WELCOME!

The faculty of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program welcomes you. We hope that you will enjoy your time in the Program, and will find the experience rich and rewarding.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Quinsigamond Community College was established in 1972 and is the oldest OTA Program in Central Massachusetts. The program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education granted reaccreditation to the Program in 2010 for the maximum period of ten years.

The Program has an excellent reputation in the regional health care system. Graduates of the Program are working in all areas in which Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTAs) are employed. The OTA Program also provides the graduate with skills to work in a range of human service jobs. Many of our graduates have continued their education to become Registered Occupational Therapists (OTR) or have pursued other additional education.

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), and the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) can be contacted at this address:

The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.
4720 Montgomery Lane
Suite 200
Bethesda, MD 20814-3449

Phone: 301-652-2682
(800) 377-8555 (TDD)

Websites: AOTA www.aota.org
 ACOTE www.acoteonline.org
INTRODUCTION

This Student Handbook has been developed to provide you with information about the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.

Policies and Guidelines for the Program are included in this Handbook, along with other information that you may find helpful. Please retain it because it will serve you as a resource throughout your time in the Program.

It is important that you become familiar with the information contained in this Handbook. To ensure that you have reviewed the contents, you will be required to detach and sign the last page of this book acknowledging that you have read it and have had the opportunity to ask questions. You will then give this signed sheet to faculty by the date assigned.

Reminder:
The following are also sources of valuable information:
- The Quinsigamond Community College Catalog
- The Quinsigamond Community College Student Handbook
- The Schedule Booklet for Credit Courses (issued each semester)
OTA Program Mission Statement

Congruent with the mission of Quinsigamond Community College, the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is committed to providing accessible, high quality programming to a diverse population of students in a supportive learning environment. The Program strives to prepare graduates to enter the workforce, and/or transfer for further education, and to engage in professional and personal development and lifelong learning.

In harmony with the College’s mission, the mission of the OTA department is to provide an occupational therapy assistant program that is consistent with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education Standards for an OTA Program and with the professions’ Standards of Practice.

The OTA Program Philosophy

We believe that:

Occupational Therapy is a theory-based, rehabilitation discipline focusing on assisting individuals to achieve maximal independence in their lives through engagement in valued occupations. The theoretical knowledge base of occupational therapy is a constantly evolving body of knowledge that encompasses rational and scientific principles upon which OT interventions are based. OT practitioners utilize the OT process, therapeutic communication, critical thinking and evidence-based information while working collaboratively with members of the health-care team to provide OT services. OT practitioners function within the Standards of Practice; demonstrating safe, competent, cost effective and ethical practice.

The client is a unique being who has the right to self-determination and has the potential to make choices that will meet his/her own needs for treatment. The client is understood holistically: biologically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and developmentally.
Environment – Internal and external contexts impact client performance and must be considered when evaluating and planning treatment interventions.

Health is a state of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of illness. A balance in performance areas is necessary to the establishment and maintenance of health.

Teaching/Learning is an active, dynamic, continuous process involving the client, his or her support network and the health care team. OT practitioners assist the client, family and other care-givers by helping them to identify their needs and by providing interventions to achieve positive outcomes. OT practitioners also have the responsibility to educate the general public about the role of occupation in the establishment and maintenance of health.

OTA education occurs within a system of higher education and is a planned approach to the acquisition of knowledge. OTA education progresses from the simple to the complex, facilitates the development of cognitive, psychomotor and affective knowledge and prepares the program graduate for entry-level practice as an OTA. The outcome of OTA education is to prepare the graduate as a generalist who accepts professional responsibility and accountability. OTA education encourages and supports participation in professional organizations and community programs. Cultural diversity within the classroom is valued and promotes appreciation and respect for differences within the college and beyond. The role of the faculty is to guide, support and facilitate learning, and to model professional behaviors, while instilling commitment to lifelong learning. The role of the student is to translate classroom learning into clinical applications through critical thinking and reflective practice.
Program Threads

The curriculum of the OTA Program at QCC is designed around three concepts that the faculty believes are fundamental in the education of occupational therapy assistants. These concepts, known as Curriculum Threads, reflect the mission and philosophy of both the OTA Program and the College.

As a student moves through the Program, he or she encounters these threads which are introduced in the first courses that the student takes, and then are reintroduced with ever increasing complexity in future courses and in the fieldwork experiences within the Program.

These concepts are:

- **Professional Identity**
- **Client Centeredness**
- **Lifelong Learning**

The Profession’s Centennial Vision Statement says, “We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven and evidence-based profession with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society’s occupational needs.” We believe that, if our graduates are to thrive in the profession of the future, the concepts of Lifelong Learning, Client Centeredness and Professional Identity will support them and enhance their practice skills as they work to meet society’s occupational needs.

A strong Professional Identity is essential for the practitioner if he or she is to provide services that truly reflect the philosophical base and core values of the profession. To support the participation of clients in contexts, the practitioner must understand occupation and its essential role in human life and wellness. To provide occupational therapy services, the practitioner must be aware of, and use, current best practices within the profession. This will include evidence based practice. If a practitioner does
not maintain a strong professional identity, he or she will not provide the services that reflect those concepts that are unique and fundamental to the profession.

Client Centeredness reflects the Core Values and Attitudes of Occupational Therapy Practice (Approved by the Representative assembly in June 1993). To meet the occupational needs or a diverse and ever evolving society, the practitioner must appreciate the uniqueness of every client, his or her individual attributes, strengths, and needs in order to provide services that are relevant to the client’s needs and life goals. The essential skills of good communication and therapeutic use of self are closely woven into this concept.

Lifelong Learning is essential if practitioners are to remain current in their practice field, to understand social changes and to respond to changing societal needs. The practitioner must be fully informed of changing legislation that impacts service provision in order to be able to advocate for his or her clients.

