

Occupational Therapy Assistant

Degree Awarded: Associate in Applied Science

Accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449, 301/652-AOTA; www.acoteonline.org

Recommended Course Sequence

First Semester		Credits
ENG 101	Freshman English 1	3
ENG 160	Technical Writing Module	1.5
PSY 111	Introduction to Psychology	3
BIO 111	Anatomy & Physiology 1	4
OTA 101	Fund. of Occupational Therapy 1	3
OTA 103	Occupational Performance 1	1
OTA 107	Principles of OT in Geriatrics & Gerontology	2
Second Semester		
ENG 102	Freshman English 2	3
PSY 220	Developmental Psychology	3
BIO 112	Anatomy & Physiology 2	4
OTA 102	Fund. of Occupational Therapy 2	3
OTA 104	Occupational Performance 2	1
OTA 106	Medical Conditions	3
Third Semester		
PSY 230	Abnormal Psychology	3
OTA 110	Intro to Assistive Technology	3
OTA 201	Principles of OT in Pediatrics & Developmental Disabilities	3
OTA 203	Clinical Reasoning Skills	1
OTA 205	Principles of Occupational Therapy in Mental Health	3
OTA 207	Principles of Occupational Therapy in Physical Disabilities	3
OTA 209	Documentation in Occupational Therapy	1.5
PED 155	CPR	1
Fourth Semester		
OTA 217	Clinical Practice 1	7.5
OTA 218	Clinical Practice 2	7.5

Total Credits: 68

Program Description

The Associate in Applied Science degree program in Occupational Therapy Assistant prepares graduates to obtain New York State licensure and to take the National Certification Board for Occupational Therapy exam* to become Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA). Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants work under the supervision of, and in collaboration with, Registered Occupational Therapists (OTR). Occupational therapy practitioners provide service to children, adults and seniors whose abilities to engage in their occupations (tasks) of living are impaired by physical injury or illness, developmental delays, the aging process or psychological and social disability.

The COTA's responsibilities include providing purposeful and meaningful activity to restore lost or impaired physical, cognitive and psychological skills; development and use of assistive technology; adapting home, play and work environments and activities to ensure successful and safe performance. The COTA may design adapted toys and games for a child with physical limitations; provide handwriting adaptations for students within a school setting to enhance their learning process; evaluate and design home adaptations to enhance independence in self-care activities such as feeding, bathing, shaving, cooking and dressing; encourage the elderly client to participate in leisure activities and to maintain personal independence.

The primary focus of the curriculum is on the development of critical thinking and clinical problem-solving skills, and on essential elements in designing and applying therapeutic interventions for the clients served by COTAs. The program includes classroom instruction, laboratory and community-based fieldwork rotations. Occupational therapy assistant courses are offered once each year. Courses must be taken in the sequence in which they are offered. A minimum grade of C is required in all occupational therapy assistant courses. The course of study may be pursued on a part-time basis. All program requirements must be completed within six consecutive semesters from the time of enrollment in the first OTA course. Individualized part-time schedules can be developed between the student and the OTA faculty advisor.

* **Note:** Graduates of the OTA program are required to apply for NBCOT® certification. Candidates applying for the Certification Examination must notify the NBCOT's Qualifications Review Committee (QRC) if they have ever been charged with or convicted of a felony. A felony conviction may prevent the candidate from taking the examination. Please consult the department chair if this may be an issue in successfully pursuing a career in occupational therapy.

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Admission Criteria

Academic Requirements:

- High school diploma or HSE
- Eligible to take Freshman English I (ENG 101)
- Eligible to take Elementary Algebra (MAT 101) or have successfully completed Developmental Algebra (MAT 020)
- Completed High School AP Biology (score of 3, 4, or 5) or a passing grade in the Biology CLEP examination; or Introduction to Biology or Anatomy & Physiology 1 with a grade of 2.0 or better (within 5 years of program entry)
- Students must attain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.4

Department-Specific Requirements:

- A minimum of 15 hours of observation in three different occupational therapy service settings. A minimum of five hours are required in each of the major treatment areas: pediatrics, adult rehab and mental health.
- A 2-3 page essay addressing personal impressions and awareness of the scope of occupational therapy practice.
- Attendance at a pre-admission orientation (includes interview, problem solving activity and discussion). At this orientation, students will receive and sign off on information pertaining to health forms, drug testing, and criminal record policies. Dates for pre-admission orientation are posted on Admissions and OTA Dept. websites.
- Interview with Dept. Chair and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

Note: Admission to this program is selective. In addition to an application to the College, students must apply for acceptance into this program through the Admissions office. Consideration for admission is based on the completion of all mandatory academic and departmental-specific requirements, highest combination of CQPA and credits completed towards the degree, and seat availability. All requirements must be completed and an eligibility form must be submitted to the Admissions Office before February 1 in order for a student to be considered for acceptance into this program for the Fall semester.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- learn problem-solving and clinical reasoning.
- build on knowledge, practice skills, theory and critical thinking applications.
- apply these multiple skills and insights to adapt to and cope in this novel and diverse world.
- think and act with flexibility, to think “outside the box.”
- welcome change and growth in themselves, their clients and the organizations they serve.

Career Opportunities

- hospitals, inpatient and outpatient mental health facilities
- rehabilitation centers and skilled nursing facilities
- schools, developmental disabilities service sites
- home and community health agencies
- accessibility and home modification specialists
- assistive technology specialists
- health and wellness centers
- advancement to OTR

Transfer Opportunities

While the A.A.S. is a degree leading to immediate job placement upon graduation and successful completion of the National Certification exam, SUNY Orange has special relationships with weekend college programs for transfer to a B.S./M.S. degree at:

- Dominican College
- Mercy College

Contact Information

Occupational Therapy
Assistant Department Chair
341-4323
Admissions Office
(845) 341-4030