

Ozarks Technical Community College

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Graduates from the OTA Program at OTC receive an Associate's of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant. With this degree, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) exam for OTA. Along with state licensure, graduates are provided the opportunity to seek employment locally or throughout the United States for a job as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant.



What is the format of the OTA Program coursework?

The OTA Program is now offered in a fully hybrid format. This means that most OTA lectures are online and labs will be in-person, on the Springfield OTC campus with instructors and other students.

Students must come to campus for lab classes, as well as lab practice and testing, lecture presentations, special events and community service projects. The larger class of OTA students is divided into smaller sections for more personalized time with the instructor. The time commitment on-campus varies with the semester and the time of year.

It is possible for students to live outside of the Springfield area and still take advantage of the OTA hybrid format. For those students, it is helpful to have room and board available in Springfield for times there is bad weather or when courses require more on-campus practice time.

The hybrid program allows for more flexibility in a student's schedule, including more time for family and work responsibilities while going to school full-time. However, faculty recommend a minimum of 30 hours of devoted study time for a 15 credit hour semester in OTA. Due to the nature of the learning material, it would be very difficult for a student to hold a full-time job while participating in the OTA Program, but we have many students who continue to work while in the program.

Clinical experiences are held in various clinics, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and schools around the Springfield area, in Missouri, and in other states. Students work with our Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to schedule these experiences while in the program.



What are the requirements for applying to the OTA Program?

These requirements must be met in order for a student to be admitted:

- Submit application on time (before 4:00 p.m. on April 15)
- Submit a complete application
- Meet minimum GPA requirement in pre-requisite courses (2.5 on a 4.0 scale)



What is the required GPA for admission to the program?

Students must have a minimum 2.5 GPA *in pre-requisite courses* in order for the application to be considered.



How do I calculate my pre-requisite GPA?

To find the pre-requisite GPA, take the number of credit hours TIMES (X) the following letter grade score (A=4, B=3, C=2,). Grades of D or F will not be accepted as having met the pre-requisite. Calculate the total for all pre-requisite courses and divide by the total number of credit hours possible.



The following are not required for admission but are suggestions for improving your knowledge of the OT profession and chance for success in the OTA Program. Applicants should plan to COMMUNICATE this knowledge in the application and interview processes.

- Shadow an occupational therapy practitioner in several settings (nursing home, schools, hospitals, outpatient centers). Contact any facility, ask for the OT department, and they will be able to tell you their shadowing procedures.
- Obtain a job in a healthcare environment
- Visit www.aota.org and read about the profession
- Read journals or magazines such as OT practice, Advance for OT, or the American Journal of Occupational Therapy
- Do volunteer work or participate in health-related activities outside of school
- Take college coursework in related areas such as: adult and child development, geriatrics, computers, medical terminology, study skills, biology, psychology, or education
- Take online courses prior to entering the OTA Program
- Take a full college courseload in each semester in order to prepare for the rigor of the OTA Program courses.



What if I haven't had any previous experience in healthcare?

Students come to the OTA Program with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some have years of experience and some have none at all. Both types of students can be successful. However, the more a student understands the profession, the more satisfied one will be with the choice to pursue an occupational therapy assistant degree.



Which classes do I need to take before I apply?

The course sequence, including pre-requisites, is included in the admissions packet on the OTC website. You can find a list of pre-requisites at <https://academics.otc.edu/alliedhealth/occupational-therapy-assistant/>.

ENG 101(3CH), PSY 110(3CH), SOC 101(3CH), BCS 165*(4CH), BCS 201*(4CH), COM 100**(3CH), PLS 101(3CH)***

**Students may substitute COM 105 for the COM 100 requirement.



Since the admission deadline is April 15, can I take courses in the spring or summer and still be admitted for the fall?

In order to ***guarantee all points*** for admission into the OTA Program, all students must:

1) Be finished with all pre-requisite courses prior to the admission deadline.

or

2) Be enrolled in remaining pre-requisite courses during the spring semester in which application is made.

If a student is enrolled in pre-requisite courses on April 15, they may submit an application. Students enrolled in spring courses will be scored using their midterm grade during the admission process. If enrolled in spring coursework, students must provide proof of midterm grades when submitting their application packet. If a student is admitted while taking classes in the spring, the admission will be contingent on the student receiving a “C” or better in that course.

3) If a student still has remaining pre-requisite courses to finish in the summer after the April deadline, he/she is still eligible to apply for the OTA Program. However, he/she will receive a score of zero for any classes not started or completed by April 15. This will affect the student’s ranking in the admission process. How much it affects the ranking will be dependent on the strength of other the applicants’ files.



How many times can I repeat a course to improve my GPA?

The Allied Health Department allows a course to be repeated twice. If a prospective OTA student cannot achieve a “C” or better in a pre-requisite course on the second attempt, the course would not be counted in the application scoring process and the student would become ineligible for admission to the OTA Program. Please see the OTC Student Handbook for repeat procedures.



Do I need my transcripts sent to OTC?

All college transcripts need to be sent to OTC prior to applying for the OTA Program. High school transcripts will be needed by Allied Health if a student has less than 20 credit hours of college courses. Transcripts sent to OTC Student Services can be viewed electronically in the Allied Health department.



What if I took classes several years ago and want to apply to the OTA Program?