The QCC OTA Program aims to prepare practitioners who are committed to providing individualized services to clients while demonstrating a high level of professionalism, and who are dedicated to lifelong learning to ensure personal growth and currency of skills.
Basic Skills of the Entry-Level Occupational Therapy Assistant

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. states in the ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT (Adopted August 2006) :

“The rapidly changing and dynamic nature of contemporary health and human services delivery systems requires the occupational therapy assistant to possess basic skills as a direct care provider, educator, and advocate for the profession and the consumer.

A graduate from an ACOTE-accredited occupational therapy assistant program must

- Have acquired an educational foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, including a focus on issues related to diversity.
- Be educated as a generalist with a broad exposure to the delivery models and systems used in settings where occupational therapy is currently practiced and where it is emerging as a service.
- Have achieved entry-level competence through a combination of academic and fieldwork education.
- Be prepared to articulate and apply occupational therapy principles and intervention tools to achieve expected outcomes as related to occupation.
- Be prepared to be a lifelong learner and keep current with the best practice.
- Uphold the ethical standards, values, and attitudes of the occupational therapy profession.
- Understand the distinct roles and responsibilities of the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant in the supervisory process.
- Be prepared to advocate as a professional for the occupational therapy services offered and for the recipients of those services.”

OTA Program Outcomes

The program outcomes are used as a measurement of student achievement of desirable behaviors essential for entry-level practice as a generalist COTA.

Program Outcome (Core Competencies)

The Graduate:
1. Demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the history and philosophical base of the profession, its Code of Ethics, Core Values and Standards of Practice.

2. Demonstrates knowledge of OT theory, is able to differentiate between activity, purposeful activity and occupation, and articulate the importance of engagement in occupation to support participation in context.

3. Selects, adapts and safely administers appropriate activities and occupations for evaluation and treatment interventions based upon analysis of the activity and identification of client’s needs.

4. Communicates effectively through written, oral and non-verbal communication with client, family, employer and other health professional to explain the value of OT interventions and the importance of occupation in the promotion and maintenance of health.

5. Participates in teaching, learning and collaboration with the client, significant support person(s), and other members of the healthcare team to help promote and maintain health.

6. Understands and appreciates the importance of diversity and contextual factors in an individual’s perception of health, illness, disability and treatment interventions.

7. Demonstrates critical thinking, clinical decision making and therapeutic use of self to effect client change in individual and group settings.

8. Describes the professional relationship between the OTR and COTA, including the role of supervision during the steps of the OT Process.

9. Demonstrates effective written communication skills to document OT services and gain reimbursement.

10. Understands the contexts of OT service delivery and the role of the OTA in these contexts.

11. Understands the varied tasks that the COTA may assume to assist in the provision of OT services in traditional and emerging practice areas, and the implications of legislation on service provision.

12. Assumes responsibility for his/her personal and professional actions in the practice of OT and maintenance of competence.
Admissions Requirements for OTA Program

- Must have a high school diploma or GED
- GPA of 3.0 or equivalent in high school or 3.0 in college with minimum of 10 credits or 550 Battery Average on GED.
- Must take the college placement test to determine Math and English levels if no college level courses were previously completed.
- Required HOBET scores must be achieved within two attempts of taking the test. A 52% composite score is required.
- Math: minimum grade of B in MAT 098 or MAT 099 or place into MAT 100 level or above.
- Biology: minimum grade of B in high school biology or B in BIO 101 (recommended) or other college biology class.
- English: minimum grade of B in ENG 100 or place into ENG 101.
- Math and science courses must be taken within five years of application.
- Required grade must be earned within two attempts of taking and completing the course.
- Students must attend a Health Career Advising Session

Students who meet the established Admissions requirements for occupational therapy, will be accepted on a rolling basis until the September class is full. Students who cannot be accepted due to space limitations will be offered acceptance in subsequent fall semesters. Qualified students will be given the option of being placed on a waiting list until it is determined that there is sufficient space to accept qualified applicants. Applicants who do not meet the Admissions requirements will be asked to meet with a Careers Advisor to develop a Student Academic Plan. This plan will prepare students to meet the Admissions requirements for OT.
TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS for the OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Technical Performance Standards: Prior to application to this program, please review the Technical Performance Standards requirements in the current college catalog or look at the following website:

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
At the beginning of each semester and as a prerequisite for a clinical placement in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, all students must undergo a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check and a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check. These checks are required because of potential unsupervised contact with children, the disabled, or the elderly during a clinical experience. Students found to have certain criminal convictions or pending criminal actions may be presumed ineligible for clinical placement. The College is authorized by the Commonwealth’s Criminal History Systems Board, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 6, Sections 167-178B, to access CORI records. The College shall refer to regulations issued by the Commonwealth’s Executive Office of Health and Human Services, 101 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 15.00-15.16, as guidance when assessing student CORI records. Sex Offender checks shall be performed pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 6, Sections 178C-178P.

If the CORI and/or SORI record contains information that disqualifies the student from attending a fieldwork site, the student may apply for fieldwork at an alternative site. Permission to apply to another site may or may not be granted according to the Policy and Procedure for Placing a Student with a Positive CORI or SORI at a Clinical Fieldwork Site (see below). If the student is not permitted to apply to another site for fieldwork, he or she will be unable to continue in the Program.

A felony conviction may affect a graduate’s ability to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) examination or obtain state licensure.

**Drug Testing**

Students enrolled in the OTA Program may be required to undergo and pass a drug screening analysis to be eligible for and/or to remain at an assigned clinical affiliation. Students who either fail to pass, or refuse to submit, to a drug screening analysis will be deemed ineligible for clinical placement, which may affect their status in the Program.
Policy and Procedure for Placing a Student with a Positive CORI or SORI at a Clinical Fieldwork Site

CORI – Criminal Offender Record Information
SORI – Sex Offender Registry Information

Students are required to undergo CORI and SORI checks at the beginning of each semester. In addition, some Clinical Fieldwork Sites require additional CORI and/or SORI checks.

