

## Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

### Frequently Asked Questions



What can I do to improve my chance of admission?

**These requirements must be met in order to be admitted:**

- Submit application on time
- Submit a complete application
- Meet minimum GPA requirement

**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:**

- Shadow an occupational therapy practitioner in several settings (nursing home, schools, hospitals, outpatient centers)
- Take a job in a healthcare environment
- Maintain a good GPA in pre-requisite courses
- Visit [www.aota.org](http://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



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. Students may pick up a packet from the Allied Health Office in Lincoln Hall or call 447-8954 to request a packet. There are 4 pre-requisite courses which **MUST** be completed prior to admission. There are two additional general education courses which can be completed prior to admission or after acceptance to the program. Those who have completed COM and PLS prior to admission will receive additional points in admissions scoring as this demonstrates additional experience with college level coursework.



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

If the courses are pre-requisite courses, we will still allow you to submit an application by April 15. If you are enrolled in spring courses, your midterm grade will be scored 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.

If pre-requisite courses are planned for the summer semester after the packet is due, we will still accept your packet. However, you will receive a zero score for the classes which are not completed at the time of admission. This may affect your ranking in the application process. If a student is admitted while taking classes in the summer, the admission will be contingent on the student receiving a "C" or better in that course.



How many applicants do you have?

On average, the program has 50-55 applicants.



How many people do you accept in the program?

There are 20 positions available for the program each fall.



How many times can I repeat a course?

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.



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 x the letter grade score (A=4, B=3, C=2, D or F would not be accepted). Calculate the total for all 4 pre-requisite courses and divide by the total number of credit hours possible.



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.



What are the criteria for acceptance?

**Students receive admission scores for:**

Academics: 65%

- Pre-requisite GPA (4 pre-requisite courses ONLY)
- Required general education GPA (PLS and COM if completed)
- Prior OTA Coursework
- Prior College Degree (Points adjusted for level of degree)

References: 5%

Biographical Essay: 10%

Interview: 20%



What is the application timeline?

- April 15—Application Deadline
- End of April —Files reviewed by Program Coordinator/Faculty
- 1st week of May—Letters regarding regret/acceptance for interviews mailed
- Second through fourth week in May (date selected by committee)—Interviews
- End of May—Letters of acceptance/alternates/regret sent
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of June—OTA Orientation Day (Tentative)



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 the referral source assigns to the different qualities of the applicant.



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
- 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 until the next admission period
- Review your application file for areas where it could have been more thorough or scored higher (i.e. Did you use references who could speak to your skills? Did you set yourself apart in the biographical essay? Did you have difficulty expressing yourself in the interview?)
- Take steps to improve your skills or update application materials