

PENNSSTATE



Berks

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

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Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy is a dynamic health care field with employment opportunities in assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, schools, hospitals as well as community and wellness settings.

Occupational therapy personnel work with people of all ages who encounter health, learning, and accessibility challenges resulting from physical, cognitive, psychological, social and/or environmental factors. Common conditions that occupational therapy practitioners work with include stroke, dementia (Alzheimer's), joint replacements, congestive heart failure, developmental delays, autism, learning disabilities, intellectual disability, anxiety disorders, mood disorders such as depression, and substance abuse.

Penn State Berks offers an associate degree in occupational therapy which prepares students for jobs as Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA). OTAs work under the supervision of occupational therapists to enable people of all ages to function as independently as possible in their daily lives. OTAs assist occupational therapists in evaluating, planning, and providing services to clients. Intervention can focus on helping clients care for their personal needs, be productive in their home, workplace or school, and engage in leisure activities.

Currently there is a shortage of occupational therapy assistants in the United States and according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics there is an above average projected need for OTAs.

Career Possibilities

A graduate with an associate degree in occupational therapy may find employment in the following settings:

- skilled and intermediate care facilities
- rehabilitation hospitals and centers
- public and private schools
- early intervention programs and preschools
- general, psychiatric, and pediatric hospitals
- hand centers
- community living programs and shelters
- day treatment centers
- ergonomic and work safety programs
- hospices and home health agencies
- wellness and accessibility programs
- work hardening and vocational programs
- assistive technology centers

Admission Requirements

An applicant must have four secondary-school units of English, two units of mathematics, two units of science, and five units of arts, humanities, social studies, and/or foreign languages. A high school diploma or equivalent and satisfactory Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT/SAT1) scores are also required. Application forms are available from high schools, any Penn State campus, or on the web at <http://www.bk.psu.edu/Admissions/admissions.htm>

Accreditation

Penn State's Occupational Therapy Assistant program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

Certification Exam and Licensure

Upon graduation, graduates sit for the certification examination administered by the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successfully completing this examination, the graduate will receive the credential; Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (as well as most other states) requires a license to practice as a COTA. A license is granted based on successful graduation from a certified OTA program such as PSU Berks and passing the NBCOT certification examination. Specific licensure requirements are dictated by the state licensure board. A felony conviction may prevent a graduate from taking the NBCOT exam or obtaining a state license.

Required Courses

Students enrolled in the PSU Berks Occupational Therapy Assistant associate degree program complete 69 credits of course work.

General Education Courses

- *Bio 129 Anatomy (4 credits)
- *Bio 141 Physiology (3 credits)
- *Bio 142 Physiology Lab (1 credit)
- Eng 15 Rhetoric and Composition (3 credits)
- GA Arts Elective (3 credits)
- GH Humanities Elective (3 credits)
- HDFS 129 Introduction to Human Development and Family Studies
 - *or* Psych 212 Introduction to Developmental Psychology (3 credits)
- Kines 13 CPR (1 credit)
- Math 21 College Algebra *or* Math 17 Finite Math *or* STATS 100 (3 credits)
- Psychology 100 Introduction to Psychology (3 credits)



Occupational Therapy Courses

- *OT 100S Structural Foundations of Occupational Therapy (1 credit)
- *OT 101 Conceptual Foundations of Occupational Therapy Practice (2 credits)
- *OT 103 Activity Analysis: Occupational Performance across the Lifespan (3 credits)
- *OT 105W Activity Analysis: Group Interaction skills (3 credits)
- *OT 107 Activity Analysis: Assistive Technologies/ Methods of Adaptation (3 credits)
- *OT 109 Management and Ethics in Occupational Therapy (3 credits)
- *OT 195A Level I Fieldwork Experience (1 credit)
- *OT 195B Level I Fieldwork Experience (1 credit)
- *OT 201 Clinical Reasoning and Documentation in Occupational Therapy (3 credits)
- *OT 202 Occupational Therapy for Developmental Disabilities (3 credits)
- *OT 204 Occupational Therapy for Behavioral Health (3 credits)
- *OT 206 Occupational Therapy in Physical Dysfunction (4 credits)
- *OT 295A Fieldwork Experience (6 credits)
- *OT 295B Fieldwork Experience (6 credits)

* Students must earn a grade of a C or better in these courses

Course Descriptions

Biology 129 (Anatomy)

This is a 4 credit course. PSU offers Anatomy for 4 credits and Physiology for another 4 credits. Most colleges and universities offer Anatomy and Physiology I & II. Whether you take PSU courses or A&PI and A&P II at another college is up to you. Just be aware that you can not combine PSU credits and other college's credits in this category. So, if you start to take A&P I at another college, you need to take A&P II at that college as well.