For the College check, the Program Coordinator collects completed CORI forms from students and gives them to the Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Health Care who submits them for evaluation. The results of the checks are reviewed by the Dean of Health Care; the Program Coordinator is not informed of CORI or SORI results unless the student chooses to do so. The Dean counsels the student on potential difficulties of fieldwork placement resulting from a positive CORI and/or SORIs so that the student is able to make a decision on viability of remaining in the Program.

For a facility check, the student receives a blank CORI form from the clinical site or from faculty. This form is completed and returned to the facility for submission and evaluation. The facility may contact the student and/or faculty if a record indicates positive offender information. The facility may ask for additional information to be provided by the student on the offense so that a decision can be reached by the facility on whether or not to allow the student to come to the fieldwork site.

If the facility makes the decision not to accept a student, the placement is cancelled and the student must petition the Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator for an alternative placement.
Before the Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator make the decision to look for an alternative site, the student will be asked either:

a) to disclose the nature of the offense to the Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator so that a judgment can be made as to whether or not the student can be found an alternative site

OR

b) to meet with the Dean of Heath Care to explain the placement cancellation. The Dean will advise the Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator on whether or not to seek an alternative site. It is not required that the Dean reveal the offense to the Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

The decision to refuse to find an alternative site is made if the Dean, the Program Director and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator decide that to do so would be placing the client population at risk or would be contrary to the Code of Ethics of Occupational Therapy.

A student who is not allocated an alternative placement cannot proceed in the Program.
PROFESSIONALISM

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is designed to give you a combination of theory and practical experience in occupational therapy treatment techniques, and to assist you in achieving the skills that will prepare you to work as an occupational therapy professional.

Professionalism is a somewhat ambiguous term. It may mean a dress code for some clinics; it may mean the ability to follow a prescribed work schedule or independently plan your own schedule in others. Different work settings have different demands.

However, professionalism always means: demonstrating mature, courteous, and responsible behavior; respecting confidentiality; following through on commitments without prompting; keeping documentation up to date; accepting feedback in a constructive and non-defensive manner; treating others with respect; expressing oneself in a clear and concise manner; and consistent attendance and promptness.

Professionalism is an extremely important part of your training as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant and is as important as your skill as a clinician. No matter how clinically skilled you may be, you will be unable to retain a position as a COTA if you cannot consistently demonstrate professional behavior.

The courses in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are therefore designed to assist you in developing as a professional. They are set up so that you must demonstrate both clinical and professional behavior in order to successfully complete them. A portion of the grade in almost all classes is earned by demonstrating professional behaviors.
POLICY REGARDING PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
IN CLASSROOM AND CLINIC

1. Use of Equipment and Supplies
All equipment and supplies used in the program will be maintained in a safe and useable condition. Students are expected to treat all equipment and supplies with respect and to comply with the following rules:
   a) Students will not attempt to use equipment which they have not been trained to use
   b) Students will use equipment and supplies for the purposes for which they are intended.
   c) Students will take care to avoid injury to any other person while using supplies or equipment in the program.
   d) Students will report breakages immediately to a faculty member.
   e) Students will replace all equipment and supplies in appropriate storage space after use.
   f) All equipment and supplies will be returned to storage in a clean and useable condition
   g) Students will not remove equipment and supplies from the teaching area without permission.
   h) Students wishing to donate equipment and/or supplies to the Program must obtain permission to donate from the Program Coordinator or faculty members.

2. Confidentiality
All information learned while in the clinical setting from charts, team meetings, therapist interactions, patient interview, etc. is confidential. Any classroom discussions that reveal personal information about students, faculty or clients is confidential. Any discussion of this information outside of the setting is a breach of confidentiality. Even discussion among other health care
professionals should be limited to the nature of the problem. DO NOT GOSSIP. If it is necessary to discuss such information in class to enhance the learning process, the patient’s name should not be used, nor the patient identified insofar as is possible.

Breaches of confidentiality both in the clinical site and the classroom are serious violations of the OT Code of Ethics. Breach of confidentiality at a clinical site may result in removal from a clinical site, which could delay or prevent a student from completing the Program. (See policies for Level I and Level II Fieldwork). Breaches of confidentiality in the classroom setting will result in disciplinary action possibly preventing the student from completing the Program.

3. Infection Control
Students will be instructed in infection control techniques and will learn the strategies of universal precautions. In all settings: clinic, classroom, fieldwork site, etc., the student will be vigilant in the practice of infection control and good hygiene.

4. Use of cell phones, computers, tablets and other electronics in the classroom.
Students are not permitted to make or receive telephone calls, text or search the web while a class is in progress or during a fieldwork placement. All telephones, beepers, etc. must be switched off at the beginning of the class or the placement. In an emergency situation, the student must ask the instructor or clinical supervisor for permission to leave the telephone on. The instructor or clinical supervisor will make the judgment whether or not this will be permitted. If it is permitted, the telephone may only be programmed to vibrate. To answer an emergency call the student must leave the classroom or patient area.

Students are not permitted to use telephones or other electronic devices to photograph or record classroom activities without the permission on the instructor.
Violations of these policies will result in the loss of grade points for professional behavior.

5. Use of tape recorders
Instructor permission must be granted before a student tapes a class. A tape recorder or other recording device may never be used in a clinical setting.

6. Visitors in the Classroom.
Any student wishing to bring a visitor (adult or child) to the class must request approval from the instructor in advance of the class. Visitors are not allowed in fieldwork settings.

