



## **Greetings Perspective OTA Students!**

Thank you for your interest in Stark State College's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. This information is the most up to date information but please note that it is subject to change as needed to maintain a high quality program. Program information is also available at [www.starkstate.edu](http://www.starkstate.edu).

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program has limited enrollment; therefore, students must apply and be accepted into the Program separately from being enrolled into the College. The Program uses a "rolling admissions" process which means there is no specific application deadline for each class. Students become eligible to apply when they meet specific admission criteria. Once students successfully complete the application process, they are assigned a place in the next available class which has an opening.

All individuals considering the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program must first apply to the College. Please follow these steps to apply:

1. Apply to Stark State College (only if new to the college).
2. Submit all academic transcripts from high school and other higher education institutions to Registration.
3. Take the ACCUPLACER Assessment Test (only if not taken previously) or submit ACT scores, if they are no more than 2 years old.
  - Your scores will determine whether or not you will need to take any prerequisite courses BEFORE you begin the courses required to apply for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.
  - The test can be taken any time after you apply to the College but it is strongly recommended that you complete it before your first advising appointment so your advisor can give you the best advice about how to meet the OTA admission requirements.

- Call 330-966-5450 or 800-797-8275 to schedule a testing date and time; there is no fee for this test.

4. Make an Academic Advising appointment.

- If you have never taken a credit course at Stark State College, make an appointment with an Admissions Counselor by calling 330-494-6170, or stop into M110.

- If you are a current student at the College, make an appointment with your assigned advisor. To identify your advisor, log on to **MyStarkState** and click on the “**My Stuff**” tab or **MAP**.

We look forward to helping you pursue your academic goals!

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## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for PROSPECTIVE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT (OTA) STUDENTS**

***If after reading this information, I still have questions, who should I contact?*** If you are new to Stark State College, call the Admissions Office (330) 966-5450 to schedule an appointment with an admissions counselor.

- ***Is the Program accredited?*** Yes. The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449 • 301-652-2682. [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org).
- ***What resources can I use to assist me in exploring the Occupational Therapy profession?*** Visit [AOTA.org](http://AOTA.org), [OOTA.org](http://OOTA.org), [NBCOT.org](http://NBCOT.org), or [OTPTAT.ohio.gov](http://OTPTAT.ohio.gov) to learn much more about the occupational therapy

professions. You may also visit the Career Development Office in Room M104.

- ***What exactly is an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA)?*** The OTA is a licensed professional who works under the direct supervision of an Occupational Therapist (OT) to promote optimal independence and quality of life for persons across the life span. Occupational therapy assistants help patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living. Occupational therapy assistants are directly involved in providing therapy to patients. For more detailed information, please read the information in the following link:  
<https://www.starkstate.edu/occupational-therapy-assistant/>.
- ***Do I have to be licensed to practice as an OTA?*** Yes. To apply for an Occupational Therapy Assistant License in Ohio, a graduate must pass the written National Certification Examination, and a jurisprudence (state law) exam. Each state has its own requirements, although they are similar.
- ***Will I get a degree upon completion of the Program?*** Yes. The Associate of Applied Science degree is awarded.
- ***Where are OTAs employed?*** OTAs work in a variety of settings. They include: hospitals, nursing homes, schools, home health agencies, early intervention programs, mental health centers, outpatient clinics and community health organizations.
- ***Can I expect to find a job once graduated?*** Yes. Throughout Ohio, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, “Employment of occupational therapy assistants throughout Ohio is projected to grow 48 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. Occupational therapy will continue to be an important part of treatment for people with various illnesses and disabilities.” SSC's Career Development Office (S100) can assist students in their job search before and after graduation.
- ***Are there personal attributes I should consider if thinking about occupational therapy as a career?*** Yes. Prospective students should have the ability to succeed in a science-based curriculum, relate well to people on a one-on-one basis, feel comfortable being hands-on and working in close proximity with people of all ages and backgrounds, be patient, have

good time management and stress management skills, and be able to speak and write well.

- ***If I am past the traditional college age, am I too old to enter the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program?*** No. There is a growing trend for people to change careers. Students who have the cognitive, interpersonal, and physical capacity to perform the necessary tasks can be successful in this career field no matter their age.
- ***Is there a minimum age requirement?*** Yes. All students must be at least 18 years of age by the time they start the technical OTA courses. This is to ensure that the student can participate in fieldwork education.
- ***How long is the Program?*** Currently, two classes of 20 students are enrolled each academic year, in the fall and spring semesters. The Program requires 5 semesters to complete the 70 credit hours required for graduation.
- ***Can I double up on courses to complete in a shorter timeframe?*** No. Each semester builds upon the skills learned in the previous semester. The sequential nature of the curriculum does not allow for altering the 5 semester pathway.
- ***Can I attend part-time?*** Maybe. Students must enroll in all technical courses scheduled for each semester. However, students who complete all or most of their nontechnical courses prior to enrolling will have reduced credit hour loads, roughly equivalent to part-time study.
- ***How many days a week will I be in class?*** Most of the OTA classes are scheduled to meet twice a week. Your clinical for the first 4 semesters is generally scheduled for one full day. With that said, if all of your nontechnical courses are complete, you can anticipate being in class/clinical for three days per week during semesters 1-4 of the Program. Semester 5 requires a full time commitment, as students are assigned a clinical placement for 5 days per week, approximately 8 hours per day.
- ***What expenses can I expect to incur related to my OTA education?*** Expenses include, but may not be limited to: tuition, college fees, textbooks and supplies, liability insurance, health insurance, physical examination and immunization costs, background checks, uniforms, and transportation to and from off-campus clinical experiences. In addition,

certification examination and state license application related fees should be expected.

