

Occupational Therapy Assistant

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Associate in Applied Science Degree (5 semesters)
Career Cluster: Health Science

At a Glance

Employment of occupational therapy assistants and aides is expected to increase by 27 percent or more through 2014, much faster than average for all occupations. Occupational Therapy is best described by The American Occupational Therapy Association as follows: Occupational therapy focuses on enabling people to do the activities of daily life. The very word "occupation" means an activity which "occupies" our time. Young or old, we all have a job to do - the job of living. Learning, growing, playing, working, managing our homes, and caring for our families are among the "occupations" of life. Unfortunately, physical, emotional, or other challenges often prevent people from fully participating in the job of living.

Disease, injury, depression, or developmental problems can make it difficult for people to do everyday tasks and be active and independent. Occupational therapy-a vibrant, growing profession makes it possible for people to achieve independence and to enjoy life to its fullest.

By choosing a career as an occupational therapy assistant, you will make a difference! You will be able to improve the lives of people, from newborns to the very old.

Students today can look forward to dynamic careers working in multiple settings with people of all ages. The employment outlook for occupational therapy assistants is bright. Recent information published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected that the job outlook for occupational therapy assistants will continue to improve steadily for the foreseeable future.

Program Description

Under the direction of an Occupational Therapist, the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) assists in evaluating patients and in developing a plan of selected tasks to restore, influence, or enhance performance of individuals whose abilities to cope with daily-living tasks are impaired or threatened by developmental deficits, the aging process, physical injury or illness, learning disabilities, or psychological and social disabilities. Occupational Therapy Assistants are employed in general hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, home health-care agencies, private practices, and other specialized health-care settings.

A student who has completed all OTA required general education courses may complete the OTA program courses in three semesters.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, P.O. Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220 at 1-800-SAY-AOTA Ext. 2911. The certifying agency is the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT) 301-990-7979 located at 800 South Frederick Avenue, Suite 200, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-4150. After successful completion of the NBCOT exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). Conviction of a felony may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or to attain state licensure. Most states require licensure

in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination.

Admission Requirements

Applicants Must:

1. Meet all the general requirements of WSCC.
2. Complete general required courses for OTA by deadline of June 1.
3. Submit to WSCC Admission Office, by June 1 deadline, an official WSCC application for admission, current official college transcripts demonstrating completion of OTA general required courses, and a copy of official ACT scores (a minimum ACT score of 18 is required to qualify for program entry).
4. Submit to OTA Program Director, but June 1 deadline, a complete OTA program application, copy of unofficial college transcripts, documented evidence of 24 hours of observation and/or participation in not less than two approved occupational therapy departments. (Hours will be verified through telephone conversation or correspondence with supervisors listed on application.) Proof of active/current AHA Approved CPR Certification for Healthcare Providers must also be provided with application. The program application can be found online at <http://www.wallacestate.edu/ota.html>.
5. Attain a minimum GPA of 2.5 or greater on a 4.0 scale with a grade of "C" or better on all general required pre-OTA courses. GPA calculated for program selection will be on the general required pre-OTA courses only.

Students are encouraged to meet with the OTA Program Advisor prior to spring semester (before application) to verify completed and needed course work, for successful application to the program.

Program application packets, which include the OTA Program application, documentation of observation hours, must be submitted to the OTA Program as a complete packet. Incomplete packets will not be accepted for consideration. Applications may be downloaded from the OTA section of the WSCC Web Page at www.wallacestate.edu.

Selection and Notification

1. The OTA program admits annually in the fall semester.
2. Candidates are ranked for admission on the basis of ACT scores, weighted GPA (GPA x 7.6) and completion of admission requirements.
3. Program applications will be reviewed for completion of program admission requirements. Written notification of the program admission status for each applicant will be mailed to the student at the address provided on the application.
4. Students must return written confirmation of their acceptance within 14 days of the postmarked date of the acceptance letter. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of place in the class. A signed consent to drug testing and background screening must accompany the acceptance confirmation.

Program Expectations

Students admitted into the Occupational Therapy Assistant program are expected to comply with the Health Science Program Regulations and Expectations as published in the Programs of Study section of the Wallace State College Catalog.