7. Test and Quizzes
If the student misses a quiz, test or examination it is his/her responsibility to contact the instructor to request a make-up test. This request must be made as soon as possible after the missed test, and the make-up test must be taken before the next scheduled class following the missed test if possible. Failure to contact the instructor before the next class may result in a “zero” grade for the test. If a student anticipates an absence on the day of a test, he/she should inform the instructor in advance. The instructor will schedule the make-up test.

8. Academic Honesty
Presenting the work, ideas, writings, projects, etc. of others as one’s own work is unacceptable. Academic honesty is expected of all students and cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in an academic failure in the course in which it occurs. Further college disciplinary action may result if the course instructor deems it necessary. See the QCC Student Handbook for College policy on academic honesty.

7. Dress and Hygiene in Clinical Settings
Students are expected to be neat, clean and well groomed when attending all fieldwork settings.

   • Long hair should be tied back or put up
- Fingernails must be clean and trimmed. No false nails.
- Tattoos must be covered.
- No jewelry except wedding and/or engagement rings, small necklaces, non-dangling earrings and wristwatches should be worn. Inserts in piercings must be removed if visible. No more that 2 earrings in each ear.
- Hats are not permitted in the clinical setting unless required by your religious affiliation.
- Do not wear jeans or sneakers unless the clinicians at the site wear these articles of clothing and give permission for students to do the same. Clothing with tears and holes is not permitted.
- Shorts, tank tops, bare midriffs, clothing with holes, visible underwear and any other body revealing clothing is inappropriate in the clinical setting. Be aware that clothing rides up and down as you move.
- No strong cologne, aftershave or perfume. Ensure that you do not smell of cigarette smoke or have any unpleasant body odors. Some clients are extremely sensitive to scents and smells.
- Chewing gum in a clinical setting is not permitted.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, ask your clinical instructor for direction.

QCC is in compliance with P.L. 101-226, the Drug-Free School and Communities Act, which prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol by students and employees.

Any student who comes to class or to a clinical site with the odor of alcohol on his or her person, or who exhibits behavior that suggests impairment by drugs and/or alcohol will be asked to remove him or herself immediately from the site. The student will be issued with a warning and will not be permitted to return to the classroom or clinical site without documentation that they have attended the Student Assistance Program (Refer to the QCC Student Handbook for further information on the Student Assistance Program).
ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. **Classroom Attendance**
   Refer to the Quinsigamond Community College Catalog, Student Handbook and the specific course requirements.

2. **Fieldwork Attendance**
   A. **Level I**
   Days and times of attendance are arranged between the instructor of the course in which the fieldwork is being conducted, and the facility providing the experience. You will be informed of these dates and times by your course instructor. If you cannot attend a Level I session, it is your responsibility to inform the clinical supervisor at your assigned site as soon as possible. This time will have to be made up by arrangement with your clinical supervisor, so that you will meet the required hours for this fieldwork assignment. Failure to make up fieldwork hours will result in a failing grade in the course.

   B. **Level II**
   After you have received your assigned fieldwork site from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, the dates and the working hours for your Level II placement are arranged between you and your clinical supervisor before the beginning of the fieldwork. You are expected to be at your site each day for the assigned times. You are not entitled to any snow days or vacation days that the College has unless your clinical site also has these as non-working days. You must notify your clinical supervisor immediately if you have to be absent from the placement, and your supervisor may require you to make up all missed time. Do not schedule doctor’s appointments, job interviews, etc, during your fieldwork time. There is a general belief that students are entitled to two days off during the placement. No such policy is in place either from ACOTE or Quinsigamond Community College. Your clinical supervisor has the right to require you to make up **ALL** time missed at the placement.

   Remember, you are working at your Level II placement to demonstrate the entry-level skills of a COTA. You will be assigned your own patient caseload and you will be responsible for regular treatment sessions. Your absence will result in other therapists covering your responsibilities, thereby increasing their own workload.

   Please try to view the Level II Fieldwork experience as “my first job” rather than as “my last class”. Your attendance behaviors are expected to be the same as those of an employee of the facility, even although your role is that of student.
Quinsigamond Community College
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Policy on Social Networking

Even with strong privacy settings, it is important that you avoid posts or photos on social networking sites about your fieldwork experiences. Here are some specifics:

1. **Do not** ask your supervisor to “friend” you while on Fieldwork and do not “friend” your supervisor. This puts your supervisor and yourself in an awkward situation with personal information about each other. If you mutually decide to do this after the Fieldwork experience, this is your personal choice.

2. Consider what you post on any social networking site. Many potential employers go to these sites to see what you have posted and often determine if they are interested in having you as an employee. Consider “Googling” your name to discover what is in cyberspace that others can see about you.

3. Names of supervisors, comments or criticism about sites or information about what is happening at sites are **not** appropriate on public social network sites.

4. Stating where you are on FW is up to you, but there are problems with you being identified. Consider if you want privacy from clients, patients and staff.

5. Use your official QCC e-mail address for all professional correspondence needed via e-mail for all fieldwork related issues.

6. If you have any posts that are even questionable, please **remove them immediately**.

7. If there is any question or you are unsure of something regarding social networking, call the fieldwork coordinator immediately for advice.

8. It is a HIPPA violation if you mention a client/patient with enough information that the person might be identified, even if you avoid use of the client’s name. The consequences for violations, as you know, are severe. Below are the AOTA HIPAA Guidelines for Fieldwork which applies equally to your practice at the site, your conversation about the site and any other communication you might use regarding your placement:
POLICY REGARDING PROGRESSION IN THE PROGRAM

As in all health programs at QCC, a student must receive a grade of 73% or higher (a grade of “C” or higher) in all OTA courses, and have demonstrated satisfactory performance in fieldwork, if fieldwork is a part of the course.

