

Occupational Therapy Assistant

Degree Type

Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

Admission Requirements

Procedure for Admission into the Professional Phase of the Associate of Science or Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Admission into the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program is a two-step process:

1. Candidates are eligible to enter the general education phase of the OTA program as "OTA students" by meeting South University's General Undergraduate Admission Requirements.
2. Candidates must complete prerequisite coursework and meet all requirements outlined below to be eligible for admission to the professional phase of the OTA program.

Students may transfer prerequisite courses into the program before entering the professional phase if approved by the registrar. The coursework that is transferred to South University must permit the student to obtain a 2.85 CGPA by the time the student applies for admission into the OTA professional phase. Students who transfer coursework into South University but cannot mathematically attain a CGPA of 2.85 by the time they would enter the professional phase will not be admitted to the OTA program.

Transfer credit will not be accepted for South University courses with an OTA prefix.

Note: This policy does not apply to South University OTA students (in good standing) transferring between campuses.

Admission Requirements for the Professional Phase of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Applicants must apply for admission into the professional phase of the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program. Applicants must submit a complete application packet and meet all admission requirements as stated below to enter the ranking process. The professional phase slots will be filled by applicants with the greatest academic potential for success as determined by the ranking process. Applicants with the highest numerical ranking will be admitted to the professional phase of the program.

The criteria to determine admission to the OTA program include:

1. Application must be submitted seven (7) weeks prior to the start of the professional phase of the program.
2. Applicants must meet the Essential Functions of the OTA program.
3. Applicants must have a minimum grade of 'C' or above in all prerequisites, except for the following course, in which students must achieve a minimum grade of 'B' or above: OTA1003 Introduction to Occupational Therapy Assistant. (OTA1001 Introduction to Occupational Therapy is an acceptable substitution.)
4. Applicants must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.85 or greater in prerequisite coursework. All prerequisite coursework must be successfully completed prior to entry into the Professional Phase of the OTA program.

Applicants must have successfully completed the following courses in the past seven years from the intended start date of the Professional Phase of the OTA program: Medical Terminology, Anatomy and Physiology I (lecture and

lab) and Anatomy and Physiology II (lecture and lab). Applicants must have successfully completed OTA1003 Introduction to Occupational Therapy Assistant in the past two years from the intended start of the Professional Phase of the OTA Program. (OTA1001 Introduction to Occupational Therapy is an acceptable substitution.)

Ranking of Applicants for Admission into the Professional OTA Curriculum will be based upon the following criteria:

1. Cumulative GPA in required prerequisite coursework (2.85 or greater required).
2. Science GPA (2.0 or greater required). Science coursework will not be accepted if greater than 7 years old.
 - a. [AHS1001](#) Medical Terminology
 - b. [BIO1011](#) Anatomy and Physiology I
 - c. [BIO1012](#) Anatomy and Physiology I Lab
 - d. [BIO1013](#) Anatomy and Physiology II
 - e. [BIO1014](#) Anatomy and Physiology II Lab

NOTE: If a qualified student is not accepted or if a student is unable to matriculate into the Professional OTA Curriculum, they may use that same application to apply into the next cohort on that same campus within one year from the date of application submission. After that time, the student must apply as a new student.

Essential Functions for the OTA Program

The following are considered to be essential functions related to the profession of occupational therapy to be successful in the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program and in future employment as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA).

It is the responsibility of the OTA Program at South University to inform students considering a career as a COTA about the essential functions required both in the academic program and in the workforce. Factors and requirements will vary, depending on the specific area of practice and work setting.

Students must demonstrate safe and continuous application of these essential functions or of any and all others that are integral to the success of the OTA student and future occupational therapy practitioner. Students will display professional behaviors, assess their own performance with respect to the behaviors, and be ready to make behavioral changes as directed by academic and clinical faculty.

