

# Occupational Therapy Assistant

## OTA Associate of Applied Science Degree

The OTA Associate of Applied Science degree program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is offered as an Associate of Applied Science degree embedded within a liberal arts institution. The overall mission of the OTA program is to prepare students as confident entry-level practitioners, understanding the importance of both leadership and service in the communities they serve. In addition, the CMU OTA graduate desiring an advanced degree benefits from the unique opportunity to expand upon their OTA education by pursuing a planned advanced CMU Bachelor of Science degree in Health Sciences. The OTA curriculum at CMU includes a strong liberal arts groundwork providing opportunity to transition easily into the advanced coursework in health services leadership, a practical expansion built upon the intricacies of healthcare and healthcare delivery systems.

Central Methodist University's program placement within a four-year liberal arts university situates us in an exciting position for future expansion of the degree. In Spring 2015 ACOTE determined that the entry-level degree for the OTA will be offered at both the associate and bachelor's degree level. The decision to move to a dual entry-level for the OTA allows opportunity for CMU to be among the first of such programs in the country.

### OTA Curriculum Design and Threads

The OTA curriculum is designed as both a ladder and a model for progressive, lifelong professional learning. Students will learn foundational knowledge early in the program and will progressively build upon this knowledge base through evolving levels of professional coursework and integrative activities. OTA program coursework is 20 months in length and is composed of lecture, laboratory, collaborative experiences, community activity, and offsite fieldwork experience.

Our approach to curriculum design is driven by the profession's conceptual understandings about occupational performance and its emergence in roles across and throughout the lifespan. Evidence-based literature supports that participation in meaningful occupation results in the ongoing human pursuit for a sense of wellbeing and meaning. In addition, to understanding the development of humans and its impact on occupational choice and engagement, students will be able to articulate their roles as practitioners within the lifespan progression and as advocates of the occupational therapy profession. CMU graduates will exemplify the qualities of professional and social responsibility, excellence and leadership as their role of occupation and client-centered practitioner grows and is defined through the program. Further, CMU graduates will understand their role as change agents as they engage and inspire clients to reach wellness through occupations of meaning (The Commission on Education, 2011).

In recognition of the profession's published philosophy regarding occupational performance, and our understanding that humans learn in diverse ways we have referenced multiple educational philosophical approaches to meet the learning needs of our students. Implementation of these philosophies within the curriculum design defines a predominant pattern of consistency. Conceptual threads that are woven through the curriculum with a devoted emphasis in each course include occupational beings across the lifespan, lifelong learning, professionalism, and client-centered practice. These threads directly link to core qualities defined with the Central Methodist University mission. These core qualities are integral pieces defining a holistic education:

#### Professional Excellence:

Commitment to progressive, lifelong learning as individuals and professionals.

Agents of change; committed to advocacy, leadership, and service.

(AH100 Introduction to OT, Integrated Lab Skills I, II, & III)

#### Ethical Leadership:

Examples of engagement client-centered practice, acts of service, therapeutic use of self with clients and within intra/inter-disciplinary teams.

(Health Sciences for the OTA: Ethics, Management and Leadership OTA111)

#### Social Responsibility:

Values engaging in occupations/occupational performance to humans throughout the lifespan.

Client-centered practice.

(OT Fundamentals and Practice I: Early Development OTA104, OT Fundamentals and Practice II: Adult Development OTA105, OT Practice Settings: Outpatient, Inpatient, and Community OTA109, OTA130-133 Fieldwork Levels I, II, III, & IV)

### **Program Outcomes**

Course sequences evolve from introductory material to higher levels of content requiring critical thinking and problem solving capability on the part of the student. Progression through the program requires that students incorporate aspects from all courses in the format of an integrated lab. The integrated lab will be used as an assessment of student knowledge progression.

Upon successful of the OTA program the OTA graduate will:

1. Demonstrate qualities of leadership and social responsibility. These qualities will be apparent within the occupational therapy field, professional settings, and within community.
2. Apply critical thinking and problem solving to the provision of occupational therapy services evidenced by successful completion of fieldwork practicums.
3. Incorporate the principles of communication, advocacy and healthcare education into practice.
4. Exhibit commitment to individual and professional growth as a lifelong learner.
5. Demonstrate collaboration with other healthcare providers to promote the full human potential.

### **The OTA Program Learning Model**

Our curriculum design is presented within a fusion of old and new pedagogy. Features have been borrowed from Bloom's taxonomy levels of learning, the principle of constructivism theory and the progressions of learning as explained by Knowles principles of adult learning (Queensland Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Collaborative, 2007) and self-determined learning as described by Hase and Kenyon (Hase & Kenyon, 2001).