A student who does not obtain a grade of 73% or higher in an OTA course will be dismissed from the program. A student may apply for readmission which may or may not be permitted. The Readmission Policy is printed in the QCC Student Handbook and in this OTA Program Handbook. The Academic Vice President, Program Coordinator and faculty will make a decision regarding readmission based upon the reason for the student’s failure in the course and the student's performance in other courses.

Any English course or Anatomy and Physiology course in which a student does not obtain a grade of 73% or higher must be repeated. English, A & P and all OTA courses must be completed with a grade “C” or higher, and all Program didactic courses must be complete before a student may begin Level II fieldwork.

Students who wish to withdraw from the Program must follow the College withdrawal procedure (see QCC Student Handbook).
STEPS TO LICENSURE AFTER COMPLETING THE PROGRAM.

Graduates of the program will be awarded an Associate in Science degree and, upon satisfactory completion of all academic and field work experiences, the graduate will be eligible to sit for the National Certification Examination for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Upon successful completion of the examination, the graduate will be a certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA).

A license to practice occupational therapy is required in Massachusetts and upon successful completion of the certification examination, the graduate may apply for state licensure which is offered based upon the NBCOT Certification examination results. A student may hold more than one license to practice OT if he or she wishes to be employed in more than one state. Each state requires a separate license to practice.

Students will receive orientation to the processes of applying to take the certification examination and applying for a license to practice, but it is the responsibility of the student to complete these steps.
PROOF OF IMMUNIZATIONS

Students must provide proof of immunity to the following diseases by the third week in the Program:

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria and Tetanus
- Rubella
- Rubeola (Measles)
- Varicella
- Mumps

Students must also furnish evidence that a two-step tuberculosis skin test has been performed.

Completed Health Forms and proof of immunizations are to be given to the Healthcare Data Administrator, Mailbox # 21

If health requirements has not been furnished by the next registration session, students will not be permitted to register for OTA courses.

Clinical facilities may require additional immunizations with very little notice to the college, for example influenza vaccine. The Program is unable to predict when and if such requirements will be made. If students do not comply with these requests they will be unable to complete fieldwork at these clinical facilities and so may not be able to complete the OTA Program.
Readmission to the OTA Program

See also the QCC Student Handbook for Readmission to Health Programs

This readmission policy applies to students who have left the program by withdrawal or for academic/clinical failure.

The following is the general procedure for readmission for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

A. After withdrawal or dismissal from a health care program, students should immediately contact the Admissions Office to declare a major. Failure to do this, may affect the students’ future financial aid status.

B. When a student wishes to request readmission into the program, the student must write a letter requesting readmission and must meet with the Program Coordinator to request reentry. This meeting must take place a minimum of 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student is requesting reentry.

If the reason for withdrawal was not related to poor academic performance, the student will fill out the Request for Readmission Form (available from the Program Coordinator). The Program Coordinator will list the specific items that must be completed prior to consideration for readmission, including the dates for completion of each item. A copy of the form will be given to the student. Once the student completes the requirements outlined on the readmission form by the specified date, a Review Committee will meet and make a recommendation regarding readmission. The recommendation will then be sent to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for a final decision. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will forward the completed readmission form to the Admissions Office. The steps followed will be documented and made part of the student’s permanent file.

If the reason for withdrawal was related to poor academic performance or if the student failed to achieve the minimum grade of “C” in a course, resulting in removal from the Program, the following process will be followed. The student will fill out the Request for Readmission Form (available from the Program Coordinator). The Program Coordinator will list the specific items that must be completed prior to consideration for readmission including the dates for completion of each item. A copy of the form will be given to the student. Once the student completes the requirements outlined on the readmission form by the specified date, a Review Committee will meet and make a recommendation regarding readmission. The recommendation will then be sent to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for a final decision. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will forward the completed.
readmission form to the Admissions Office. The steps followed will be documented and made part of the student’s permanent file.

**Important Note**

The student will be required to take or retake the HOBET test (Health Occupations Basic Entrance Test) and attain the levels required for acceptance into the Program in the following circumstances:

- When the reason for withdrawal was academic failure with a grade of D or lower in a course
- When the reason for withdrawal was academic failure with a grade of C- or lower in two or more courses

The numerical value of the HOBET test used for readmission is the same as for admission: a composite score of 52%

**C.** Only under extenuating circumstances, determined by the Program Faculty, will readmission be considered a second time. The Vice President of Academic Affairs must agree to approval for a second readmission, and his or her decision will be based upon the recommendation of the Program Coordinator.

**D.** Readmission to the Occupational Therapy Program must occur within one year of withdrawing or failing. No student who is on academic probation will be readmitted to the Program.
Policy for Handling Complaints Against the Program

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program maintains records of complaints about the program. Within the OTA program, there exists mechanism for resolving issues involving complaints prior to the grievance procedure. Students are encouraged to utilize this process when applicable.

A student with a complaint is encouraged to initially contact the individual or Professor concerned to attempt to resolve the complaint. If not satisfied, the student should make an appointment with the Program Coordinator, or if the complaint is against the Program Coordinator, the Academic Dean. By following this procedure, differences among faculty or administration and students have typically been resolved at this level and do not progress to written complaints.

Students who voice complaints to the Program Coordinator or Academic Dean and are not satisfied are then directed to the Student Grievance Policy published in the Student Handbook. This policy and procedures is reviewed annually by the Department of Student Life to insure that it is current and appropriate.

A record of all complaints resolved before the formal grievance policy are kept on file in the program coordinator’s office. All formal grievance appeals are kept on file in the office of the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services. Typically, the file includes all of the components of the appeal process and the action recommended by the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee may be comprised of representatives from the Student Services, Faculty, Instructional Services Administration, and the Financial Aid and Business offices.

Students who are involved in a grievance process will not be permitted to go to a clinical setting until the grievance is resolved. If appropriate, the student will be assisted to complete the clinical work after the settlement of the grievance.
Latex products are common in the medical environment. Allergic responses to latex can range from irritation and allergic contact dermatitis to the possibility of life threatening anaphylactic shock. Guidelines have been established at Quinsigamond Community College to provide information to potential allied health and nursing program applicants and staff who are sensitive to latex.

