

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT - AAS

Program Description

St. Catherine University founded the first two-year occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program in the country more than 60 years ago and has a long history of successfully educating occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs). The OTA program is designed to help students master occupational therapy skills, develop and refine leadership, and facilitate interpersonal and communication skills.

Occupational Therapy Assistants make a difference in people's lives. They collaborate with Occupational Therapists to help people engage in "day-to-day" activities, also known as human occupations, that contribute to their physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of life.

Students entering the St. Catherine University OTA program will experience the LIFE core curriculum (<https://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/core-curriculum/liberal-arts-science-core-curriculum-associate-programs/#newforfall2022text>), which reflects a commitment to St. Kate's mission, vision, and principles and supports students' development toward four objectives: justice, knowledge, skills, and leadership.

Students are strongly encouraged to research and understand the profession of occupational therapy before beginning the program. Information regarding the profession and career options can be found on the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) website <https://www.aota.org/>.

Philosophy and Curriculum Design

The philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is that human beings learn through engagement in meaningful occupations. Engagement in occupation influences the health and well-being of individuals and their communities. The OTA Online program takes a holistic approach to the person, recognizing the mind, body, and spirit are interdependent.

Didactic and Lab Experiences

Students will benefit from personal attention in their didactic, lab, and fieldwork experiences. Our associate of applied science degree program offers a 16-month (4 consecutive semesters) online track with face-to-face labs in Virginia, Texas, California, and Minnesota. Labs are an essential component of the OTA program, and attendance is required in order to complete the program.

Fieldwork Experience

Students can interact with individuals and groups, including well populations and those with physical, psycho-social, or developmental disabilities; work in a variety of settings, including hospitals, nursing homes, schools, rehabilitation facilities, community centers, and clients' homes; and practice their profession in collaboration with other healthcare team members. Each student completes more than 700 hours of directed fieldwork experience in a variety of healthcare and community settings. Students may have fieldwork experiences within traveling distance of their homes, although travel to a site beyond that may be required to expand the opportunities due to unforeseen variables.

All St. Catherine University students enrolled in a health care program must meet minimum immunization requirements and remain compliant throughout the completion of their program. These requirements are defined by the terms of our fieldwork contracts and are standardized across programs. OTA program students must also complete *Basic Life Safety for Healthcare Providers (BLS)*. This must be an American Heart Association or American Red Cross certification and must be completed before the first Level I fieldwork. Options other than these must be approved by a Compliance Administrator in the Clinical Clearance office.

Most states have regulations requiring all students in a clinical setting to have a criminal background check. Background checks are conducted prior to the start of classes or within the first two weeks of class each year, and the University provides all necessary forms. Any identified problems on a background check may impact a student's ability to attend labs or participate in fieldwork and progress in the program.

Professional Behaviors

Developing appropriate professional behaviors is vital to becoming a competent practitioner. The OTA program aims to help students develop and nurture professional behaviors in the academic setting, allowing them to refine these skills in their clinical fieldwork settings. Upon graduation, as an entry-level occupational therapy assistant (OTA), students will be prepared to uphold the ethical standards, values, attitudes, and behaviors of the occupational therapy profession.

Accreditation

St. Catherine University's Occupational Therapy Assistant program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814. The telephone number is (301) 652-6611, and website is <https://acoteonline.org/>.

Certification

Graduates of the OTA program can sit for the national certification examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). NBCOT is located at One Bank Street, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD, 20878. The phone number for NBCOT is (301) 990-7979, the email is info@nbcot.org, and the website is <http://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/health/occupational-science-therapy/occupational-therapy-assistant-aas/www.nbcot.org>.

When graduates apply to take the certification examination with the NBCOT, they are asked to answer questions related to felony convictions. Graduates will also be asked about felony convictions when applying for state licensure. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to complete fieldwork experiences, sit for the NBCOT certification examination, or attain state licensure. Contact NBCOT or your state licensing board for further information on these limitations.

After successfully completing the NBCOT exam, the individual will be certified as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. Many states have some form of regulation to practice. Generally, state regulations are based on the successful completion of the NBCOT certification examination.

Time to Complete the Program

Students complete their professional (OTA) course sequence in as few as 16 months, which consists of 4 consecutive semesters. A maximum of two courses from the supporting course and LIFE general education core

can be taken during the first three semesters of OTA coursework. Level II Fieldwork is completed in the final semester in accordance with the curriculum design and the program policies.

Eligibility Requirements to Begin the Professional Sequence of Courses:

After admission to the University, students must meet the following requirements to be eligible to begin the professional sequence of courses.

- An overall GPA of 2.5
- A cumulative prerequisite GPA of 2.5
- No more than two general education core requirements remaining to be completed
- All prerequisite courses must be taken for a letter grade, except for Medical Terminology, which may be taken S/U. (All courses must be taken at an accredited school.)

Prerequisite Requirements

Prerequisites must be completed with a grade of C or better (except for Medical Terminology, which may be taken S/U) before beginning the professional sequence of courses. A minimum prerequisite and cumulative GPA of 2.5 is required.

Any of the four courses in which a grade less than a C is earned must be repeated.

Students should strive for more than the minimum grade of C for all prerequisites; earning a C in all courses will not meet the 2.5 prerequisite GPA requirement.

