

# 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](http://www.acoteonline.org)

## Recommended Course Sequence

First Semester	Credits
ENG 101 Freshman English 1	3
ENG 160 Technical Writing Module	1.5
PSY 101 General Psychology 1	3
BIO 111 Anatomy & Physiology 1	4
OTA 101 Fund. of Occupational Therapy 1	3
OTA 103 Occupational Performance 1	1
OTA 107 Prin. of OT in Geriatrics & Gerontology	2
PES 100 Concepts of Physical Wellness	1

### 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
PES ____ Physical Education	1

### Third Semester

COM 101 Foundations of Communication	3
PSY 230 Abnormal Psychology	3
SOC ____ Sociology Elective	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

### Fourth Semester

OTA 217 Clinical Practice 1	7.5
OTA 218 Clinical Practice 2	7.5

Total Credits: 72

## Program Description

The Associate in Applied Science degree program in Occupational Therapy Assistant prepares graduates to obtain New York State certification 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 GED
- 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 I 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.

## Student 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