Latex free environments are seldom available in either clinical or academic settings. Therefore, an individual with a latex allergy/sensitivity wearing alternative vinyl or nitrile gloves is still exposed to latex residue of others working in the area or to latex present in the equipment, models and mannequins. Although latex gloves are the most prominent source of latex allergens, many other products contain latex including, but not limited to:

- Blood pressure cuffs, medication vials, syringe connectors and wound drains
- Stethoscopes, catheters, respirators, and goggles
- Oral and nasal airways, surgical masks, and electrode pads
- Endotracheal tubes, syringes, IV tubing, and tourniquets

Any student who has or develops symptoms consistent with latex allergy/sensitivity is advised to consult a qualified allergist for evaluation prior to enrollment in the Health Programs at Quinsigamond Community College. All such evaluations are at the student’s expense. If it is determined that a student suffers from a latex sensitivity/allergy and the student desires an academic adjustment, including auxiliary aids or service, or reasonable accommodation due to this condition, the student must contact the College’s Office of Disability Services at 508-854-4471.

As with all matters related to one’s health, the utmost precautions should be taken by the student to reduce the risk of exposure and allergic reactions. This may include the carrying of an epi-pen by the individual or other precautions as advised by the student’s health care provider. It is the responsibility of the student with a latex sensitivity to understand and acknowledge the risks associated with continued exposure to latex during a clinical education and healthcare career, even when reasonable accommodations are made and to regularly consult with his/her health care provider.

In an effort to minimize the presence of latex in the College’s lab facilities, Quinsigamond Community College will provide latex-free and powder-free gloves in all College lab facilities. Should a clinical agency site NOT provide latex-free gloves, the College will provide latex-free gloves for clinical use. Additionally, the College is taking the following steps to minimize latex in its lab facilities: 1) replacement of all gloves in use by faculty and students with nitrile or vinyl gloves; 2) maintaining an inventory of all products/equipment and supplies in the Health Care Division that contain or could contain latex; and 3) future purchase of latex-safe supplies and equipment whenever possible.

As with all students in the Health Care Programs, a student with a latex sensitivity or allergy is required to satisfactorily complete all requirements and technical standards of the program to which they have been accepted.
Quinsigamond Community College  
Health Care Division  

Student Latex Release Form for Students with Identified Latex Allergy

I ____________________________, disclose to Quinsigamond Community College Division of Health Care and ________________Program that I have a sensitivity/allergy to latex.

I have attached documentation of testing that I have received from a physician confirming this allergy/sensitivity. This documentation clears me for participation in college lab activities and clinical rotations as required in the _________Program’s Handbook in which I am enrolled.

I understand that, due to my participation in a Health Program, I may be exposed to latex, which may result in a worsening of my pre-existing latex sensitivity. I understand that continued exposure may cause my condition to worsen and potentially lead to life threatening symptoms. I accept these risks knowingly and voluntarily and will take all reasonable precautions to prevent such exposure.

Further, I understand that:

- It is my responsibility to be aware of potential exposure to latex in my learning environment and to avoid or minimize such exposure;
- It is my responsibility to notify each of my course instructors/clinical faculty or preceptors of my latex sensitivity/allergy in every situation where potential exposure may be present;
- It is my responsibility to follow up with my health care provider/allergist for services related to my latex allergy and follow their recommendations;
- It is my responsibility to assume any costs related to latex allergy screening and treatment;
- It is my responsibility to have on my person emergency medication (Epi-Pen or other) as prescribed by my physician in the event of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction;
- College and clinical labs are not a latex free environment and therefore the risk of exposure to latex cannot be eliminated; and
- Quinsigamond Community College cannot guarantee a latex free environment during College lab activities or clinical rotations.

By my signature, I release and discharge Quinsigamond Community College, its officers and employees from all responsibility and liability related to personal injury suffered by me because of exposure to latex in the College’s lab or during a clinical rotation.

____________________________________  ______________________
Student Signature  Date

____________________________________  ______________________
Parent Signature if Student is under 18 years old  Witness

11/09
Fieldwork Experiences in the OTA Program

The Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (2011) state:

“FIELDWORK EDUCATION
…….. The experience should provide the student with the opportunity to carry out professional responsibilities under supervision of a qualified occupational therapy practitioner serving as a role model. The academic fieldwork coordinator is responsible for the program’s compliance with fieldwork education requirements.”

CORI / SORI CHECKS and DRUG TESTING

Fieldwork placement facilities may require a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check and/or a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check and/or drug testing of all students attending the placement. If the CORI, SORI and/or drug test result contain information that disqualifies the student from attending a fieldwork site, the student may apply for fieldwork at an alternative site. Permission to apply to another site may or may not be granted according to the Policy and Procedure for Placing a Student with a Positive CORI or SORI at a Clinical Fieldwork Site printed in this Handbook. If the student is not permitted to apply to another site for fieldwork, he or she will be unable to continue in the Program.

Students Involved with a Grievance Process

Students who are involved in a grievance process will not be permitted to go to a clinical setting until the grievance is resolved. If appropriate, the student will be assisted to complete the clinical work after the settlement of the grievance.
Level 1 Fieldwork

“The goal of Level I fieldwork is to introduce students to the fieldwork experience, to apply knowledge to practice, and to develop understanding of the needs of clients.”

The Level I fieldwork experiences are part of the laboratory requirements for the following courses:

- OTA 103 Group Process and Intervention
- OTA 215 Developmental Problems and Practice with Children
- OTA 221 Concepts and Occupational Therapy Interventions in Mental Health
- OTA 223 Concepts and Occupational Therapy Interventions with the Physically Challenged

The student will complete a minimum of 18 hours of Level I fieldwork for each course.