In addition, the OTA Progressions Committee may become involved in issues related to a student's performance of the essential functions. The OTA Progressions Committee may make recommendations to the OTA Program Director that result in, but are not limited to, a lower course grade, the creation of a remediation plan, exclusion from a course, dismissal from a Level I or Level II Fieldwork experience, professional behavior probation or dismissal from the OTA program and/or South University.

Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C.A. Section 794, and the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination against "otherwise qualified" persons with a disability. South University provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disability Services office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

All students must demonstrate competency in the following essential functions related to the profession of occupational therapy:

Behavioral/Emotional Functions

Adaptation: The ability to respond with flexibility to change or difference.

Emotional Stability: The ability to control one's own emotions, differentiate between different emotions and identify each appropriately; use emotions to guide thinking and direct behavior.

Interpersonal Skills: The ability to interact effectively with others.

Safety: Maintain the well-being of others in compliance with policies and procedures.

Ethics: The ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to comply with authority and with policies and procedures.

Professional Behavior and Appearance: The ability to adjust behavior and appearance in response to given circumstances.

Cognitive Functions

Critical Thinking: The ability to define and resolve issues by asking questions, gathering and analyzing information.

Time Management: The ability to identify and prioritize tasks to be accomplished and maintain work pace appropriate to given work load.

Math, Reading Comprehension: The ability to apply basic math functions, calculate time and simple measurements; comprehend written words.

Perception: The ability to be aware of things in relation to others and to discriminate between those relationships.

Communication Functions

Verbal: The ability to speak using the English language, clearly communicating and clarifying information.

Written: The ability to communicate legibly and concisely in English, using proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, style and formatting.

Listening, Comprehending, Responding: The ability to hear, understand and respond appropriately to what was communicated.

Sensory Functions

Hearing: The auditory ability to detect sound within 10 feet away, sufficient to monitor clients and interact with others.

Touch: The ability to come into physical contact with something and perceive that it is there.

Vision: The ability to look at and see something or someone close-up and from a distance greater than 20 feet, noting verbal and nonverbal postures or behaviors.

Physical Functions

Fine motor dexterity: The ability to coordinate small muscle groups during movement, usually involving coordination between the hands, fingers and eyes to manipulate small objects.

Gross motor skills: The ability to coordinate large muscle groups to move and to stabilize the head, trunk, arms and legs to reach, lift, push, pull, stand, balance, walk, run, bend, kneel and crouch; possess minimum grip strength of 30 pounds in one or both hands, and the ability to stand up to 30 minutes at a time, push up to 250 pounds and lift/transfer up to 250 pounds.

Mobility: The ability to independently move easily from point A to point B.

Endurance: The ability to exert self and remain active for a long period of time (e.g., 45 minutes); stamina.

Environmental Functions

Working conditions: The ability to recognize, avoid and prevent safety and health hazards in the work setting.

For additional admissions information please see the admissions section [here](#).

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program at South University, Richmond, Virginia Beach, and Tampa are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA, and its web address is <http://www.acoteonline.org>.

Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, all states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure. More information on ACOTE may be obtained at <http://www.acoteonline.org>.

Program Overview and Outcomes

The occupational therapy assistant works under the supervision of the occupational therapist to help individuals regain or accommodate to decreased range of motion, muscle strength, coordination, perception and activities of daily living, which includes dressing, eating, toileting, hygiene and home management.

The Associate of Applied Science and the Associate of Science degrees in the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) degree program are dedicated to providing educational opportunities of the intellectual, social and professional development of a diverse student population. Through its carefully balanced and sequenced curricular design over eight quarters or nine quarters, the Occupational Therapy Assistant program is designed to prepare qualified graduates to seek entry-level employment as occupational therapy practitioners. The program prepares students with knowledge and skills for competent entry-level practice in a variety of contexts for an ever-changing world. The Occupational Therapy Assistant program further seeks to lead the profession and community through its contributions in educational leadership, community and professional service, lifelong learning, and scholarship.

