



Occupational Therapy

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MARCH 9TH, 2018

Occupational Therapist (OTs)

Work with individuals who suffer from a mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling condition.

Occupational therapists use treatments to develop, recover, or maintain the daily living and work skills of their patients.

The therapist helps clients not only to improve their basic motor functions and reasoning abilities, but also to compensate for permanent loss of function.



Tasks

- Review patients' medical history, ask them questions, and observe them doing tasks
- Evaluate a patient's condition and needs
- Develop a treatment plan for patients, identifying specific goals and activities
- Help people with various disabilities perform different tasks, such as teaching a stroke victim how to get dressed
- Demonstrate exercises
- Evaluate a patient's home or workplace and, on the basis of the patient's health needs, identify potential improvements
- Educate a patient's family/employer about accommodating and caring for the patient
- Recommend special equipment and instruct patients on how to use it
- Assess and record patients' activities and progress for patient evaluations, for billing, and for reporting to physicians and other healthcare providers

Preparation

A master's degree or higher in occupational therapy

Must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) at an institution accredited by recognized institutional accrediting agencies. Currently, 200 exist.

Admission to graduate programs in occupational therapy generally requires a bachelor's degree and specific coursework, including biology and physiology. Many programs also require applicants to have volunteered or worked in an occupational therapy setting.

Occupational therapists are expected to continue their professional development by participating in continuing education courses and workshops are conditions of maintaining licensure.



Work Environment

- Usually work on a team with other health care workers
- Design programs for clients with doctors, physical therapists, and social workers
- Record clients progress so they can adjust these programs as needed
- Must be able to assess clients' abilities by talking to client about their abilities and watching them do common tasks

Areas of Work

Hospitals	Community care centers
Nursing Homes	Social service agencies
School Boards	Rehabilitation clinics
Consulting agencies	Colleges

Wages

Hourly Wage | \$31.19 | 8 to 9 hours/ day
Annual Wage | \$64,870

Additional Details

Involves: Physical activity | attend events or presentations | some have private practices | interaction with diverse group of people

Training & Education

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) accredits educational programs for the occupational therapy assistant.

Occupational Outlook

Quick Facts: Occupational Therapists	
2016 Median Pay [?]	\$81,910 per year \$39.38 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education [?]	Master's degree
Work Experience in a Related Occupation [?]	None
On-the-job Training [?]	None
Number of Jobs, 2016 [?]	130,400
Job Outlook, 2016-26 [?]	21% (Much faster than average)
Employment Change, 2016-26 [?]	27,700

Areas of Specialization



Children and Youth



Health and Wellness



Mental Health



Work and Industry



Rehabilitation, Participation, and Disability



Productive Aging

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAMS

Occupational Therapist Assistant (OTAs)

Assist occupational therapists in providing occupational therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with State laws, assist in development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, direct activity programs, and document the progress of treatments.

Additional Titles: Staff Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant/Licensed (Staff COTA/L), School Based Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, Rehabilitation Assistant, and Occupational Therapy Technician

Duties

- Assist educational specialists or clinical psychologists in administering situational or diagnostic tests to measure client's abilities or progress.
- Design, fabricate, or repair assistive devices or make adaptive changes to equipment or environments.
- Transport patients to and from the occupational therapy work area.
- Order any needed educational or treatment supplies.
- Attend care plan meetings to review patient progress and update care plans.
- Assemble, clean, or maintain equipment or materials for patient use.
- Perform clerical duties, such as scheduling appointments, collecting data, or documenting health insurance billings.
- Demonstrate therapy techniques, such as manual or creative arts or games.
- Teach patients how to deal constructively with their emotions.
- Work under the direction of occupational therapists to plan, implement, or administer educational, vocational, or recreational programs that restore or enhance performance in individuals with functional impairments.

NEED TO KNOW

Customer and Personal Service
Psychology
English Language
Education and Training
Therapy and Counseling

NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO

Active Listening
Speaking
Social Perceptiveness
Reading Comprehension
Writing
Time Management
Service Orientation

Accredited OTA Programs

- American Career College-Orange County Campus
- CBD College
- Grossmont College
- Sacramento City College
- Santa Ana College
- Stanbridge University

OTA @ Santa Ana College

Prerequisites

- ANATOMY 1
- PHYSIOLOGY 1
- COMM 101
- ENGLISH 101
- PSYCH 1
- PSYCH 14

First Year-Semester I

OTA 100, Terminology & Documentation for the OTA (1)
 OTA 101, Foundation of Occupation & Occupational Therapy (4)
 OTA 101L, Exploration of Occupation Through Activity (2)
 OTA 110, Human Occupation Across Lifespan (3)

