

# Occupational Therapy Assistant

## Degree Type

Associate of Science

Occupational therapy is the profession for individuals who enjoy solving challenging problems that help people of all ages overcome physical, developmental, mental and/or emotional disabilities and achieve independence; you will find many opportunities in the field of occupational therapy. The need for therapists will grow well into the 21st century, reflecting the importance of function, prevention of disability, and promotion of health. The Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA), under the supervision of a registered Occupational Therapist, uses therapeutic activities to help people with an illness or disability live healthy, productive lives. Therapy is functional, purposeful, and individualized for each client. In the classroom, students experience simulated and actual clinical activities. Students will learn vital skills to safely work with people with many types of abilities, disabilities, and functional challenges.

## American Occupational Therapy Association Vision 2025

As an inclusive profession, occupational therapy maximizes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living. (AOTA, 2017) [<https://www.aota.org/about/mission-vision>]

## Admission Requirements

General college admission requirement:

- High School Diploma including general education core.

**Program requirements: (all located in the OTA Admission Packet located on RVCC website:**

<https://www.rivervalley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/OTA-Program-Admissions-2024.pdf>):

- Demonstration of knowledge of the field of occupational therapy through flexible pathways (more information available in the OTA Application packet)
- Signed Essential Skills Agreement
- Signed Licensure/Liability Agreement
- A pre-admissions advising appointment with the Program Director after all program and college application materials are submitted.

## Curriculum Grading and Progression Through Program

Students who earn less than a “B-” (80%) grade for any professional course must repeat that course. Students who repeat the course for the second time and earn less than a “B-” grade will be suspended from the program for one semester. Students who earn less than a “C” (73%) grade for any liberal arts course must repeat that course. Students who repeat the course for a second time and earn less than a “C” grade should refer to the Student Handbook policy. At selected points in the curriculum. Students must pass a comprehensive examination in order to progress.

## Curriculum Flexibility

The curriculum may be completed in two to three years. A curriculum plan is individualized for each student and done so with the OTA Program Director. All students must complete the curriculum within a three year period from the date of their matriculation.

# Criminal Background History: Consideration for Applicants

Background checks are required for all OTA students and are completed in the first semester of the program. A student with a criminal background accepted into the OTA program may have difficulty being placed for Level II Fieldwork. Some fieldwork sites have policies forbidding the placing of students with certain criminal backgrounds in their settings. It is important for the OTA academic fieldwork coordinator to be aware of any student with a criminal background so efforts may be made, sooner than later, to establish for him or her, a fieldwork site.

Taking and passing the national certification exam is mandatory for practicing occupational therapy in the United States. States require OT practitioners to be licensed. A passing score on the certification exam is typically a requirement to secure an OT/OTA state license. Prospective students who have been convicted of felonies and/or other serious crimes (as defined by NBCOT) may not be eligible to take the national certification exam to become an Occupational Therapy Practitioner.

As of January 1, 2019, the NBCOT will implement its Policy for Presumptive Denial. Exam candidates who do not meet NBCOT eligibility requirements have the right to appeal any decision made by the NBCOT.

NBCOT Presumptive Denial Policy URL: [https://www.nbcot.org/-/media/NBCOT/PDFs/Presumptive\\_Denial\\_Policy.ashx](https://www.nbcot.org/-/media/NBCOT/PDFs/Presumptive_Denial_Policy.ashx) NBCOT Early Determination Review Any potential or current OTA student concerned about his/her future eligibility to take the certification exam, as it relates to his or her criminal background may participate in NBCOT's Early Determination Review. NBCOT Early Determination Review Payment Form URL: <https://www.nbcot.org/-/media/NBCOT/PDFs/early-determination-review-paymentform.ashx?la=en>

## Program Accreditation

The Associate-level Occupational Therapy Assistant program is accredited by Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

ACOTE  
7501 Wisconsin Avenue  
Suite 510E  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 652-6611  
accred@aota.org  
www.acoteonline.org

Graduates of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program will be eligible to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) certification exam. Upon successful completion of the exam, individuals will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). All states require licensure in order to practice. State licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification exam or attain state licensure.

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Total Credits

69-71

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### Course Sequencing

## First Year: Fall Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
AHLT104R	Introduction to Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy	1
OCTA110R	Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy	2
AHLT112R	Clinical Conditions for Occupational/Physical Therapy	3
AHLT135R	Foundations of Rehabilitation	3
BIOL201R	Anatomy and Physiology I	4
PSYC101R	Introduction to Psychology	3

## First Year: Spring Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
AHLT123R	Functional Kinesiology	3
OCTA213R	Psychosocial Function in Occupational Therapy	3
OCTA214R	Physical Function in Occupational Therapy	3
OCTA120R	Foundations of Professional Practice	2
OCTA190R	OTA Level IA Fieldwork	1
BIOL202R	Anatomy and Physiology II	4

## First Year: Summer Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
PSYC114R	Human Development	3
ENGL102R	College Composition	4

## Second Year: Fall Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
AHLT210R	Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy Management	2
AHLT220R	Clinical Neurology	2
OCTA221R	Clinical Neurology Lab for OTA	1
OCTA212R	Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics	3
OCTA230R	Advanced Concepts in Professional Practice	1
OCTA215R	Occupational Therapy for Aging Populations	1
OCTA192R	OTA Level IB Fieldwork	1
	Mathematics Elective	3-4
	Humanities/Fine Arts/World Language Elective	3-4

## Second Year: Spring Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
OCTA290R	OTA Level IIa Fieldwork Experience	6
OCTA291R	OTA Level IIb Fieldwork Experience	6
OCTA220R	Seminar in Occupational Therapy	2