Combined models of learning support a natural advancement of student development. It is our firm belief that students must understand how to learn if they are to transition into the professional environment as a lifelong learner with the ability to remain skillful as a clinician. Integrating the referenced philosophies of learning addresses the needs of both the millennial and traditional learner.

How it all works....

In Semester-I of the program students are introduced to health issues and the impact of illness/diseases on occupational performance (OTA100). A foundational knowledge of muscle movement will be obtained, introductory concepts of neuroscience will be explored and the student will learn to think critically regarding intervention and creative strategies to facilitate client engagement. In Semester-II students will build upon concepts of illness and dysfunction through advanced coursework. Global understandings of disease, movement and occupation will be expanded upon as coursework is refined further into dedicated areas of specificity. Course materials will transition from introductory entry-level engagement to building the fundamental core abilities of analysis, problem-solving and cultivation of practice. Student knowledge will be further enhanced; narrowed into lifespan groups including childhood and adolescence (OTA104), adult development and later or older adult (OTA105). The holistic approach to occupational therapy will be further expanded upon with emphasis in mental health (OTA106) and physical dysfunction and rehabilitation (OTA107) coursework. In Semester-III the student embraces the advanced level of practitioner through functional execution of knowledge in various settings. Students will integrate and apply knowledge from year one into hands-on scenarios. Foundational and fundamental knowledge will now be applied through practice; practice in the healthcare community and through campus initiatives, incorporating both traditional and emerging practice opportunities. Students will learn how to incorporate refined aspects of leadership and management into their professional and personal lives. The courses OTA 109, 110, 111, and 112 will prepare the student for final fieldwork assignments.

Class time will be characterized by opportunities for students to explore, discuss, debate and test out ways to use new knowledge and skills. The instructor will have a primary role as facilitator, helping students learn the strategies needed to strengthen their learning skills and expand their repertoires of approaches to learning. Our unique Practice Skills Integrated Lab (OTA103 OTA108 & OTA112) exemplifies the cohesive combination of these philosophies and is just one example in how learning needs will be addressed for our students.

Fieldwork experience is critical to practitioner development; hands on participation allows the OTA student to build confidence, learn therapeutic use-of-self, understand what it means to engage as part of a bigger team, develop professional skills that reinforce a healthy mix of both leadership and supporter qualities.

### **Requirements for Licensure**

1. Graduation from an accredited OTA program.

2. An arrest or conviction may disqualify a candidate for licensure examination. The State Board of Occupational Therapy has the authority to refuse the issue of a license (Reference: [Occupational Therapy Practice Act RS MO 324.086.1\\_blank](#))

### **OTAcostAdditional Cost**

In addition to [tuition, housing, books/supplies, and transportation costs](#)[RIF1] students in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program will incur additional expenses. Each of the following tasks must be completed prior to the beginning of the program. The following is a breakdown of the most common costs; which are subject to changes initiated by the vendor:

Individual costs to be paid by the student:

1. Criminal background check \$70-100
2. Urine drug screen \$65
3. CPR-American Heart Association \$50
4. Personal Health Insurance Variable cost
5. Professional membership to AOTA \$75/year
6. NBCOT Exam prep \$99

Information regarding acceptable vendors for certified background check and urine drug screen will be provided to each applicant by the Health Professions Division office.

Immunizations are required to be up to date. Cost of updating immunizations status will vary greatly dependent upon student needs and provider charges. Students are responsible for all charges related to updating immunization status. Each applicant should work with his/her primary care physician for updating and or to verify the immunization status. Details regarding these expectations and requirements will be enclosed in the letter of acceptance to the program and is included in the student handbook.

### **Program Fee:**

Liability Insurance: \$50 for duration of program. This is a requirement for participation in clinical labs and practice and is to be paid by the student at the start of the program.

### **Technology:**

Each student is responsible for acquiring personal access to a tablet or notebook computer that the student can bring to class, the simulation and ADL lab. This device must be portable and have a good battery. Reliable home internet access is essential; dial-up access may not be fast enough, depending on your provider. The student's tablet, or notebook must support newer versions of Microsoft Word and EXCEL. Preferred browsers include Internet Explorer 9.0 or higher, most current version of Mozilla Firefox, or most current version of Google Chrome. The device must have a standard screen resolution of at least 1024 x 768 pixels for standard display. Devices with integral cameras or recording capability are not allowed as these constitute a potential HIPAA violation. This aspect of the device may be disabled by covering the camera lens aperture. Any device capable of supporting MS Window 7/8, a MacBook laptop, or an iPad will work. Newer 'high-end' Android tablets such as Samsung Note or Google Nexus will also work. It is the responsibility of each student to provide their own computing hardware!

### **Non-Discriminatory Policy**

The OTA Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, religion, sex, national origin, age, or federally defined disability in its recruitment and admission of students.

