

NORTHWOOD TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Occupational Therapy Assistant
Fieldwork Handbook

CONFIDENTIALITY/HIPAA

In compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), it is the policy of the Health Sciences programs at Northwood Tech to provide procedures for best practices for students to utilize. These procedures are to protect the privacy of consumers in compliance with federal and state laws governing the use and disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI).

Confidentiality Guidelines

- PHI obtained during program courses, learning experiences, simulation, or guest lectures is intended for educational purposes only. This information is to be discussed only during program class time.
- Personal identifiers should not be used in class discussions or in class writing assignments.
- Conversations where PHI is discussed shall occur only in program classrooms.
- If the student is given a copy of PHI material, the student shall ensure that the name, age, birthdate, and address are not located on the copied material.
- Documentation containing PHI shall not leave the original location.
- If a classmate shares confidential information outside of these guidelines, notify the instructor.
- Conversations that instructors, advisors, and/or program directors are holding with students shall be kept confidential.

Breaking Confidentiality Policy

- If the guidelines listed above are not followed, the student will have an individual meeting with the program director and any faculty involved in the situation.
- A course of action will be determined by the program director, faculty involved, and the student.
- Noncompliance with this policy may result in dismissal from the program.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- Federal law mandates that the clinical agencies with which the health sciences programs collaborate comply with HIPAA regulations. In most clinical agencies, first-time violators are typically not given a second chance and are immediately dismissed from their employment. Program students providing client care are subject to the clinical agency's processes to address HIPAA violations.
- Violations of HIPAA regulations also constitute unsatisfactory clinical performance assessments related to professionalism and will result in failure of the clinical course in which the infraction occurred.
- Students must be adequately educated on HIPAA regulations and the consequences of HIPAA violations.