



RURAL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (RHOP)
PROGRAM STANDARDS for the OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
OPTION
Participants and Alternates

PHILOSOPHY

The Occupational Therapist Option in the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) is a cooperative program between Chadron State College (CSC), Peru State College (PSC), Wayne State College (WSC) and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Occupational Therapy (OT) Program. The purpose of the program is to recruit and educate individuals from rural areas of Nebraska who will return to underserved rural areas of the state to practice as occupational therapists. The program represents a commitment and dedication to the education of Nebraskans and quality health care for the citizens of the state.

COURSE WORK

Participants and alternates are hereafter referred to collectively as “students”. Students must:

1. Complete all prerequisite courses for UNMC Occupational Therapy (OT) Education, listed under the UNMC Division admissions website.
2. Complete a course of study culminating in a bachelor’s degree in four academic years. Any exception to this time frame must be approved by both the State College Occupational Therapy Advisor and the Chair of the UNMC OT RHOP Committee.
3. Obtain approval from the undergraduate State College Occupational Therapy Advisor before registering for or dropping any class.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The following Academic Standards apply to remain in good standing and continue in the Nebraska State College (NSC) phase of the RHOP OT Option. Students must:

1. Earn a "C-" or better in the **required prerequisite courses** (see UNMC Division website).
2. Students must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) and a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher.**

ACADEMIC PROBATION

RHOP academic probation will be allowed for only *one* semester. Probation is recommended and communicated by the designated State College Occupational Therapy Advisor responsible for monitoring student performance. The State College Occupational

Therapy Advisor, in consultation with the Chair of the UNMC OT RHOP Committee, will determine student requirements to improve academic performance to be removed from RHOP academic probation. RHOP academic probation results if a student:

1. Earns less than a “C-” in any course. The course must be retaken and the student will be placed on RHOP academic probation the following semester.
2. Cumulative or semester GPA falls below 3.0.
3. Withdraws from one or more classes which results in dropping below the required full-time academic enrollment status (defined as 12 credit hours per semester)
4. Withdraws from all classes without prior approval of the State College Occupational Therapy Advisor and the Chair of the UNMC OT RHOP Committee.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal from RHOP constitutes formal action by the UNMC OT RHOP Committee in consultation with the NSC institution. The student will be dismissed from the RHOP Program if the student does not:

1. Comply with the terms of an academic probation.
2. Complete all of the recommendations for improving academic performance.
3. Obtain a grade of “C-” or better in a required course that has been retaken.
4. Raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or higher after one semester of remediation.
5. Satisfactorily complete the NSC coursework as defined by academic standards for good standing.
6. Satisfactorily complete the professional development requirements.

Immediate dismissal from RHOP may result from illegal or unprofessional behavior. A copy of the dismissal notice and terms provided to the student by the NSC institution will be shared with the Chair of the OT RHOP Committee.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE NSC PHASE

A student who chooses the RHOP OT Option is expected to be dedicated to a career in rural practice. To enhance their understanding and knowledge of the field, students are expected to:

1. Log professional development using the Discovering Occupational Therapy format (see UNMC Division website). Some of the experiences must be relate to rural Nebraska so the student develops significant knowledge of occupational therapy practice in rural Nebraska.
2. Logs must be submitted electronically to the State College Occupational Therapy Advisor and the Chair of the UNMC OT RHOP at the end of each semester.
3. Attend required events conducted by UNMC for RHOP participants.
4. Visit UNMC at the Omaha or Kearney campus during regularly scheduled RHOP trips.
5. Visit, work, or volunteer with persons across a variety of age ranges in a variety of settings (school, hospital, community center, camp, clinic, day care, nursing home, health screen, etc.).
6. Participate in on-campus activities that enhance their ability to interact with people.

7. Write a reflection paper summarizing their professional development across semesters. Submit this as part of the application materials for admission to the UNMC Professional Program.
8. Each RHOP student should return to their high school at least once during their studies at CSC to promote RHOP.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DURING THE NSC PHASE

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

Students must exhibit professional and personal behaviors that reflect positively on them, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and the undergraduate institution. The students must remember that this includes summers and vacations. The students in RHOP are expected to comply with all campus standards of behavior as described in the undergraduate student handbook, as well as RHOP standards which **include attending classes as scheduled, promptness, exhibiting respect towards fellow students and faculty, displaying initiative and leadership skills**. They are also expected to obey all laws and thus, avoid having any criminal charges brought against them. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disciplinary action including dismissal from RHOP. The students must also remember that drug and alcohol offenses, felony convictions, etc. can prevent them from getting a license to practice their profession.

PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING DATE OF ENTRY

Any RHOP student wishing to change the date of admission into the professional phase of the program must petition in writing to both the undergraduate State College Occupational Therapy Advisor and the Chair of the UNMC OT RHOP Committee. The petition should state in detail the reasons for the requested change, the proposed new date of admissions, and what academic preparation will continue for entry into the OT professional program at UNMC. A decision whether to allow the change or not will be made as soon as possible after the submission of the request.

ALTERNATE TRANSITION TO PARTICIPANT STATUS

In the event that any of the candidates selected as participants in this class and in this option decide not to accept a position, withdraw after entering the program, or are dismissed from the program, the RHOP admissions interview team from UNMC and the undergraduate institution may select a replacement from among the alternates in that class. Academic accomplishments, progress within the curriculum, and participation in professional development activities as described in the Program Standards will be considered in the selection of an alternate to fill each vacancy. A second interview may be requested.

ENTRANCE OF PARTICIPANTS INTO THE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

While successful completion of the requirements for the NSC phase of the Occupational Therapy option will normally guarantee admission to the UNMC professional phase of the program, students must demonstrate their successful completion by means of a formal application and interview process during the final year. Prior to matriculation into the professional phase, the student must:

1. Meet all academic and professional development standards and personal behavior requirements according to the RHOP Agreement and Standards.

2. Apply through the Occupational Therapist Central Application Service (OTCAS) following designated deadlines of the senior year.
3. Submit a reflection paper (noted above) before the interview summarizing his/her professional development through Discovering Occupational Therapy activities.
4. Interview with the UNMC Occupational Therapy Education Admissions Committee to evaluate the student's readiness for professional study at UNMC.

Students failing to demonstrate adequate professional development, in the judgment of the UNMC Occupational Therapy Education Admissions Committee, will be denied admission to the Professional Program.

RESIGNATION PROCEDURE

Should a participant or alternate choose to resign their position in RHOP, a formal letter of resignation must be filed with the OT Option Academic Advisor and the undergraduate RHOP Program Director as well as the professional program at UNMC.