- ***Is financial aid available?*** Yes. SSC's Financial Aid Office can provide information concerning available grants, loans and scholarships. Call (330) 966-5456 to make an appointment with a financial aid counselor.
- ***Can I visit the Program facilities?*** Yes. Please call ahead to make arrangements. Call Jeri Quinn, Administrative Assistant, at (330) 966-5458 if you wish to make an appointment.
- ***Is experience as a healthcare provider helpful?*** Yes (and No)! Familiarity with the medical field and terminology is always helpful. There is no advantage, however, in admissions or in course work. All students must meet the same admission criteria and must complete all coursework listed on the curriculum plan.
- ***If I already have a degree, do I still have to wait for entry into the OTA Program?*** Yes. Unfortunately, at this time, all admissions are determined upon receipt of the Admissions Checklist in the Registration Office. The application must demonstrate that all minimum criteria are met. Once an applicant is assessed as qualified, they are given the next available seat in the Program. One potential advantage of having previous college credit is that it could expedite the time needed to reach eligibility. It does not, however, reduce the time on the acceptance list.
- ***Are there any specific physical requirements necessary to perform functions associated with being an OTA?*** Yes. Given the nature of the work, individuals considering the field of occupational therapy should have good strength, endurance, mobility, dexterity, and sensory perception. The work can be physically taxing since assistants help patients perform tasks and exercises throughout the day. This may involve lifting and supporting patient weight, bending, stooping, and pushing wheelchairs or equipment.
- ***Can credits earned in the Program be transferred or applied to a bachelor's degree?*** Yes. Several Arts and Sciences courses included in the curriculum are TAG (Transfer Assurance Guide) approved, and are therefore transferable throughout the University System of Ohio. Technical courses must be evaluated by the institution where a student wishes to transfer.

- ***When do classes begin?*** Students are admitted twice per year, during the fall and spring semesters.
- ***What hours will I be in attendance at school while enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program?*** The schedule varies during the year. Lecture and lab classes are generally scheduled between 8:00am -5:00 pm (M-F). Students are encouraged not to schedule other activities, including employment, until the schedules are posted and clinical placements are determined each semester.
- ***Can I work while in the OTA Program?*** Yes, with limits encouraged. It is recommended that part-time employment be limited each week for the first 4 of 5 semesters. However, the actual number will vary depending on individual student circumstances. Students are strongly encouraged NOT to work during the 5th semester, due to the clinical and course requirements.
- ***Are there any special requirements for enrolling in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program?*** Yes. Enrollment is limited. Therefore, acceptance by SSC does not automatically mean acceptance into the OTA Program. Candidates must become eligible by meeting specific requirements and must apply to the Program. Formal notification of acceptance into the Program is required.
- ***Is there an application deadline?*** No. Applications will be accepted when a candidate completes the eligibility {pre-application} requirements.
- ***What must I do to become eligible?*** What steps should I follow? Eligibility requirements are located at:  
<https://www.starkstate.edu/occupational-therapy-assistant/>.
- ***What does eligibility mean?*** A student has met the special pre-application requirements and is ready to apply for admission to the Program.
- ***Do all eligible applicants get into the Program?*** Yes. All students that meet admission requirements are accepted into the program. Students are accepted on an ongoing basis; eligible applicants will be placed into the next available cohort group.
- ***How long might I wait to begin classes after being accepted?*** When a student is accepted, they will be informed of their start date. If spaces open earlier, the applicant will be notified. Students are encouraged to

apply as soon as they are eligible and to use the waiting period to complete the non-technical courses.

- ***How long does it take to complete the Program?*** Once students begin the technical portion of the Program, 5 semesters are required to reach completion. Most students take some or all of the required nontechnical courses before starting the OTA sequence.
- ***Is there a time limit for completion of the Program?*** Yes. Once a student begins the technical courses, she/he must complete within 3 years.
- ***I have a 2.9 GPA; do you round up?*** No. Admission to the OTA Program requires a 3.0 GPA.
- ***Are OTAs at risk for infectious diseases such as AIDS?*** Maybe. OTAs utilize Universal Precautions, a practice in accordance with the infection control guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, and by doing so, are at no greater risk than any other health care professional.
- ***If I am currently enrolled in an OTA Program at another college, is transfer to SSC possible?*** Maybe. SSC's Program may or may not be able to accept in-progress OTA students depending on space availability and the curriculum match between the two colleges.
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Please contact us if you have further questions:

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