Academic Progression

To successfully complete the OTA Program, the student must meet the following requirements:

- Earn a D or better in every general education core requirement.
- Earn a C or better in every prerequisite, supporting course, and OTA program course.

Failure to meet any one of these requirements will result in a student being placed on probation. Students placed on probation for a second time will be dismissed from the program. Specific and detailed progression policies are available to admitted students.

See also: Master of Arts in Occupational Therapy (<http://catalog.stkate.edu/graduate/health/occupational-science-therapy/maot/>) (graduate catalog) (<http://catalog.stkate.edu/graduate/health/occupational-science-therapy/maot/>)

Curriculum

In addition to the program-required courses, students must complete the LIFE general education core curriculum (<http://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/core-curriculum/liberal-arts-science-core-curriculum-associate-programs/>).

The A.A.S. OTA program requires a minimum of 63 credits.

Prerequisite Requirements

All prerequisites must be completed before starting OTA courses. Any of the four courses in which a grade less than a C is earned must be repeated. Students should strive for more than the minimum grade of

C for all prerequisites; earning a C in all courses will not meet the 2.5 prerequisite GPA requirement.

Code	Title	Credits
BIOL 2400	General Anatomy and Physiology with Lab ¹	4
IPE 1020	Medical Terminology	1
PSYC 1000	General Psychology	4
PSYC 2020	Lifespan Developmental Psychology ¹	4
Total Credits		13

¹ Must have been completed no more than five years prior to entering the University to be considered for transfer.

Required OTA Courses

Code	Title	Credits
A minimum grade of C is required in these courses.		
OTA 1100	Foundations of Human Occupation with Lab	2
OTA 1120	Role of the OTA with Lab	2
OTA 1140	Psychosocial Approaches I with Lab	2
OTA 1150	Professional Growth and Engagement with Lab	2
OTA 1280	Level I Fieldwork	1
OTA 1290	Level I Fieldwork	1
OTA 2240	Psychosocial Approaches II with Lab	2
OTA 2250	Rehabilitation Practice I with Lab	2
OTA 2265	Rehabilitation Practice II	2
OTA 2275	Pediatric Practice I	2
OTA 2355	Level II Fieldwork	6
OTA 2365	Level II Fieldwork	6
OTA 2370	Pediatric Practice II with Lab	2
OTA 2380	Aging with Lab	2
OTA 2390	Primary Care and OT with Lab	2
OTA 2420	Applied Skills with Lab	2
Total Credits		38

Required Supporting Course

A maximum of two courses from the supporting course and LIFE general education core lists can be taken during the first semester of OTA coursework.

Code	Title	Credits
A minimum grade of C is required in this course		
PHIL 2440	Healthcare Ethics	4
Total Credits		4

Code	Title	Credits
Fall Term		
BIOL 2400	General Anatomy and Physiology with Lab	4
IPE 1020	Medical Terminology	1
PHIL 2440	Healthcare Ethics	4
PSYC 1000	General Psychology	4
PSYC 2020	Lifespan Developmental Psychology	4
Spring Term		

CORE 1000W	The Reflective Woman	4
OTA 1100	Foundations of Human Occupation with Lab	2
OTA 1120	Role of the OTA with Lab	2
OTA 1140	Psychosocial Approaches I with Lab	2
OTA 1280	Level I Fieldwork	1
Summer Term		
OTA 1290	Level I Fieldwork	1
OTA 2240	Psychosocial Approaches II with Lab	2
OTA 2250	Rehabilitation Practice I with Lab	2
OTA 2275	Pediatric Practice I	2
THEO 1000	Theological Questions	4
Fall Term		
OTA 2370	Pediatric Practice II with Lab	2
OTA 2380	Aging with Lab	2
OTA 2390	Primary Care and OT with Lab	2
OTA 2420	Applied Skills with Lab	2
Spring Term		
OTA 2355	Level II Fieldwork	6
OTA 2365	Level II Fieldwork	6
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Spring Term		
BIOL 2400	General Anatomy and Physiology with Lab	4
IPE 1020	Medical Terminology	1
PHIL 2440	Healthcare Ethics	4
PSYC 1000	General Psychology	4
PSYC 2020	Lifespan Developmental Psychology	4
Summer Term		
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Fall Term		
OTA 1290	Level I Fieldwork	1
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OTA 2250	Rehabilitation Practice I with Lab	2
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OTA 2380	Aging with Lab	2
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OTA 2420	Applied Skills with Lab	2
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OTA 2355	Level II Fieldwork	6
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Summer Term		
BIOL 2400	General Anatomy and Physiology with Lab	4
IPE 1020	Medical Terminology	1
PHIL 2440	Healthcare Ethics	4
PSYC 1000	General Psychology	4
PSYC 2020	Lifespan Developmental Psychology	4
Fall Term		
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OTA 1140	Psychosocial Approaches I with Lab	2
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OTA 2265	Rehabilitation Practice II	2
OTA 2275	Pediatric Practice I	2
THEO 1000	Theological Questions	4
Summer Term		
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OTA 2390	Primary Care and OT with Lab	2
OTA 2420	Applied Skills with Lab	2
Fall Term		
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OTA 2365	Level II Fieldwork	6