For more Information, see “The Policy for Completion of Level I Fieldwork Experience”.

Level II Fieldwork

Students will be provided with a Fieldwork Student Handbook outlining further details of the fieldwork experience when they begin to prepare for Level II Fieldwork.

The goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapy assistants. Level II fieldwork must be integral to the program’s curriculum design and must include an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation. It is recommended that the student be exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings.
The Level II fieldwork requirements are fulfilled in the fourth semester in the Program with the completion of the courses OTA 241 and OTA 242.

Each level II fieldwork requires eight weeks of full-time affiliation at an assigned facility. The student, therefore, spends the entire semester in the field, completing 16 weeks of full-time fieldwork. Work times vary between facilities, but students usually complete approximately 40-hours of fieldwork per week for 16 weeks.

To plan for this part of the Program, the student should consider the following:

- **This full-time weekly schedule prevents the student from engaging in much additional employment during this semester.**

- **Although the student is not on campus, the courses are charged for at the usual credit rate for the College.**

- **The facility providing the fieldwork experience determines the work hours and attendance policy for the student. Therefore, childcare issues, transportation concerns, etc. must be flexible enough to permit the student to fulfill all attendance requirements of the facility.**

- **There may be additional costs related to fieldwork such as gas and tolls related to travel, parking charges at facilities, the costs of identification badges at facilities and other expenses.**

- **The Program does not have sufficient local placements for students and so students must understand that it may be necessary to travel significant distances to placements.**

If a student is pursuing his/her degree on a part-time basis and is not following the course schedule as designed for the two year program, it is important to note that all Level II Fieldwork, OTA 241 and OTA 242, must be completed within eighteen (18) months of completing didactic coursework.

For more Information see “The Policy for Completion of Level II Fieldwork Experience”.
Policy for Completion of Level I Fieldwork Experience

1. The Level I fieldwork experience is part of the laboratory requirements for the following courses:
   - OTA 103 Group Process and Interventions
   - OTA 215 Developmental Problems and Practice with Children
   - OTA 221 Concepts and Occupational Therapy Interventions in Mental Health
   - OTA 223 Concepts and Occupational Therapy Interventions with the Physically Challenged

   The student will complete a minimum of 18 hours of Level I fieldwork for each course.

2. Program faculty will arrange all Level I fieldwork placements; students are not allowed to arrange their own placements.

3. The time and/or days of the placements are dependent upon the schedule available at the facility offering fieldwork. Every effort will be made to schedule the fieldwork into scheduled laboratory time; however, it may be necessary to attend fieldwork at a time other than the laboratory time published in the Course Schedule Booklet.

4. Fieldwork placement facilities may require a CORI check of all students attending the placement. If a student is refused admission to that facility because of a positive CORI, the process outlined in the Policy and Procedure for Placing a Student with a Positive CORI or SORI at a Clinical Fieldwork Site (see this Handbook) will be followed.

5. The student must pass the Level I Fieldwork in order to pass the course in which it is required. The student will not receive a passing grade for the course no matter how well he/she has performed in the other areas in which he/she is assessed (examinations, quizzes, papers, presentations, etc.) if the fieldwork component is not passed. The reason for this is that academic skills alone are not sufficient for clinical practice; students must also demonstrate the skills and behaviors required of a healthcare professional in the work setting.

6. The clinical supervisor will evaluate the student’s performance using the attached Level I Fieldwork Evaluation Form. An overall rating of “1” or “0” indicates that, in the opinion of the clinical supervisor, the student has not
successfully completed this fieldwork. The instructor in charge of the course will decide whether or not the student has passed the fieldwork.

7. If a student does not successfully complete the Level I fieldwork, he or she must petition the OTA Department **one time only** for permission to repeat the experience. This request to repeat the fieldwork must be made in writing to the instructor of the class in which the fieldwork was scheduled within two weeks of notification to the student that he/she has failed the Level I fieldwork.

The OTA faculty will meet to review the request. Permission to repeat the fieldwork may or may not be granted and will depend upon the reason for failure. The Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (Principle 2) states: “Occupational therapy personnel shall intentionally refrain from actions that cause harm”. Faculty will not grant permission to repeat the fieldwork if it is felt that, to do so, would violate the Code of Ethics. If permission is not granted to repeat the Level I Fieldwork, the student will be unable to complete the Program

8. If the student is removed from the fieldwork site at the request of the site’s clinical staff for behavior deemed inappropriate for the setting, the student has failed the placement and must petition for another placement as outlined in 7 above. Permission may or may not be granted as stated in 7 above.

9. If the student is permitted to repeat the fieldwork experience, the instructor in charge of the course in which it exists will schedule it. Lack of availability of sites may make it necessary for the student to repeat the experience after the end of the semester in which it was originally scheduled. The student will receive an “I” in the course until the Level I fieldwork is successfully completed. This grade of “I” will be converted to an “F”, according to the College Grading Regulations, if the fieldwork is not completed by the end of the twelfth week of the following semester. If the student successfully completes the fieldwork before the end of the twelfth week of the following semester, the “I” grade will be changed to a letter grade for the course.

10. The student will not be allowed to enroll in another course requiring a fieldwork component until the failed level I fieldwork is successfully completed
To the clinical supervisor – At the end of the assignment, please evaluate the student in the areas listed below. **You may add additional comments on the back of this sheet.**

The student may return the Evaluation Form to the Instructor, or the form may be mailed.

**Satisfactory** = Generally meets the objective. Behavior or skill adequate and acceptable for this early fieldwork experience.

**Needs Improvement** = The student is beginning to develop the skill or behavior, however needs more work in order to achieve the minimum expectation.