### **Admission Criteria for Selection of Students**

Admission criteria and a detailed explanation of the selection process may be viewed on the [OTA website](#).

## **Occupational Therapy Assistant Classes**

**AH100 Introduction to Occupational Therapy.** 2 hours. This course provides the student with a historical overview of the profession, the foundational concepts of occupational therapy (OT) - process and theory, basic health care concepts, wellness and prevention, legal and ethical considerations, an understanding of the role of the OTA, and basic documentation. This course is intended to provide students interested in the OTA program of study with an introduction to the profession. This course including interactive opportunities to obtain a feeling for the profession to determine if the practice of OT is the right professional fit.

**OTA100 Foundations: Introduction to Health Issues and Occupational Performance.** 3 hours. This course provides the student with foundational knowledge regarding common conditions seen by the occupational therapist practitioner. Students will be exposed to the etiology and symptoms of physical and psychological clinical conditions experienced across the lifespan and

how the use of occupational therapy services can impact the patient's ability to engage in occupations. Course content emphasizes the effects of trauma, disease, and congenital conditions on the biological, psychological, and social aspects of occupational behavior. The content and final exam for AH212 is embedded in OTA100. Students completing OTA100 may waive AH212, a course required for the B.S. in Health Sciences Prerequisite: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

**OTA101 OT Foundations: Neuroscience Principles.** 2 hours. This course is an introductory neuroscience course for the occupational therapy assistant. This class expands upon the students' knowledge base acquired in Anatomy and Physiology. Topics include principles of neuroscience at the cellular level, development of the nervous system, neuroscience at the system level, neuroscience at the regional level and support systems. Concepts of neurological development and functioning, motor learning, reflex development and integration and the impact of illness and disease related to neurological deficits are covered. This course will provide the foundation for later fundamental courses. Prerequisite: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

**OTA102 OT Foundations: Therapeutic Media and Design (Practice Framework).** 3 hours. The OT Practice Framework will be introduced. This course is designed to stimulate occupation-based, client-centered practice. This course addresses two areas; therapeutic media as an avenue of intervention and fundamental design as an avenue of adaptation. Various avenues of therapeutic media will be explored. Emphasis will be placed on awareness of activity demands, contexts, adapting, grading, and safe implementation of occupations or activities. Students will practice activity analysis, will have opportunity to improve communication and professional skills and will formulate critical thinking skills required to justify recommendations for interventions and adaptations. In addition, students will be introduced to fundamental design and construction and its use in adaptations for the client. Design in the areas of basic splinting, orthotics, prosthetics, assistive devices and mobility will be explored. The student will be introduced to the concept of evidence gathering, contributing to assessment and recommending appropriate interventions. Prerequisite: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

**OTA103 Practice Skills Level 1: Foundations Integrated.** 1 hour. Hybrid - The integration skills lab is designed to allow the student to integrate concepts from all classes into one project or case study. This time may also be used for intra-professional and inter-professional group activity. Prerequisite: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

**OTA104 OT Fundamentals and Practice I: Early Development.** 4 hours. This course provides the student with a fundamental knowledge for occupational therapy from birth through late adolescence. The course will explore the physical, perceptual, cognitive and psychological development stages. Exploration of unique areas of dysfunction that can affect the health and wellness of infants, children and adolescents will be explored. The material will cover evaluation and analysis, intervention, occupational therapy services, and the assistant's role within this population. Students will focus on the skills necessary to assist this specific population to return to relevant occupations. The parent, family, and caretaker relationship will be emphasized as crucial in the occupational therapy practice for the pediatric client. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA100, 101, 102, 103

**OTA105 OT Fundamentals and Practice II: Adult Development.** 4 hours. This course provides the student with a fundamental knowledge of occupational therapy from early adulthood to death. The content introduces students to physical dysfunctions that affect this group and will focus on skills necessary for prevention, remediation, compensation, and techniques to improve participation in occupations across the lifespan. Normal and pathological conditions associated with aging will be reviewed; for example orthopedic and neurological and other disabilities. The material will cover evaluation and analysis, interventions, occupational therapy services and settings, documentation and the role of the assistant. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA100, 101, 102, 103

**OTA106 OT Fundamentals and Practice III: Interventions and Tools in Behavioral Health.** 4 hours. This course expands upon the historical foundational knowledge by focusing on psychosocial issues related to the practice of occupational therapy. Students will focus on skills targeted toward appropriate interventions strategies, integration of occupation and goal directed activity for patients diagnosed with mental illness. Within this course the student will expand upon group techniques as well as individual intervention. The material will cover evaluation and analysis, interventions, occupational therapy services and settings, documentation and the role of the assistant within the behavioral health domain. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA100, 101, 102, 103

