

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

INFORMATION SHEET – 2024- 2025

In the health care profession, the **Occupational Therapy Assistant** supports clients in achieving their maximum level of function following life challenges such as a birth injury, stroke, car accident, mental illness, or other major medical events. Occupational therapy assistants work under the supervision of occupational therapists in various rehabilitation settings in order to improve the quality of life of their clients.

Job Information: The most current national salary survey was completed by the US Dept. of Labor in May 2023. The median annual wage of occupational therapy assistants was reported to be **\$65,540**, with a median hourly wage of \$37.05 (New York- \$77,060). Employment of occupational therapy assistants is projected to grow 23% from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations. Please refer to the US Dept. of Labor link below for further information: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes312011.htm#st>

The *US News and World Report* reported in May 2024 that Occupational Therapy Assistant is now the best paid profession in Health Care support. Please see the following link for more salary, career, and job satisfaction information: <http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/occupational-therapy-assistant>

The Program: This two-year Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS) is a full or part-time evening and weekend program designed to prepare its graduates to apply for certification and licensure as an occupational therapy assistant and to practice as an entry-level generalist. The program teaches its students to develop skills to successfully work in a variety of healthcare settings, including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools, mental health facilities, and community centers.

OTA students participate in Medical Missions, are active participants with the state and national professional associations, as well with the program's student professional association- Student Occupational Therapy Assistant Association (SOTA).

Fieldwork

There are two levels of fieldwork experience that are required in the program:

- Level I: (Two) 21-hour placements completed during the fall and spring semesters.
- Level II: (Two) 8 -10-week placements after all courses are completed.

****Fieldwork Level II placements must be successfully completed within 18 months of the completion of all academic coursework.**

The OTA Program is a cohort program that only starts full-time students in the fall term. Part-time students may be eligible to start in a spring term.

Admission Criteria: – Admission to the OTA Program is a competitive multi-step process.

Freshman admission requires:

1. Have an overall high school GPA of 85% or higher and a minimum of two years of high school English with an 85% (B) average or higher.

- Submit **TWO** references with their application. Preferably, one recommendation should be from an occupational therapy assistant, occupational therapist, work supervisor, or instructor of a high school or University course. Recommendations must be current (a maximum of six months).

Admission preference for applicants with high school GPAs of 85% or higher or previous University credit with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. For their first academic year, students will **only** enroll in general education course requirements:

General Education Requirements:

BIOL 130	Human Anatomy & Physiology I	3 credits
BIOL 130A	Human Anatomy & Physiology I Lab	1 credit
BIOL 131	Human Anatomy & Physiology II	3 credits
BIOL 131A	Human Anatomy & Physiology II Lab	1 credit
ENGL 111	Written English & Literature Studies I	3 credits
ENGL 112	Written English & Literature Studies II	3 credits
MATH 116	College Algebra	3 credits
PSYN 101	Intro. to Psychology	3 credits
COMM 110	Oral Communications	3 credits
SOCL 101	Intro. to Sociology	3 credits

General Education Requirements **26 credits**

* Anatomy pre-requisite courses must have been taken within the last five years.

For students to remain in the program and progress to the occupational therapy assistant courses (OCTR), they must complete the first year with the following performance:

- Minimal overall GPA of first year must be 2.75 or higher
- A grade of C or better in all general education prerequisite courses
- Any student who receives a grade of C- or below in any general education course will be required to repeat the course.
- Anatomy pre-requisite courses must have been taken within the last five years.

Sophomore or Transfer Student Progression Criteria for OTA Major courses:

All students interested in progressing to fall full-time OTA Major courses **MUST** complete all **General Education** and **Health Science Requirements** before the start of the fall semester.

Health Science Requirements:

HLSC 205	Standard Safety Precautions for the Healthcare Professions	1 credit
HLSC 210	Overview of OT Practice	1 credit
HLSC 225	Intro. To Health Professions Literature & Scientific Writing	1 credit
Health Science Requirements		<u>3 credits</u>

- Students who meet the program's progression criteria will be invited to interview with representatives of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Progression Committee when a written essay is required.
- The OTA Program's Progression Committee will review each applicant's records. Progression into the occupational therapy assistant courses (OCTR), is based on a combination of GPA, interview, and written work. Candidates will be notified of their progression decision within two weeks from the date of the interview.
- The OTA Program offers rolling admissions for all applicants. Our priority application deadlines are March 15 for fall admissions and January 15 for spring admissions. All required documents must be received before a decision can be made.

Evaluation

- **Admission is based on a preference for applicants who have a GPA of 3.0 or above.**
- Admission decisions are based on a composite numerical score/ranking of the applicant's GPA, interview, essay, and recommendations.
- Decision letters will be mailed to applicants within two weeks of the interview.
- The number of students accepted to the program is limited to a max of 30 students each year.

Admission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Mercy University (professional program) is extremely competitive; completion of the application requirements and formal interview does not guarantee admission.

Exceptions

- Transfer credit will be granted only for those pre-requisite courses with a grade of C or higher.
****Please note: The Anatomy pre-requisite courses must have been taken within the last 5 years.**
- Students who are admitted to the program and have a cumulative GPA less than 3.0 will be admitted on a **conditional** basis.
- All admitted students **must** maintain at least a minimum 2.75 GPA or better within the major courses at the end of their first semester (full-time students) and in their first two semesters (part-time students). Any student falling below a 2.75 GPA within the major will need to repeat any/all courses before going into FW II. A faculty review with a remedial plan will be put in place. The plan will identify areas of academic weakness and results from any competency exams. Remedial plans will be reviewed/approved by the Program Director. Such a plan must have clear objectives with deadlines for achievement.