The program accepts most pre-requisite coursework as eligible to meet requirements, even if it was taken several years ago. Students must have a “C” or better in all pre-requisite coursework.

EXCEPTION: Student must take Anatomy and Physiology within the last 5 years before application is made. If a student is applying for admission in 2021 and took A&P in 2015, he/she will have to repeat the course(s) to be eligible for admission, as that would mean a 6 year span between admission and completion of the course.



How many people apply to the OTA Program?

Each year the program has 60-80 applicants.



What is the average GPA of admitting students?

The average GPA is 3.6 out of 4.0. for students selected to the OTA Program.



How many students are accepted into the program?

We take an average of 24-28 students for the program each fall, depending on the scores of the cohort. When deemed necessary by the Program for future fieldwork scheduling, the class size may be reduced for the application period.



I want to be an OTA, but I had to enroll in the BCS Degree at OTC. What does that mean for me?

You must be enrolled in a degree in order to receive financial aid. We suggest you enroll in the BCS degree, then start by taking the OTA pre-requisites on your list of required courses. If you are accepted into the OTA Program, you won't have spent time and money on extra courses that you don't need. If you don't get in the first time, you will still be enrolled in a degree track and can finish the degree if you choose to do so. So, again, no time or money will be wasted.



What type of computer system do I need?

Students taking online courses at OTC must have access to a computer that meets OTC's Computer Requirements for Online Courses. You can find this on the OTC website at www.otc.edu. If you have any questions about these computer requirements, please email helpdesk@otc.edu.



What are the criteria for acceptance?

Admissions Scoring:

*Academics: 60% of the total score

- Score for pre-requisite GPA (6 pre-requisite courses ONLY)
- Score for prior college degree (Points are pro-rated for level of degree)
- Score for overall college GPA (Points are pro-rated for 3.3 and above overall GPA)
- Score for prior OTA Coursework at OTC/Prior OTA coursework at different college (where applicable)

*References: 10% of the total score

- Score for each of 3 references provided

*Essay: 5% of the total score

- Score for submitted essay, reviewed by the admissions committee

*Interview: 25% of the total score (may be online or in-person)

- Scoring for individual and group participation in each step of the interview process
- Scoring for attendance at one OTA informational session during the fall or spring prior to admission

Note: OTA informational sessions are listed on the OTC website at

<http://www.otc.edu/programs/alliedhealth.php>.



Who should I use as my references?

Students should request references from people who are able to speak to the criteria on the reference form. Scoring for references is based on the points assigned to the different qualities of the applicant illustrated on the reference form. Students do not receive extra points for additional letters sent to the committee.



Do I get credit for applying in previous years? Do I get credit if I was an alternate last year?

There is no credit given for previous applications or for previous alternate status. However, applicants who were given alternate status and were not selected are encouraged to apply again.



What is the application timeline? (The timeline provided is tentative and may vary slightly as needs and schedules change).

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| ➤ April 15 | Application Deadline |
| ➤ End of April | Files reviewed by Program Director/Faculty |
| ➤ 1 st week of May | Letters regarding regret/acceptance for interviews mailed |
| ➤ Week after OTC finals in May | Interviews |
| ➤ End of May | Letters of acceptance/alternates/regret sent |
| ➤ August | New Student Orientation for all new OTA students |



What if I'm selected for an interview and/or admission and I change my mind about continuing with the admissions process?

The admissions committee understands that unexpected changes happen which may limit your ability to participate in the admissions process. We only ask that you contact the Allied Health office as soon as possible (preferably several days prior to your interview), so that other applicants may be called to take your place. As it speaks to an issue with professional behaviors, any applicant who misses the interview and has not called to cancel in an appropriate amount of time will be ineligible for admission in future years.



If I'm not accepted, can I apply again?

For most students, there is no limit to the number of times a student can apply for the OTA Program. If a student is not accepted, he/she should contact the Allied Health office at 447-8954 to activate the application for the next year. OTA applications will be good for one year from the date of the first application. After one year, students will need to reapply for admission. Students are encouraged to update any or all of their application materials from a previous year, in order to show currency in their activities.



I don't want to do anything else but be an OTA. What if I don't get in the first time?

Because there are usually more applicants than open positions, the program faculty encourages all students to reflect on his or her long term goals when applying. As members of the admissions committee, we want to maintain an unbiased review of all applicants but here are some ideas of how to proceed if you aren't admitted:

- Retake courses to achieve a higher GPA (if possible and desirable to do so)
- Take a year off to work and reapply the next year
- Continue taking coursework which supports the profession of OT or work toward an additional degree
- Review your application file for areas where materials could have been more thorough. (i.e. Did you use references who could speak to your skills? Did you communicate your experiences in your biographical essay? Did you speak specifically and confidently in the interview?)
- Take steps to improve your skills or update application materials. Remember, there are usually 2-3 times as many applicants as there are positions. You must set yourself apart from the other applicants. Help the committee to see why you are the best applicant for this position!

- ❖ For more information about specific OTA Program questions or the profession of OT, please contact:

Becky Jenkins, MS, OTR/L

OTA Program Director

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- ❖ For more information regarding OTA application materials or the application process, please contact:

Sandy Scroggins

Admissions, Allied Health Office

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- ❖ For more information regarding OTC Student Service/Financial Aid/General OTC Course Advising, please contact:

Anita Beeler or Natalie Beckler

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