Upon Acceptance:

1. OTA students are required to submit an annual physical examination form, including proof of Hepatitis B and other vaccination status.

- Students are required to submit proof of current CPR certification. Only CPR courses that provide certification for health care providers will be accepted.
- Malpractice and accident insurance, available through the College, is required of all OTA students.
- OTA students are required to undergo Background Screening and Drug Testing according to Health Science Division policy.

Progression:

OTA students must attain a minimum grade of "C" in all general education and major required courses. Failure to do so in major required courses will result in dismissal from the program. A student in good academic standing will be allowed to apply for readmission only once to the program.

OTA students are required to exhibit professional behavior at all times. A professional behavior assessment is completed on each OTA student. A minimal acceptable score of 70 is required each semester by OTA students. Failure to obtain the minimal acceptable score will result in probation of the OTA student with supplemental counseling by an OTA advisor. If the OTA student is unable to obtain the minimal required score after counseling, they will be dismissed from the OTA program.

Readmission to Program

Students whose progression through the OTA program is interrupted and who desire to re-enter the program must schedule an appointment with an OTA faculty advisor to discuss re-entry. The student must apply for readmission to the OTA program within one year from the term of withdrawal of failure. Students who are accepted for readmission are required to repeat certain classes previously completed.

Readmission may be denied due to, but not limited to, any of the following circumstances:

- Failure to possess a GPA of at least 2.0 for all OTA major and OTA general education courses.
- Refusal by fieldwork sites to accept the student for fieldwork experiences.
- Over 12 months have elapsed since the student was enrolled in an OTA course.
- Student has been dismissed from the program.

Career Path

Occupational Therapy Assistants are employed in general hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, home health-care agencies, private practices, and other specialized health-care settings. Depending on your employer or the setting in which you work, your tasks may include:

- Aiding the growth and development of premature babies
- Improving learning environments for physically or mentally challenged school children
- Adapting home environments for people dealing with the effects of stroke, reduced vision, or other conditions
- Analyzing job tasks and equipment to prevent future injuries for an injured worker
- Measuring the effectiveness of treatment activities

The middle 50 percent of occupational therapy assistants earned between \$39,240 and \$57,810 in May 2008, with the highest 10 percent earning more than \$65,160. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The WSCC Occupational Therapy Assistant Program courses will be accepted for transfer to Athens State, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and University of South Alabama in the Bachelor Degree in Health Science. As of January 1, 2007 all students interested in furthering their career and becoming an occupational therapist are required to obtain a post baccalaureate degree (i.e. professional master's degree or entry level doctoral degree). Please consult STARS transfer guide for the latest information.

Completion Requirements

GENERAL REQUIRED COURSES

ORI 101* Orientation to College	1
ENG 101 English Composition I	3
Humanities/Fine Arts Elective	3
SPH 106 or 107 Speech	3
MTH 116 Mathematical Applications	3
BIO 201** Human Anatomy & Physiology I	4
HIT 110 Medical Terminology	3
CIS 146 Microcomputer Applications	3
PSY 200 General Psychology	3
	25-26

*See ORI 101 information on p. 20.

**BIO 103 is a prerequisite class for this course.

MAJOR REQUIRED COURSES

OTA 200 Occupational Therapy Fundamentals	3
OTA 205 Practical Anatomy and Kinesiology	4
OTA 208 Development Across the Life Span	3
OTA 210 Purposeful Activity	2
OTA 211 Activity Analysis	2
OTA 220 Referral and Assessment Techniques	3
OTA 221 Documentation for the OTAS & COTA	2
OTA 222 Treatment Planning & Implementation	4
OTA 223 Professional Skills Development	3
OTA 224 Service Operations Management	3
OTA 230 The Psychiatric Environment	2
OTA 231 Group Process in OT	1
OTA 240 Medical Conditions in OT	3
OTA 245 Splinting	2
OTA 250 Level I Fieldwork - A	1
OTA 251 Level I Fieldwork - B	1
OTA 252** Level II Fieldwork -A	4
OTA 253** Level II Fieldwork - B	4
OTA 260 OTA Review Seminar	1
EMS 104 First Aid	1
	49

TOTAL HOURS 74-75

**Students must complete Level II Fieldwork within 20 months following completion of academic preparation.