



Occupational Therapist Assistant

Course Overview: Focuses on careers in planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health informatics, support services, and biotechnology research and development.

Career Goal (O*NET Code): (31-2011) - Occupational therapy assistants may handle some of the routine work of running an occupational therapy practice, like answering calls from patients. Occupational therapy assistants and aides work under the direction of occupational therapists in treating patients with injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help these patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working.

Student Name: _____
Grade: _____
School: _____

SUGGESTED COURSEWORK

EXTENDED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Middle School	8th	HS Courses:	(Local districts may list high school credit courses here)	<p>Curricular Experiences: *** Health Occupations Students of America</p> <p>Career Learning Experiences: Career Preparation Internship Job Shadowing Clinical Rotations Certifications Clinical Volunteer Work (local hospitals & medical facilities)</p> <p>Service Learning Experiences: Boy/Girl Scouts Campus Service Organizations Community Service Volunteer Medical Mission Trips Peer Mentoring / Peer Tutoring Special Olympics</p>	<p>Extracurricular Experiences:*** Language Immersion Programs National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine School Newspaper Student Council UIL Academic Competitions Yearbook</p>		
High School	9th	Courses*:	English I Algebra I or Geometry Biology			World Geography Foreign Language I Physical Education or Athletics	<p>COLLEGE CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES -- High School</p> <p>Students should take Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual credit, Advanced Technical Credit (ATC), or locally articulated courses (Tech Prep), if possible. List those courses that count for college credit on your campus.</p>
		Career-Related Electives:	Principles of Health Science				
	10th	Courses:	English II Geometry or Algebra II Chemistry			World History Foreign Language II Elective	
		Career-Related Electives:	Medical Terminology and Pathophysiology				
	11th	Core Courses:	English III Algebra II or Pre-Calculus Physics			United States History Foreign Language III ** Professional Communications or Speech	
		Career-Related Electives:	Health Science				
	12th	Core Courses:	English IV Pre-Calculus or Calculus 4th Science			Government/Economics Elective Elective	
		Career-Related Electives:	Practicum in Health Science				

Postsecondary	How to Become an Occupational Therapy Assistant			<p>Carrer Options (Sample of reported job titles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) • Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant-Licensed (COTA-L) • Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) • Behavior Specialist • Licensed Occupational Therapy Assistant • School Based Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant 	<p>Professional Associations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Occupational Therapy Association • National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy 	
		An associate's degree is required to become an occupational therapy assistant. They must also be licensed in most states. They can also increase their chances of getting into a community college or technical school program by doing volunteer work in a healthcare setting, such as a nursing care facility, an occupational therapist's office, or a physical therapist's office.				
		Texas Southmost College	South Texas College			Texas State Technical College
		Occupational Therapy Assistant (AAS)				
		the University of Texas at Brownsville	The University of Texas - Pan American			

* Students must meet local & state high school graduation requirements. ** Required course for the Distinguished Graduation Plan (in addition to other measures). *** Based on campus availability. Students may select other elective courses for personal enrichment purposes.

This plan of study serves as a guide, along with other career planning materials, for pursuing a career path and is based on the most recent information as of 2009. All plans meet high school graduation requirements as well as college entrance requirements.



Occupational Therapist Assistant

TEA Industry Cluster	Health Science
SOC Code	31-2011
Identified by	Tech Prep Occupations
Projected Growth (2018)	67%
BISD Magnet School Available	Yes

Source: Demand Occupations by Cluster, updated *June 27, 2012*

Description

What Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides Do

Occupational therapy assistants may handle some of the routine work of running an occupational therapy practice, like answering calls from patients.

Occupational therapy assistants and aides work under the direction of occupational therapists in treating patients with injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help these patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working. For more information, see the profile on [occupational therapists](#).

Occupational therapy assistants are typically more directly involved in giving therapy. Occupational therapy aides typically do support activities.

Duties

Occupational therapy assistants typically do the following:

- Help patients do therapeutic activities, such as specific stretches and other exercises
- Work with children who have development disabilities, leading them in play activities that promote coordination
- Teach patients how to use special equipment; for example, showing a patient with Parkinson's disease how to use devices that make eating easier
- Record patients' progress, report to occupational therapists, and do other administrative tasks
- Occupational therapy aides typically do the following:
 - Help clients with billing and insurance forms
 - Prepare treatment areas, such as setting up therapy equipment
 - Do clerical tasks, including scheduling appointments and answering telephones
 - Help patients move to and from treatment areas

Occupational therapy assistants collaborate with occupational therapists to develop a treatment plan for each patient. Then, the occupational therapy assistant carries out the plan with the patient. Activities in the plans range from teaching the proper way to move from a bed into a wheelchair to the best way to stretch and limber one's muscles.

For example, an occupational therapy assistant might work with injured workers to help them get back into the work

force by teaching them how to work around lost motor skills. An occupational therapy assistant might work with people with learning disabilities to teach them skills that let them be more independent.