First Year-Semester II

OTA 102, Psychosocial Function & Dysfunction (4)
 OTA 102L, Psychosocial Components of Occupation (2.5)
 OTA 111, Applied Kinesiology (1)
 OTA 115, Human Disease and Occupation (2)

Second Year-Semester III

OTA 103, Physical Function and Dysfunction (4)
 OTA 103L, Physical Components of Occupation (2.5)
 OTA 201, Contemp. Models of Occupational Therapy Practice (4)

Second Year-Semester IV

OTA 202, Level II Fieldwork-Part I (6)
 OTA 203, Level II Fieldwork Part II (6)

Total Units Required for Major: 45

Pathways into the Field

Occupational Therapy Assistant Programs:

Entry Requirement: Graduation from high school, completion of CED/HSED, or completion of an associate's degree or higher
 Sample admissions criteria: St. Charles Community College
 Length of Program: Typically 2 years
 Degree(s) Awarded: Associate's degree

Entry Level OTD Degree Programs:

Entry Requirement: Enter with the minimum of a completed bachelor's degree
 Sample admissions criteria: University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
 Length of Program: Typically 2 to 3 years duration
 Degree(s) Awarded: OTD degree

Entry Level Master's Degree Programs:

Entry Requirement: Enter with the minimum of a completed bachelor's degree (Note: Some programs will accept applicants while bachelor's degree is still in progress).
 Sample admissions criteria: University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Length of Program: Typically 2 to 3 years
 Degree(s) Awarded: Master's degree.

Combined Baccalaureate/Entry Level Master's Degree Programs:

Entry Requirement: Commonly enter as a college freshman (note: many programs allow undergraduate transfers).
 Sample admissions criteria: Philadelphia University
 Length of Program: Typically 3 to 5 years (depending on point of entry)
 Degree(s) Awarded: Bachelor's degree and Master's degree

OTA to OT Degree Bridge Programs:

Entry Requirement: Completed an accredited Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (Note: Some programs will require additional prerequisites and completed Bachelor's degree).
 Sample admissions criteria: Brenau University
 Length of Program: Typically 2 to 3 years
 Degree(s) Awarded: Master's degree



ENTRY-LEVEL MASTER'S PROGRAM

Entry-Level Master's

Entry-level master's degree programs prepare students to be entry level practitioners and to sit for the NBCOT Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR®) examination.

Students may enter occupational therapist entry-level master's degree programs with any of a variety of undergraduate degrees or as undergraduates in a combined undergraduate/graduate program. Graduates from these programs are typically awarded the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) or Master of Science (MS) degree.

The degree awarded is an institutional prerogative based on consistency with the mission and structure of the college/university. Entry-level programs must be accredited by ACOTE at an institution accredited by recognized institutional accrediting agencies. Occupational therapist entry-level programs must meet minimum educational standards set by ACOTE for fieldwork. A minimum of 24 weeks of full-time Level II fieldwork is required for entry-level OT programs.

Accredited Entry-Level Master's Programs

- California State University Dominguez Hills
- Dominican University of California
- Loma Linda University
- Samuel Merritt College
- San Jose State University
- Stanbridge College
- University of Southern California
- University of St. Augustine
- West Coast University



DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Doctoral Program


Like entry-level master's programs, entry-level doctoral programs prepare graduates to enter the profession as new practitioners. The doctoral degree offers additional semesters of study focusing on clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development. According to ACOTE Standards, all doctoral programs must require their applicants to hold a baccalaureate degree or higher prior to admission, whereas that is not a requirement for the master's programs. Based on the ACOTE Standards, there are greater expectations for entry-level doctoral student outcomes related to technology, program development, staff development, synthesis and practice of advanced knowledge, and demonstrated competency in clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, or theory development.

Entry-level doctoral programs require a minimum of 24 weeks of Level II fieldwork experiences as well as an additional experiential component (16 weeks) and culminating project. The experiential component facilitates the development of advanced skills beyond the generalist level in one or more of the following areas: administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development.

Accredited Doctoral Programs

Most programs are out of state but the following are a few examples


Northern Arizona University
Arkansas State University
Indiana Wesleyan University
Creighton University
Ohio State University
University of South Dakota



Entry-Level Masters Program vs. Doctoral Program

Educational curricula vary among master's-level and doctoral-level programs and are based on institutional prerogative. The variance in curricula can create confusion when comparing programs and degrees. Despite the variance among specific programs, accredited entry-level master's and entry-level doctoral programs meet the ACOTE requirements for entry-level programs.

ACOTE Standards for an Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist establish minimum standards that must be met by all accredited occupational therapist entry-level programs. These standards maintain consistency of content among the programs. Individual programs may include additional content in the program of study and may deliver the content in different ways.



Preparing to Become an OT

How Long Will it Take?

Associate Degree
(2-3 years)

+

Bachelor's Degree
(2-3 years)

+

Master's Degree
(2-3 years)

&

Receive the Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR) through the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) exam

What Should I Major in?