Deadlines for application, progression, and admission into the program are on a rolling basis. [The start of classes for Fall 2025 is Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025.](#) Call or email the program for further information.

Why Should I Choose Mercy University's OTA Program?

THIS IS THE PREMIER APPLIED ASSOCIATES OF SCIENCE PROGRAM in the metropolitan NEW YORK Area.

Designed for the Working Adult

The program is designed for the adult learner with multiple responsibilities who is seeking a career change or has identified a desire to enter the field of occupational therapy.

The Evening Schedule on the Dobbs Ferry Campus

Classes are held three evenings (Mon, Wed, and Thursday) a week from 6:15-9:05 pm and one evening (Tuesday's) from 5:00-9:00 pm. Additionally, there are three full weekend lab days (either scheduled for Saturday or Sunday) each semester.

The Faculty

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program has doctoral and Master's prepared faculty with expertise in their respective teaching subjects. The faculty is recognized for their achievements in the field of occupational therapy.

Health Professionals clinical simulation and learning labs

Mercy University now has an invaluable tool in the 12,000-square-foot Health Professions Clinical Simulation and learning labs. The space consists of several specialized labs designed to simulate different disciplines within health care facilities. The labs are inter-professional and are used by many programs in the School of Health and Natural Sciences and are divided into four different areas.

- Clinical skills and Simulation Labs
- Movement Lab
- Health Assessment Lab
- Home Health Lab

Accreditation Information:



ACOTE's Disclosure Statement regarding Probationary Accreditation Action:

The occupational therapy assistant program at Mercy University, Dobbs Ferry, New York, was placed on Probationary Accreditation effective April 6, 2025, because the area of noncompliance related to 2018 Standard A.6.4. Certification Exam Pass Rate is so serious that the program's capability to provide acceptable education experience for the students is threatened.

The program has been requested to submit a Progress Report to return the program to full compliance with the Standards within the mandated time period for correction.

The Mercy University Occupational Therapy Assistant program is accredited by the [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education](#) (ACOTE) of the [American Occupational Therapy Association](#) (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814-6519. ACOTE's phone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA.

Graduates of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program are eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the [National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy](#) (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, most states require licensure in order to practice; however, 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 examination or attain state licensure.



For further information on these limitations, you can contact NBCOT at National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, One Bank Street, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20878- (301) 990-7979. Applicants are also encouraged to contact the State Board of Occupational Therapy in the state they anticipate practicing to investigate any limitations.

Employment Potential

In 2023, 75% of the program graduates who sought OTA positions found employment within less than three months of graduation. Many graduates are offered employment at the facilities where they completed one of their fieldwork experiences.

Academic Advancement Potential

Graduates of the program have the opportunity to advance their education at Mercy University by pursuing a Bachelor's degree. After completing a bachelor's degree, graduates who meet the criteria can apply to the Mercy University Master's Degree Program in OT.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q. Where can I obtain more information about the program?

A) Call the OTA Program directly at 914-674-7833

- E-mail the program at: otaprogram@mercy.edu
- Mercy University website link –<https://www.mercy.edu/degrees-programs/aas-occupational-therapy-assistant>

Q. How can I apply to the OTA Program?

A) After being admitted to Mercy University, contact the OTA Program regarding the application and interview procedure.

Q. What is the admission decision based on?

A) The final decision is based on a composite scoring and then ranking of your grade point average, presentation during the interview, letters of recommendation, and on-site essay.

Q. How long is the Program?

A) It depends on your situation regarding previous degrees and/or transfer credits. The program can take as long as 2+ years to finish the coursework if a student does not have any previous University credits. After the coursework is completed, there are two full-time 8 to 10-week fieldwork experiences.

Q. Is there a national board exam required?

A) Upon completion of all courses/fieldwork, students will be eligible to sit for The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy exam (as an OTA).

****Licensure requirements vary from state-to-state.**

SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE FOR THE CURRICULUM SEQUENCE AND A LISTING OF ALL REQUIRED COURSES.

Curriculum Sequence and Required Courses * New for AY 2024-2025

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Health Science Requirements..... **3 credits**

Total Requirements **29 credits**

Major Concentration Courses - Occupational Therapy Assistant:

Fall

OCTR 201	OT Practice for the Assistant: An Overview	3 credits
OCTR 204	OT Practice for the Assistant: Clinical Factors and Occupation I	3 credits
OCTR 203	OT Practice for the Assistant: Therapeutic Modalities I	3 credits
OCTR 260	OT Practice for the Assistant: Childhood & Adolescence	6 credits
OCTR 260A*	OT Practice for the Assistant: Level I Fieldwork	1 credit

*The course builds upon the material learned in OCTR 260

Spring

OCTR 218	OT Practice for the Assistant: Clinical Factors in Occupation II	3 credits
OCTR 206	OT Practice for the Assistant: Therapeutic Modalities II	3 credits
OCTR 207	OT Practice for the Assistant: Synopsis	3 credits
OCTR 214	OT Practice for the Assistant: Adulthood & Maturity	6 credits
OCTR 214A*	OT Practice for the Assistant: Level I Fieldwork	1 credit

*The course builds upon the material learned in OCTR 214

Fieldwork Level II (after all coursework is completed):

OCTR 209	OT Practice for the Assistant: Advanced Clinical Education I	3 credits
OCTR 210	OT Practice for the Assistant: Advanced Clinical Education II	3 credits
<i>OCTR 211</i>	<i>Professional Development Seminar</i>	<i>1 credit</i>

Major Concentration: OTA..... **39 credits**

Total Credits for Degree Completion68 credits