The Professional Phase of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program is delivered on campus at each of the campuses where the program is offered. It is offered on the Virginia Beach campus in two modalities: fully campus-based with the 8 Quarter curriculum or blended with the 9 Quarter curriculum. Students enrolled in the blended modality meet face-to-face in the classroom and asynchronously online over the 11-week term.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

The OTA program goals address student competency in the following areas

1. Prepare occupational therapy assistants who appreciate and adapt to diverse and alternative cultures, settings, systems, processes, and ideas. (adaptation thread)
2. Foster student skill in accessing relevant literature and information, using research-based evidence to make informed decisions in occupational therapy practice. (information literacy thread)

3. Cultivate student skill in effective critical thinking, problem-solving, and clinical reasoning with clients across the lifespan in diverse practice settings. (critical thinking thread)
4. Foster development of student's communication skills to promote effective, appropriate interaction with all stakeholders. (professionalism thread)
5. Instill in the student the values, attitudes and behaviors consistent with the occupational therapy profession's philosophy, standards and ethics. (professionalism thread)
6. Provide the student with opportunities to acquire skills in advocacy for the profession of occupational therapy to other professionals, service providers, consumers, third-party payers, regulatory bodies, professional associations and the public. (professionalism thread)
7. Provide the student with a challenging curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to deliver occupational therapy assistant services with entry-level competency under the supervision of an occupational therapist in a variety of practice settings. (professionalism and critical thinking threads)
8. Impart to the student a passion for lifelong professional development to meet changing societal needs. (lifelong learning thread)
9. Provide ongoing opportunities for stakeholders in the OTA program to have input into the development and evaluation of the OTA program to ensure the program remains true to its mission and philosophy. (information literacy thread)

Accreditation

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Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant: 109 Credits

Offered in the eight-quarter sequence at South University, Richmond only.

South University, Virginia Beach is no longer enrolling new applicants as of May 2024.

This program is a technical program and credits generally earned in this program are not applicable to other degrees.

Area I General Education Requirements: 32 Credits

Basic Communications

Course Code	Title	Credits
ENG1100	Composition I	4.0
ENG1200	Composition II	4.0

Mathematics and Statistics

Course Code	Title	Credits
MAT1001	College Algebra I	4.0

Natural Sciences

Course Code	Title	Credits
	BIO1011 and BIO1012	6
BIO1011	Anatomy and Physiology I	4.0
BIO1012	Anatomy and Physiology I Lab	2.0
	BIO1013 and BIO1014	6
BIO1013	Anatomy and Physiology II	4.0
BIO1014	Anatomy and Physiology II Lab	2.0

Arts and Humanities

Course Code	Title	Credits
HUM1200	Introduction to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	4.0

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Course Code	Title	Credits
PSY1001	General Psychology	4.0

Area II Foundation Requirements: 11 Credits

Course Code	Title	Credits
AHS1001	Medical Terminology	4.0
OTA1003	Introduction to Occupational Therapy Assistant	3.0
PSY2022	Human Growth and Development	4.0

Area III Professional Curriculum Requirements: 66 Credits

Course Code	Title	Credits
OTA1011	Medical Conditions	3.0
OTA1020	Occupational Analysis I	4.0
OTA1031	Occupational Therapy in Mental Health	5.0
OTA1039	Level I Fieldwork in Mental Health	1.0
OTA1045	Professional Documentation	1.0
OTA2020	Occupational Analysis II	4.0
OTA2031	Occupational Therapy for Children and Adolescents	5.0
OTA2039	Level I Fieldwork for Children and Adolescents	1.0
OTA2041	Movement for Human Occupation	4.0
OTA2051	Occupational Therapy for Adults and the Elderly	5.0
OTA2059	Level I Fieldwork for Adults and the Elderly	1.0
OTA2060	Occupational Therapy Management	4.0
OTA2071	Community Practice	2.0
OTA2080	Professional Issues	2.0
OTA2380	Level II Fieldwork A	8.0
OTA2385	Fieldwork Seminar A	4.0
OTA2390	Level II Fieldwork B	8.0
OTA2395	Fieldwork Seminar B	4.0
Total Credits		109