According to the American Occupational Therapy Association, a variety of undergraduate majors can prepare aspiring occupational therapists for the graduate-level study they need to work in the field. These include [kinesiology](#), [psychology](#), [anthropology](#), [biology](#), and [sociology](#).

Los Angeles Mission College offers the following degrees in preparation:

AS-T Biology
AA-T Psychology
AS-T Kinesiology
AA-T Sociology
AS Health Science

Prerequisites

ANATOMY 1	Anatomy
PHYSIOLOGY 1	Physiology
MATH 227	Statistics
PSYCH 041	Lifespan Development
PSYCH 14	Abnormal Psychology
SOCIOLOGY 1 or ANTHRO 102	Intro to Sociology or Cultural Anthro
BIOLOGY 33	Medical Terminology

Traditional Occupational Therapy Courses



Comp Exams

OT 440 Foundations: Kinesiology (2 units)
OT 441 Foundations: Neuroscience (2 units)
OT 405 Foundations: Occupation (2 units)
OT 406 Foundations: Creativity, Craft and Activity Analysis (2 units)
OT 501 Adult Physical Rehabilitation/OT 502 Mental Health/OT 503 Pediatrics
OT 511 Therapeutic Use of Self (2 units)
OT 515 Neuroscience of Behavior (4 units)
OT 518 Quantitative Research for Evidence-Based Practice (4 units)
OT 501 Adult Physical Rehabilitation/OT 502 Mental Health/OT 503 Pediatrics
OT 521 Clinical Reasoning (3 units)
OT 523 Communication Skills for Effective Practice (3 units)
OT 525 Qualitative Research for Evidence-Based Practice (4 units)
OT 586 Clinical Internship with Seminar (2 units)

Thesis

OT 501 Adult Physical Rehabilitation/ OT 502 Mental Health/ OT 503 Pediatrics
OT 534 Health Promotion and Wellness (2 units)
OT 537 Occupation-Centered Programs for the Community (4 units)
OT 538 Current Issues in Practice: Adulthood & Aging (2 units)
OT 540 Leadership Capstone (2 units)
OT 545 Advanced Seminar in Occupational Science (2 units)
OT 586 Clinical Internship with Seminar (2 units)
OT 501 Adult Physical Rehabilitation/ OT 502 Mental Health/ OT 503 Pediatrics
OT 534 Health Promotion and Wellness (2 units)
OT 537 Occupation-Centered Programs for the Community (4 units)
OT 538 Current Issues in Practice: Adulthood & Aging (2 units)
OT 540 Leadership Capstone (2 units)
OT 545 Advanced Seminar in Occupational Science (2 units)
OT 594a Thesis (2 units)
OT 586 Clinical Internship with Seminar (2 units)
OT 594a Thesis (2 units)

This would be a sample of the courses you would be taking to receive a Master's Degree in occupational therapy. This specific schedule is if you were to get a Entry-Level Professional Master of Arts degree program at USC, but this is similar to most programs.

Traditional Occupational Therapy Courses

OT 515 Neuroscience of Behavior (4 units)
OT 525 Qualitative Research for Evidence-Based Practice (4 units)
OT 534 Health Promotion and Wellness (2 units)
OT 538 Current Issues in Practice: Adulthood and Aging (2 units)
OT 581 Quantitative Research for the Practicing Clinician (4 units)
OT 540 Leadership Capstone (2 units)
OT 545 Advanced Seminar in Occupational Science (2 units)
Elective Courses (4 units)
OT 620 Current Issues in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy (4 units)
OT 686 Part-time Residency (6 units)
OT 621 Occupational Therapy Leadership: Contemporary Issues (4 units)
OT 686 Part-time Residency (6 units)
Elective Course (4 units)
OT 686 Full-time Residency (12 units)

This would be a sample of the courses you would be taking to receive a Doctorate of Occupational Therapy Degree (OTD). This specific schedule is if you were to get a OTD at USC, but this is similar to most programs.

*Admission Criteria

- Complete entry level Occupational Therapy degree with a minimum (GPA) of 3.0 from an accredited college or university.
- Be certified or eligible for certification in Occupational Therapy in the US
- Complete the GRE min. score of 153 on the verbal section, 144 on the quantitative section, and 3.5 on the analytical writing section.
- Submit three letters of recommendation from professors, therapists, and/or other professionals familiar with your capabilities and achievements.
- Show evidence of academic potential (based on Master's level study if relevant), research skills and interest
- Submit a personal statement
- English Proficiency
- An Internet Based TOEFL (iBT) score of 90 with no less than 20 on each sub-score; or
- An IELTS of 6.5 with no less than 6 on each band score.

*According to USC'S OTD Program

OT PANEL

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