

**HOWARD UNIVERSITY**  
**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT**  
**Master of Science Degree in Occupational Therapy**

**STUDENT RETENTION AND GRADUATION POLICIES**

**Academic Policies:** After admission to the MSOT program, students are governed by the following academic progression, retention and graduation policies.

1. During the professional level program a semester and cumulative grade point minimum of 3.0 must be maintained. Any student's performance falling below a GPA of 3.0 in any given semester will be placed on academic probation. The student will have one semester in which to achieve a minimum semester grade point average of 3.0 the subsequent semester. A cumulative GPA below 3.00 for three consecutive semesters will result in suspension.
2. In the event of an academic action, the curriculum may be interrupted, thus extending the length of time to complete program requirements by one or two semesters due to cyclic scheduling of the graduate program courses. The faculty of the program reserves the right to make necessary changes in the student's program for reasons such as changes in course offerings, changes in curriculum, or maintaining sequencing of courses.
3. A minimum final grade of C is required in any graduate course. A final grade of D or F in any Master of Science in Occupational Therapy course will result in suspension.
4. Readmission is not guaranteed after suspension. However, any student who has been readmitted after suspension and receives a second suspension will be permanently dismissed from the graduate program.
5. Faculty reserves the right, based on documented evidence of unethical behavior, to dismiss a student from the occupational therapy program. Occupational therapy students are expected to display the highest level of honesty and integrity in both academic and personal life. The faculty, through its Student Judiciary Committee, will exercise its responsibility to suspend or dismiss any student who is found guilty of violating ethical standards as articulated by the department.
6. Students cannot withdraw from any required course without written approval from the department chairperson due to the lock-step sequence of courses in the occupational therapy program. Students who withdraw from a graduate course without the written approval of the department chairperson will be suspended from the program.
7. An "incomplete" grade adversely affects financial aid eligibility and academic progression. A final course grade must be completed prior to registering for subsequent required courses for which the "incomplete" course grade is a prerequisite.

8. Students on academic probation are not eligible to begin Level II Fieldwork. A student on academic probation will not be allowed to proceed to Level II fieldwork until all academic requirements have been met and the probation status has been lifted.
9. A minimum of 70% proficiency for the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy must be achieved in all assigned areas of clinical practice (clinical clerkships, fieldwork, and preceptorships).
10. Failure to achieve 70% competency in fieldwork level I or a Pass for fieldwork level II will result in faculty review before proceeding further in the occupational therapy program. A student who fails fieldwork will be placed on probation and will be allowed only one time to repeat the fieldwork experience.
11. Students must complete comprehensive examinations I, II and III. A student who fails to pass the exam after three attempts will be required to remediate and pass the final exam before going on fieldwork level II. Students will be subject to faculty review and further academic actions (probation or suspension). Failure to pass any level comprehensive exam after remediation will result in suspension.
12. Students must successfully complete all didactic coursework, examinations, thesis or non-thesis requirements and fieldwork experiences prior to graduation.

\* For more information on academic actions see the *Division of Allied Health Sciences, Howard University Admissions, Retention and Graduation Policies in the Graduate Program Manual*.

## **Retention and Graduation Policy for Fieldwork** **(See Fieldwork Policy and Level II Handbook for Detailed Information)**

All Level II Student Fieldwork experiences must be completed within twenty-four months following the successful completion of all didactic coursework.

1. Students must complete all required Fieldwork Level I experiences at an 70% level of proficiency or above. Students who receive a grade that falls below 70% will be placed on academic probation. The student will be given one opportunity to repeat the required fieldwork. Removal of academic probation will be granted pending successful completion of the fieldwork level I at an 70% level of proficiency or above, and a demonstrated cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
2. Course grades of pass or fail will be applied to the rotations of Level II Fieldwork. Students must satisfactorily complete two, three-month Level II Fieldwork internships. If a student fails, he or she will be given only one opportunity to repeat the required fieldwork.
3. A student who is requested to prematurely terminate a fieldwork experience due to unsafe practices and poor performance will receive a grade of "F" in the required fieldwork. Participation in the White Coat Ceremony will be denied and graduation will

be delayed until all requirements have been met. Faculty reserves the right to place the student in a second assigned fieldwork only after specific requirements for returning to the clinical practice setting are satisfactorily met by the student.

4. Students cannot withdraw from fieldwork without written approval from the department chairperson. The withdrawal must be completed within the withdrawal period specified in the University calendar. Withdrawals that are not chairperson approved will result in a grade of "F."
5. Post-professional OTR students who elect to complete a clinical affiliation (fieldwork experience) will adhere to the same policies.

### **Graduation Requirements**

Entry level MSOT students are required to complete seventy-seven credit hours prior to graduation. This includes successful completion of all fieldwork experiences required for graduation. A total of seventy-seven credit hours and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 are required for graduation from the entry-level program. The timeframe for completion of the entry-level program is two and a half years, which includes all didactic coursework, examinations, thesis or non-thesis requirements and fieldwork experiences. Students are required to complete all didactic coursework before beginning their fieldwork II experience.

### **Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Maintenance of Financial Aid Eligibility**

#### **Transfer Students**

The MSOT program retains the right to accept transfer credits to meet degree requirements. Students enrolled in professional level MSOT courses should have all prerequisite coursework completed.

- Grades of C or above may be transferred from an accredited college/university;
- A "Pass" grade may be accepted only if the grade is based on a minimum performance level of 70%.
- Entry-level and post-professional students must show evidence of an undergraduate degree and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
- The number of semester hours transferred will be equal to the semester hours earned in the equivalent course at Howard University as long as the transfer hours are at least 75% of the equivalent Howard course (this policy applies to 3-credit hour courses and above only).
- A minimum number of transfer credit hours will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Department Chairperson will analyze the documentation from the work experience to certify that it meets the criteria for information covered in courses. No courses past 7 years are eligible for advanced standing. The Master of Science program does not accept credit for previous courses or work experience for core theory-based courses required in the entry-level master's curriculum.

**Financial Aid Suspension**

A student who incurs financial aid probation will have one academic year to meet the satisfactory academic requirements. Failure to do so will result in financial aid suspension. During financial aid suspension the student is not eligible for financial assistance.

**Financial Aid Reinstatement**

A student who has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress shall be reinstated for financial aid eligibility if he or she has successfully completed a sufficient number of semester hours and attained at least the minimum cumulative grade point average required at the end of the next academic year.

**Appeal Procedure**

A student has the right to appeal when an adverse satisfactory academic progress determination has been made. The appeal outlining justification for same must be made in writing to the Director of Financial Aid and Student Employment. Appeal procedures are specified in the Financial Aid Handbook.

**Academic And Fieldwork Grievance Policy**

Occupational therapy students have a right to seek resolution if they feel they have been aggrieved during fieldwork or academic progress. Refer to the University Grievance Procedures or the current University Bulletin for guidelines.

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