists

Student membership in the American Society of Hand Therapists (ASHT) is available. Benefits include receipt of the Journal of Hand Therapy (bimonthly) and ASHT Times, as well as reduction of cost for courses/workshops. Website: www.asht.org.

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