Biology 141/142 (Physiology/ Physiology Lab)

This is a combined lecture/ lab worth 4 credits. See Biology 129 above for important details.

English 15 (Rhetoric and Composition)

This is generally considered a freshman writing course. There are different levels of this course offered. Make sure that the course you are taking is the same level/ equivalent as required by the PSU OTA program. Depending on your freshman testing scores (FTCAP), you may be asked to take an additional, pre-writing course before completing this course.



General Arts (GA) Elective

This needs to be a hands-on, active course. (Do **not** take an art history or art appreciation course.) This course may include such things as: drawing, photography, clay/ pottery, etc. It may also include a theater course, some creative writing courses, and some music courses.

General Humanities (GH) Elective

This course is considered an elective course, which means you have many options. The only requirement is that it is humanities course. This generally means courses like history, philosophy, some literature courses, and world religions.

Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS 129)

This is a basic human development course. If taking this course at another college make sure the class covers human development from birth to death (not just child and adolescent development).

Kines 013 (CPR/ First Aid)

This is a standard CPR/ First aid course for infants, children, and adults. If you are currently certified and your certification will remain valid through your last semester of fieldwork, then you may waive this course. But be aware, you will still need to take a one credit course (or transfer one credit from another college or university) in order to have enough credits to graduate.

Math 21 (College Algebra I)

There are multiple levels of college algebra. The math course that you take needs to be equivalent to PSU Math 21. Again, based on your FTCAP scores, you may be asked to complete an additional, preliminary math course before taking Math 21. You may also complete Math 17 (Finite Math) or STAT 100 course to meet the math requirement for the OTA program.

Psychology 100

This is a general psychology course. Most colleges offer a basic first course in psychology.

OT 100S Structural Foundations of Occupational Therapy

An overview of the structural foundations of the occupational therapy profession.

OT 101 Conceptual Foundations of Occupational Therapy Practice

An overview of the conceptual foundations of occupational therapy practice. This course includes observation of therapists in treatment settings.

OT 103 (US) Occupational Performance Across the Life Span

Analysis of occupations from birth to death including descriptions of occupational performance and factors which influence performance.

OT 105W Activity Analysis: Group Interaction Skills

Group dynamics and interactions analyzed across the lifespan and practice settings. Interventions designed and facilitated by students.

OT 107 Activity Analysis: Assistive Technologies and Methods of Adaptation

Assistive technologies and methods of adaptation analyzed; selection criteria, methodologies, proper use, and precautions presented.

OT 109 Management and Ethics in Occupational Therapy

Consideration of basic management, ethics, and support tasks significant to the role of the occupational therapy assistant.

OT 195A Level I Fieldwork Experience

Practicum related to 100 level occupational therapy assistant coursework.

OT 195B Level I Fieldwork Experience

Practicum related to 200 level occupational therapy assistant coursework.

OT 201 Clinical Reasoning and Documentation in Occupational Therapy

Clinical reasoning strategies in occupational therapy practice. Practical application will include case-based reasoning, multi-faceted strategies, and selected formats of documentation.

OT 202 Occupational Therapy for Developmental Disabilities

Occupational therapy evaluation, intervention, and documentation for pediatric/developmental disability practice.

OT 204 Occupational Therapy for Behavioral Health

Occupational therapy evaluation, intervention, documentation, and the importance of engagement in occupations with a focus on behavioral health and well-being.

OT 206 Occupational Therapy for Physical Disabilities

Occupational therapy evaluation, intervention, documentation methods for physical disability practice.

OT 295A Field Experience in Occupational Therapy I

Part I of supervised experience in select occupational therapy settings in the role of an occupational therapy assistant; seminars included.

OT 295B Field Experience in Occupational Therapy II

Part II of supervised experience in select occupational therapy settings in the role of an occupational therapy assistant; seminars included.

Program Sequence

The associate degree program in occupational therapy at Penn State University, Berks campus, is designed to be completed in five semesters. Depending on your student status, you may elect, or need, to take the courses over a longer period of time. There is NO possibility of completing the program in less than five semesters, regardless of how many college credits or degrees you enter the OTA program with. Keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. To remain a fulltime student for financial aid and health insurance coverage, you need to carry at least 12 credits per semester.
2. Financial aid requirements for the summer may be different than the spring and fall semesters. Check with the financial aid office for regulations and financial aid coverage for the summer semesters.
3. The OT courses must be taken in the semesters outlined and all OT courses offered in the semester must be taken during the same semester.



