



Occupational Therapy Assistant Information

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q. What does an occupational therapist assistant (OTA) do?

A. The occupational therapy assistant utilizes purposeful activity with persons who are limited by physical injury or illness, psychosocial dysfunction, developmental or learning disabilities, poverty, cultural differences, or the aging process. Specific occupational therapy direct services include teaching daily living skills; developing perceptual motor skills and sensory integrative functioning; and promoting play skills, vocational abilities, and leisure capacities. In addition, they fabricate and apply selected orthotic devices and assistive technology; adapt work, home and school environments; and administer standardized assessments.

Q. Where are occupational therapist assistants employed?

- A. Occupation therapy assistants are employed in a variety of settings, including:
- Hospital and Clinics
 - Rehabilitation Centers
 - Public and Private Schools
 - Camps
 - Business and Industry
 - Community Facilities
 - Home Health Agencies
 - Nursing Homes and Residential Centers
 - Correctional Facilities
 - Mental Health Centers
 - Private Practice

The OTA is prepared to work with a variety of populations including, but not limited to, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly in areas of physical and mental health as well as emerging areas of practice.

Q. What is the employment outlook for occupational therapists?

A. The outlook is excellent. Employment in the field is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations because of public interest in the rehabilitation of disabled persons is high, the U.S. population is aging, and established occupational therapy programs are highly successful.

Q. How do I become an occupational therapy assistant?

A. The University of Southern Indiana offers an occupation therapy assistant associate degree. Students enroll in 27 credit hours of core curriculum courses, and 49 credit hours of OTA course work. The OTA course work includes 43 credit hours of didactic coursework and six credit hours of clinical fieldwork. Clinical fieldwork experience commences after all didactic coursework is completed. Fieldwork is generally completed over a 16-week period, with the student working and learning alongside an experienced occupational therapy practitioner on a full-time basis for the duration, however, fieldwork may be complete on a part-time basis with some limitations.

Q. What kinds of OTA educational programs are available?

A. To become an occupational therapy assistant, you may complete either a two year associate degree program or one of a limited number of 12 to 14 month certificate programs. Each type of program also includes a minimum of 4 months of supervised clinical education or internship. USI offers an associate of science degree.

Q. What credentials will I have once I graduate?

- A. Graduates are eligible to sit for the national certification for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will have the title certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA). Most states require licensure in order to practice; however, state credentials are usually based on the successful passing of the NBCOT certification exam.

Q. Is USI Occupational Therapy Assistant Program accredited?

- A. 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, PO Box 31220, Bethesda, Maryland 20824-2682, 301-652-2682.

Q. How do I enroll in the USI Occupational Therapy Assistant Program?

- A. The program selects students for admission to the OTA program on the basis of:
- Admission to University
 - Completion of OTA Core Curriculum and a minimum GPA of 2.7 on a 4.0 scale.
 - Submission of all materials in admissions packet by January 20 of year planning to be admitted to the fall class.
 - Interview with Occupation Therapists Admission Committee
 - The selection of students for admission to the program is based on a combination score that includes the standardized interview with occupational therapists (50%) and cumulative GPA (50%). Thirty students with the highest scores are admitted to the OTA program

Q. Can I transfer credits from another educational program toward a degree in occupational therapy assistant?

- A. Credits applicable to the required USI OTA courses may be transferred from an accredited college/university.

Q. What is the USI pass rate on the NBCOT certification exam?

- A. The pass rate average for the last three graduating classes 2004 – 2006 is 82% for first time test takers.

Q. Where do I go to get further information about occupational therapy assistant and the University of Southern Indiana's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program?

- A. AOTA's website- <http://www.aota.org/> or Contact the USI Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at 812-465-1140 or the Internet:
USI's website- <http://health.usi.edu/acadprog/ota/index.php>

For more information contact USI Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at 812-465-1140.