**OTA107 OT Fundamentals and Practice IV: Physical Dysfunction and Rehab.** 4 hours. This course explores the physical function required to promote successful occupational performance. The core of the content is designed to direct the assistant in the methods required to restore the client's ability to participate in personally selected and valued occupations. The content builds upon previous coursework, providing the student additional opportunity to practice data gathering, intervention strategies, use of adaptive equipment techniques, and patient/client education. Topics will include theory and foundations in physical dysfunction practice, the perspective of the client with disabilities, therapeutic use of self, the occupational therapy process, documentation,

competencies in appropriate evaluations, performance areas, special needs for the older adult population and greater depth into a variety of clinical conditions. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA100, 101, 102, 103

**OTA108 Practice Skills Level 2: Fundamentals Integrated.** 1 hour. Hybrid-The integration skills lab is designed to allow the student to integrate concepts from all classes into one project or case study. This time may also be used for intra-professional and inter-professional group activity. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA100, 101, 102, 103

**OTA109 OT Practice: Settings; Outpatient, Inpatient, and Community.** 4 hours. This course allows the student to integrate concepts from foundational courses (OTA100, 101, 102, 103) and explore how interventional strategies may vary in different settings. Concepts discussed will include therapeutic use of self, coordination with supervising OTR and healthcare team, clinical judgment, evidence based practice, educating the client and caregiver, use of community resources, appropriate documentation of techniques and current healthcare environments within which the student will practice as an OTA. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA 106, 107, 108

**OTA110 OT Practice: Professional Skills and Transitions.** 4 hours. This course will address the student's ability to articulate the role of occupation in the promotion of health and well-being to a variety of audiences (i.e. client, caregiver, clinical team members, and the community). The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of the OTA in case management, care coordination, and discharge planning in a variety of environments. Evidence based intervention models including, but not limited to, adaptive environments, compensatory strategies, and the fabrication/application/fitting of orthotic devices will be discussed. Additional topics of discussion will include structures of reimbursement and documentation, effective documentation of need/rationale for services, advocacy within the profession, identification of personal responsibility re: professional development, abilities, and competencies in relation to job responsibilities. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA104, 105, 106, 107, 108

**OTA111 OT Practice: Health Sciences for the OTA.** 2 hours. This course will discuss the impact of contextual factors (socioeconomic, political, cultural, professional, ecological) on occupational therapy practice. Students will identify strategies for conflict resolution regarding ethics in the personal and organizational realms. Students will also explore skills needed for the effective, ethical supervision of nonprofessional staff within the healthcare setting. Course discussion will include indemnification and documentation of quality improvements, understanding of regulatory and legislative systems that impact occupational therapy practice, as well as current policy issues and professional responsibility. Students will explore individual and group leadership issues and be able to identify personal leadership qualities to apply in their lives and practice. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA104, 105, 106, 107, 108

**OTA112 OT Practice Skills Level 3: OT Practice Integrated.** 1 hour. Hybrid-The integration skills lab is designed to allow the student to integrate concepts from all classes into once project or case study. This time may also be used for intra-professional and inter-professional group activity. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA104, 105, 106, 107, 108

**OTA113: Credentialing and Licensure Preparation.** 0-1 hour. Students will demonstrate understanding of the requirements for licensure, certification, and registration within state laws. They will also demonstrate understanding of the AOTA Code of Ethics and Ethics Standards as well as the Standards of Practice. These are to be used as a guide in ethical decision making regarding client intervention, interactions amongst professionals, and within the employment setting. (Online/Self/Study)

**OTA130 Fieldwork 1.** 1 hour. (1 week) This course introduces the student to various clinical settings addressing mental health populations in an observational role. Level of interaction with the clinical population to be determined by the fieldwork supervisor. The student will be responsible for assignments as determined by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Assistant Program, OTA100, 101, 102, 103

**OTA131 Fieldwork 2.** 1 hour. (2 weeks) This course provides the student with further observational experience in a variety of clinical settings. Level of interaction with the clinical population to be determined by the fieldwork supervisor. The student will be responsible for assignments as determined by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Prerequisites: Admission to the Central Methodist University Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, OTA108, OTA130

**OTA132 Fieldwork 3.** 6 hours. (8 weeks) This course provides the student opportunities in introductory-level clinical training within the equivalent of a full-time clinical practice under supervision. Focus of the fieldwork is on interactional skills and therapeutic use of observation in the clinical setting. Prerequisites: OTA112, OTA131

**OTA133 Fieldwork.** 6 hours. (8 weeks) This course provides the student further instruction and practice within a clinical setting. Clinical training is within the equivalent of a full-time clinical practice with supervision. Focus of this fieldwork is on interactional skills and therapeutic use of observation in the clinical setting. Prerequisites: OTA112, OTA132