4. Courses are not offered every semester. Summer course offerings are limited and may change from year to year. In most summers, the following courses are usually offered at Penn State Berks: Math, English, an art course, and a humanities course.
5. Classes may be taken at PSU Berks Campus, other Penn State University campuses, as well as other institutions of higher education.
6. All colleges and universities have different names for their courses (and different numbers). You need to check the course descriptions in order to find which course meets the PSU course description.
7. It is best to get pre-approval for courses taken at other institutions in order to guarantee that they will be accepted at PSU. Speak to your advisor for details.
8. In order for any course to be transferred and accepted from another educational institution, you must earn a grade of C or better.

The typical two and half year, five semester plan for completing the OTA program is as follows:

Fall - Semester 1 (Total Semester Credits = 13)

- OT100S (a) (d) (1 credit)
- OT101 (a) (d) (2 credits)
- Biology 129 (a) (4 credits)
- English 015 (GWS) (3 credits)
- Psychology100 (GS) (3 credits)

Spring - Semester 2 (Total Semester Credits = 14)

- OT103 (a) (b) (d) (3 credits)
- HDFS 129 or PSYC 212 (c) (3 credits)
- Biology 141 (GN) (a) (3 credits)
- Biology 142 (GN) (a) (1 credit)
- Math (GQ) (3 credits)
- Kinesiology 013 (1 credit)

Fall - Semester 3 (Total Semester Credits = 16)

- OT105W (a) (d) (3 credits)
- OT107 (a) (d) (3 credits)
- OT109 (a) (d) (3 credits)



- OT195A (d) (1 credit)
- Humanities Elective (GH) (3 credits)
- Art Elective (GA) (3 credits)

Spring - Semester 4 (Total Semester Credits = 14)

- OT202 (a) (d) (3 credits)
- OT204 (a) (d) (3 credits)
- OT206 (a) (d) (4 credits)
- OT201 (a) (d) (3 credits)
- OT195B (d) (1 credits)

Summer / Fall - Semester 5 (Total Semester Credits = 12)

- OT 295 A (a) (6 cr.)
- OT 295 B (a) (6 cr.)

FW Level II is two full-time placements - eight weeks each placement

Key

- Students must earn a grade of C or better in this course.
- OT 103 meets the intercultural requirement and is designated US.
- Students may take PSYCH 212 in place of HDFS 129. NOTE: PSYCH 100 is a pre-req for PSYCH212
- OT courses must be taken in the designated semester/order.

Notes

Additional Information regarding program sequence:

- Students must complete these courses prior to enrolling in the 200 level OT courses: ENG015, PSYC100, BIOL129, BIOL141, BIOL142, and HDFS129.
- Courses meeting GQ, GH, GA requirements may be taken during any semester.
- Some general education courses may/are able to shift from semester-to-semester. Consult with advisor for best individual academic plan.
- All didactic degree requirements must be completed prior to enrolling in OT 295 A/B.
- FW Level II dates will be set by the Fieldwork Coordinator. Academic advising is required to establish FW II placements.
- OT 295A/B must be completed within 18 months of completing the didactic requirement.

Options for Continuing Education

While there is no requirement to get any other degree beyond the associate's degree in occupational therapy offered at Penn State Berks, there are a number of options for students wishing to continue their education. Below are a number of options:

Continue education by earning a Baccalaureate degree at PSU Berks

Possible degrees include:

- Applied Psychology
- Kinesiology
- Business
- Engineering

See [the Penn State Berks website](#) for more information.

Continue education by earning a Baccalaureate degree at Penn State University, State College

Possible degrees include:

- Psychology
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Kinesiology
- Education
- Human Development

See [the Penn State University website](#) for more information.

Continue education by earning a Masters degree in Occupational Therapy

Local institutions include:

- Alvernia College
- College Miseracordia (weekend program)
- Elizabethtown College
- Philadelphia University (weekend program)
- Temple University
- Thomas Jefferson University
- University of the Sciences in Philadelphia

A listing of all graduate schools is available at [the American Occupational Therapy Association website](#).

NOTE: After completing a baccalaureate degree in a related field, students may continue their education to become an occupational therapist by completing a Masters degree in Occupational Therapy. A listing of graduate schools is available at aota.org.

Additional Information

For more information on educational and career opportunities in occupational therapy, certification, and accreditation:

The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA)

4720 Montgomery Lane
Suite 200
Bethesda, MD 20814-3449
Phone: 301-652-2682
<http://www.aota.org/>

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)

c/o Accreditation Department
American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
4720 Montgomery Lane
Suite 200
Bethesda, MD 20814-3449
Phone: 301-652-2682 x2914
<http://www.acoteonline.org/>

National Board for the Certification of Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT)

12 South Summit Avenue
Suite 100
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Phone: 301-990-7979
Fax: 301-869-8492
<http://www.nbcot.org/>

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the PSU Berks OTA Program please see our web site:

[Penn State Berks website »](#)

[Occupational Therapy Degree Program at Penn State Berks »](#)



Or contact:

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