

# ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT



Cleveland University  
KANSAS CITY

Chiropractic and Health Sciences

## SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- ◇ Occupational therapy assistants – referred to as OTAs – directly support clients who want to achieve their daily living goals, despite facing personal challenges. Those challenges may be developmental, emotional, mental, physical, sensory based, or cognitive.
- ◇ For many occupational therapy clients, the goal is to learn or re-learn how to perform daily living activities, such as getting dressed by themselves. Other clients need instruction in using adaptive technologies or tools. Employees recovering from injuries many need assistance to re-engage in work at the same level as before.
- ◇ Successful OTAs have specific qualities: friendly demeanor, demonstrate compassion, detail-oriented, and are effective in one-to-one communication. They have the physical strength to move clients to different therapy positions when necessary.
- ◇ The occupational therapy assistant ranks as a top-10 “Best Healthcare Support Job” in the U.S., according to *U.S. News & World Report*.<sup>1</sup>

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT: AN EXPANDING ROLE IN TODAY’S HEALTHCARE

In occupational therapy, a supervising occupational therapist creates the treatment plans for clients, through testing, measurement, and observation, often in collaboration with their OTA partner. It’s the OTA who takes the plan from theory to action.

The trend toward early diagnosis of disorders – autism, developmental challenges – means OTAs increasingly work with younger populations. At the same time, there’s an increase in the number of senior adults who want to stay active and live as independently as possible.

Recent research by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) shows that occupational therapy practitioners have a significant role in improving healthcare outcomes. Becoming an OTA means entering a people-first career that offers a sense of “doing something with big impact.”

OTA work settings include school districts, hospitals, nursing or assisted care centers, in-home care, and community groups.

On an average day, an OTA might:

- Demonstrate a beneficial play activity for a child with a developmental disability
- Assess client situations and make recommendations
- Help clients practice adaptive ways to complete daily living activities such as eating and grooming
- Provide guidance and encouragement to the client, family members, or caregiver
- Document client progress
- Partner with clients to implement long-term solutions for chronic pain and other issues
- Set up and train people to use adaptive equipment

## TWO-YEAR OTA DEGREE PROGRAM AT CUKC

Preparing future practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to help people live fulfilling lives is the mission of the Associate of Applied Sciences (A.A.S.) in Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Cleveland University-Kansas City (CUKC). This result is accomplished by combining high-quality academic education with embedded fieldwork experiences.

Fieldwork is essential because this is where knowledge becomes action. You’ll develop a comfort level in working with people and how to understand their needs. In any given week you might be working with a young child with a developmental disability, an office worker recovering from surgery, or a senior adult relearning a daily activity.

The OTA degree is 73 credit hours, which includes:

- 24 credit hours of general education courses
- 49 credit hours of professional OTA courses as a full-time student.

OTA courses at the University are delivered in sequential 8-week modules year-round, allowing for students to complete the program in two years. Academic and fieldwork courses are offered during the day to model typical clinical experiences.

Even better, the knowledge and skills learned in each course at CUKC lead directly into the next one, which makes the concepts of the new course easier to grasp. CUKC offers multiple program start dates.

# ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

## ACCREDITATION

The CUKC A.A.S. in Occupational Therapy Assistant program is accredited by the American Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). ACOTE accredited occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant educational programs satisfy the educational requirements in all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Students graduating from an ACOTE® accredited occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant educational program are eligible to take the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) certification exam and apply for licensure in all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

More information regarding state qualifications and licensure requirements is on the AOTA state licensure webpage.<sup>7</sup>

## LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

CUKC's OTA degree program helps prepare you to pass the the national certification exam of the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). All states require a license to practice. State licenses are based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination.

Occupational therapy assistants are responsible for renewing their certification and licensure as well as meeting continuing education requirements.

## EARNINGS AND JOB OUTLOOK

The median annual wage is \$61,520 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The higher salaries for OTAs trend toward metropolitan areas and demand is higher in-home healthcare and nursing care facilities than in other areas, such as clinics and hospitals.<sup>4</sup>

Employment for OTAs will grow by more than 25% between now and 2031, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

OTAs work with people of all ages, and possibilities for employment are numerous. The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) lists six practice areas:<sup>6</sup>

- Children and youth
- Health and wellness
- Mental health
- Productive aging
- Rehabilitation and disability
- Work and industry

## CAMPUS VISITS AND TOURS

Campus tours and visits are an excellent way to get to know the CUKC program, faculty, and campus environment.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

(Referenced September 2022)

<sup>1</sup><https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/occupational-therapy-assistant>

<sup>2</sup><https://explorehealthcareers.org/career/occupational-therapy/occupational-therapy-assistant/>

<sup>3</sup><https://acoteonline.org/schools/ota-associate/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm#tab-5>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.aota.org/Practice.aspx>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.aota.org/career/state-licensure>

## FREE EBOOK DOWNLOAD

Visit [cleveland.edu/ota-ebook](https://cleveland.edu/ota-ebook) to download a FREE eBook that can help you find more answers about becoming an occupational therapy assistant.



EBOOK

The occupational therapy assistant program is 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 website address is [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org).

**QUESTIONS?** Talk to an Admissions Advisor at 800.467.2252 or [admissions@cleveland.edu](mailto:admissions@cleveland.edu).