Assistants monitor activities to make sure patients are doing them correctly. They also encourage the patients. They record the patient's progress so the therapist can change the treatment plan if the patient is not getting the desired results.

Occupational therapy aides typically prepare materials and assemble equipment used during treatment. Aides fill out insurance forms and other paperwork and are responsible for a range of clerical tasks, such as scheduling appointments and answering the telephone.

Training Opportunities Linked to Those Jobs (Degree Types and Colleges/Universities)

How to Become an Occupational Therapy Assistant or Aide

An associate's degree is required to become an occupational therapy assistant. They must also be licensed in most states. Occupational therapy aides typically have a high school diploma or equivalent.

Education

People interested in becoming an occupational therapy assistant should take high school courses in biology and health. They can also increase their chances of getting into a community college or technical school program by doing volunteer work in a healthcare setting, such as a nursing care facility, an occupational therapist's office, or a physical therapist's office.

Occupational therapy assistants generally have an associate's degree. Occupational therapy assistant programs are commonly found in community colleges and technical schools. These programs generally require two years of full-time study. They include classroom instruction in subjects such as psychology, biology, and pediatric health. Occupational therapy assistants also complete clinical fieldwork as part of their education to gain hands-on work experience.

To be licensed, occupational therapy assistants must graduate from an accredited program. In 2010, there were about 300 programs for occupational therapy assistants that the [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education](#) (ACOTE) had accredited.

Occupational therapy aides typically have a high school diploma or equivalent. They are trained on the job. This training can last from several weeks to a few months and includes classroom and practical training where the aide works under the direct supervision of more experienced assistants or aides.

Important Qualities

Compassion. Occupational therapy assistants and aides frequently work with patients who struggle with many of life's basic activities. As a result, they should be compassionate and caring and have the ability to encourage others.

Detail oriented. Occupational therapy assistants and aides must be able to quickly and accurately follow the instructions, both written and spoken, of an occupational therapist.

Interpersonal skills. Assistants and aides spend much of their time interacting with patients. They should be friendly and courteous, and they should be able to communicate with patients to the extent of their ability and training.

Physical strength. Assistants and aides need to have a moderate degree of strength because of the physical exertion

required to assist patients. Constant kneeling, stooping, and standing for long periods also are part of the job.

Licenses

Most states require occupational therapy assistants to be licensed. Licensure usually requires completing an accredited occupational therapy assistant education program and passing an exam. Some states have additional requirements, such as continuing education.

Occupational therapy aides are not required to be licensed.

Certification

Occupational therapy assistants who have completed an accredited program can become certified by passing an exam offered by the [National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy](#). Certification is voluntary and allows assistants to use the title "Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant" (COTA).

Advancement

Some occupational therapy assistants and aides advance by taking additional education to become occupational therapists. A small number of occupational therapist "bridge" education programs are designed for qualifying occupational therapy assistants to advance to therapists.

Texas Southmost College	South Texas College	Texas State Technical College	The University of Texas at Brownsville	The University of Texas - Pan American
	Occupationa Therapy Assistant (AAS)			

Local Employers

Employer	City		Employer	City
A Better Choice Home Health	Brownsville		Ben Milam Elementary School	Harlingen
A One Health Svc Agency	Brownsville		Bonham Elementary School	Harlingen
A Touch Home Health Care Inc	Brownsville		Bowie Elementary School	Harlingen
Abc Pediatrics	Brownsville		Calvary Christian School	Harlingen
Abundant Life Home Health Inc	Brownsville		Cardiovascular Associates	Harlingen

Career Options (Specific Job Types)

Sample of reported job titles:

- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)
- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant-Licensed (COTA-L)
- Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA)
- Behavior Specialist
- Licensed Occupational Therapy Assistant
- School Based Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant

Salary Ranges

Wages for Occupational Therapy Assistants

Location	Pay Period	2011				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$16.22	\$20.28	\$25.02	\$29.67	\$34.60
	Yearly	\$33,700	\$42,200	\$52,000	\$61,700	\$72,000
Texas	Hourly	\$19.71	\$24.96	\$30.27	\$35.91	\$43.18
	Yearly	\$41,000	\$51,900	\$63,000	\$74,700	\$89,800
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX MSA	Hourly	\$8.14	\$9.60	\$25.89	\$33.61	\$38.21
	Yearly	\$16,900	\$20,000	\$53,900	\$69,900	\$79,500
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	Hourly	\$10.50	\$16.35	\$30.09	\$36.21	\$42.11
	Yearly	\$21,800	\$34,000	\$62,600	\$75,300	\$87,600

Professional Associations Linked to the Careers

For more information about occupational therapy assistants or aides, visit

[American Occupational Therapy Association](#)

[National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy](#)

Sources

The information provided in this document was collected from the following sources:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>)
- O*NET OnLine (<http://www.onetonline.org/>)

- Texas CARES (<http://www.texascaresonline.com/>)
- CareerOneStop (<http://www.careeronestop.org/>)