**Unsatisfactory** = Fails to achieve even the minimum expected level of acceptable skills or behaviors.

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<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Respects patient rights and confidentiality</td>
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<td>2. Communicates respectfully with clients and staff</td>
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<td>3. Demonstrates promptness and punctuality</td>
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<td>4. Manages personal affairs such that these do not interfere with professional responsibility</td>
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<td>5. Dresses appropriately and is neatly groomed</td>
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<td>6. Takes an active part in the learning experience</td>
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<td>7. Modifies behavior according to the demands of the situation</td>
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<td>8. Demonstrates appropriate client-staff boundaries</td>
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<td>9. Functions within assigned role</td>
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<td>10. Adheres to policies and procedures of the facility</td>
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<td>11. Works effectively with others</td>
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| Communication Skills                                                                  |              |                   |                |              |
| 12. Interact with a client-centered focus with individuals with diverse backgrounds, ages, etc. |          |                   |                |              |
| 13. Displays the ability to initiate and be receptive to communication with other professionals |          |                   |                |              |
| 14. Exhibits appropriate affect                                                        |              |                   |                |              |
| 15. Generates relevant questions and potential solutions                               |              |                   |                |              |
| 16. Articulates questions and opinions clearly                                         |              |                   |                |              |
| 17. Accepts feedback and modifies performance                                          |              |                   |                |              |

**Recommended Overall Rating** (Please circle one)

- Exceptional: 4
- Inadequate: 0

An overall rating of “0” or “1” indicates that the student has not successfully completed this Level 1 Fieldwork
Policy for Completion of Level II Fieldwork Experience

1. Level II fieldwork experiences are offered in traditional and/or emerging practice settings, consistent with the Program’s curriculum design. In all settings, students will be required to develop the skills to provide client-centered services that produce occupation-based outcomes.

2. A minimum of 16 weeks’ full-time Level II fieldwork is required. The student can complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of three different settings. Most often our students will complete two eight-week fieldwork placements (OTA 241 and OTA 242). These placements will provide the student with experience in service provision to different populations in different treatment settings (see Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (2006) above).

3. Quinsigamond Community College’s OTA Program does not arrange for Level II student placements outside of the forty eight contiguous states.

4. Level II Fieldwork may be completed on a part-time basis as long as it is at least 50% of a full-time equivalent at that site. Students should note that part time placements are difficult to find and may not be available when a student request them.

5. No part of the Level I Fieldwork may be used for the Level II Fieldwork.

6. During the year prior to Level II fieldwork, students will be asked to select the types of settings in which they would prefer to complete the fieldwork, for example: school settings, rehab. hospitals, nursing homes, community settings, etc. Students are encouraged to look at the fieldwork files in the OTA lab which contain information on facilities with which QCC has fieldwork affiliations. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator identifies sites that will offer fieldwork experience to our students, and will attempt to provide each student with 2 placements in settings of his/her choice. However, because the College does not have unlimited fieldwork options, the student should understand that it may not be possible for the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to locate sites that match the student’s requests.

7. Students MAY NOT contact facilities themselves. Any requests for placement at facilities not on the fieldwork site lists must go through the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.
8. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will notify the student of his/her two assigned placements and will instruct the student on the process of contacting the Clinical Fieldwork Supervisor at the fieldwork setting.

9. Students must provide a Health Form completed by his/her physician to each facility prior to the placement. Health Forms are in an appendix in the Student Fieldwork Manual or may be obtained from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Proof of immunization for hepatitis B is required for placement. Failure to have this completed form and proof of immunization available will result in delay of the placement until the form is obtained, and may postpone graduation.

10. **Students may be required to travel significant distances to a fieldwork site.** Although every attempt is made to assign students to sites that are close to their home location, the Program cannot guarantee that such sites can be located.

11. If a student chooses an out-of-state placement resulting in CORI checks from states other than Massachusetts, or the fieldwork facility to which they are assigned requires special testing prior to the placement (e.g. fingerprinting), the student will be responsible for costs of these additional checks.

12. Student performance on fieldwork is evaluated by the Clinical Supervisor, who communicates the results of this evaluation to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. The American Occupational Therapy Association form: Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student is usually used but is not required. If this form is used, a score of 70 points or higher is required to pass the fieldwork.

13. If a student does not successfully complete the Level II fieldwork, he or she may petition the OTA Department **one time only** for permission to repeat the experience.

   Permission may or may not be granted and will depend upon the reason for failure. The Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (Principle 2) states: “**Occupational therapy personnel shall intentionally refrain from actions that cause harm**”. Faculty will not grant permission to repeat the fieldwork if it is felt that, to do so, would violate the Code of Ethics.

14. If the student is removed from the fieldwork site at the request of the site’s clinical staff for behavior deemed inappropriate for the setting, the student will have failed this fieldwork whether or not the setting completes a Fieldwork Evaluation Form. When this occurs, students may petition for permission to repeat the fieldwork as stated in # 13 above.
15. If the student is permitted to repeat the fieldwork experience, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will schedule it. Lack of availability of sites may make it necessary for the student to repeat the experience after the end of the semester in which it was originally scheduled. The student will then be unable to graduate as planned. However, when both Level II fieldworks are completed successfully, the student may apply to take the Certification Examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT). This examination may be taken before the student graduates as long as all Program requirements are complete.

16. When the student is completing fieldwork they may contact any faculty member for assistance or advice at any time. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will visit the placement during the fieldwork to assess student progress, and will make additional visits if requested by the student or Clinical Supervisor.
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Student Handbook
for the
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
2013-2014

I have read the contents of this handbook and I understand the
information provided.
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about information
that I do not understand.

I understand that changes in ACOTE requirements, QCC
policies, fieldwork facility requirements and/or State or
Federal laws may result in changes to the policies and
procedures presented in this Handbook.

Signed:____________________________________

Print Name:______________________________

Date:___________________________________