

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, A.S. (BERKS)

Begin Campus: Berks

End Campus: Berks

Program Description

The Associate in Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program prepares students to work in numerous practice settings, guided by the supervision of occupational therapists. Across the lifespan, individuals engage in meaningful occupations. Learning, playing, working, resting, and caring for self and others are among the occupations of life. A physical or psychological challenge may hinder an individual, group, and/or community from participating fully in meaningful occupations. Occupational therapy makes it possible for people to maintain or reclaim independence; thereby positively engaging in Living Life to its Fullest™. Upon successful graduation from the program, students must sit for and successfully pass the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) national certification examination to practice. Most states also require licensure as a condition for employment. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination and obtain licensure. NBCOT may be contacted at:

NBCOT
One Bank Street
Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
301-990-7979
www.NBCOT.org (<http://www.NBCOT.org>)

To enter this major, students must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. To be admitted to degree candidacy, the applicant must have completed educational background requirements called Carnegie Units or Secondary School Units. Students are responsible for proof of liability insurance and other requirements specified by the facility providing supervised field experience.

The size of each entering class is limited so that optimal clinical experiences and practical application situations can be maintained. Students are expected to progress through the program in the prescribed manner. Fieldwork affiliations are maintained within a specified geographical area. Students may be required to make special housing and transportation arrangements during the fieldwork phase. Students must complete all Level II fieldwork within eighteen months of successful completion of OTA didactic course work. The 20TCC and 20TBL curricula are delivered in five semesters.

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational therapy is a practice informed by physical, psychological, and occupational science. It is with these skills and knowledge; occupational therapy assistants employ intervention plans that engage people in maintaining or reclaiming independence. A physical or psychological challenge may hinder an individual, group, and/or community from participating fully in meaningful occupations. When this occurs an occupational therapy assistant works with the client(s) to design a plan to Live Life to its Fullest™. As a certified occupational therapy assistant, you will work in numerous practice settings, guided by the supervision of occupational therapists. Most importantly, by choosing

a career in occupational therapy, you will be at the forefront in making a difference in people's lives by way of therapeutic use of self and an intentional relationship.

You Might Like This Program If...

You want to work with individuals and groups across the lifespan. Occupational Therapy Assistants work in rehabilitation and acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, schools, community health centers, mental health facilities, pediatric specialty settings, and higher education, and can also create their own niches in a variety of settings. If you appreciate helping to solve problems and empower people, being an occupational therapy assistant may be the right fit for you!

Entrance to Major

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program admits students to begin in the fall semester.

Incoming first-year and transfer students who meet the program and campus admission requirements are admitted directly into the major. For more information about the admission process for this major, please send a request to the campus undergraduate admission office or to the program contact (listed in the Contact tab of the Bulletin).

First year students include those who have graduated from high school and have attempted fewer than 18 semester hours of college coursework at another college or university after high school graduation.

The minimum high school units required for admission to the Occupational Therapy Assistant program include four secondary units of English, two units of mathematics (including one unit of algebra), two units of science (one unit must be biology), and five units of arts, humanities, social studies, and/or foreign languages.

Although the minimum high school GPA required for admission is a 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale), this does not guarantee admissions into the program. The program is competitive; therefore, applicants who submit their application to Penn State by December 31 will be reviewed on a space available basis.

Transfer Applicants

In addition to a cumulative grade-point average, it is recommended that a transfer applicant should have demonstrated successful completion of at least three (3) credits of natural science with a lab and one (1) social science related course from another institution. These types of courses may include (but are not limited to) mammalian anatomy, physiology, chemistry, psychology, sociology, and other core biological, chemical, and social sciences. The admissions selection committee strives to select students who have demonstrated the potential to succeed in a rigorous, science-oriented program of study.

- * OT does not offer an advanced placement option for coursework for credit for experiential learning in the OTA program.
- * OT does not require prerequisite education or work-related experience for admission to the OTA program.

Change of Major

Requests will be considered for entrance into the OTP Program based on academic performance and space available in the OTA Program.

Students who wish to change their major must have a cumulative collegiate grade-point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale as the minimum University requirement for change of major consideration. In general,

change of major to the Occupational Therapy Assistant program requires a substantially higher cumulative grade-point average. The number of qualified applicants typically exceeds the number of available program spaces; therefore, satisfaction of the minimum requirements does not guarantee approval for entrance to major.

In addition to a cumulative grade-point average, it is recommended that all change of major applicants should have demonstrated successful completion of at least one (1) laboratory based biological and one (1) social science related course prior to the January review:

Biological and Life Sciences (one lecture and one lab)

- BIOL 161/BIOL 162: Anatomy & Physiology I
- BIOL 163/BIOL 164: Anatomy & Physiology II

Social and Behavioral Sciences (choose at least one)

- PSYCH 100: General Psychology
- HDFS 129: Introduction to Human Development and Family Studies or PSYCH 212

Additional Information

Students are responsible for proof of liability insurance and other requirements, including criminal background checks and health information specified by the facility providing supervised field experience.

A felony conviction on record may impact a student's ability to sit for the certification examination administered by NBCOT after graduation; this can subsequently impact a graduate's ability to attain state licensure. Before applying to the OTA program, students can contact NBCOT for information on their early determination program to assess examination eligibility. Contact NBCOT at <https://www.nbcot.org/> for more information.

Retention Requirements

OTA Student Academic Success

Students in the Associate in Science in Occupational Therapy Program must earn a grade of C or better in: BIOL 161, BIOL 162, BIOL 163, BIOL 164, PSYCH 100, HDFS 129 or PSYCH 212, OT 100, OT 101, OT 103, OT 205, OT 207, OT 209, OT 210W, OT 212, OT 214, and OT 216.

As outlined in the course syllabi and the Associate Degree Programs Bulletin, students must earn passing grades in prerequisite occupational therapy courses to enroll in subsequent occupational therapy courses. Students will take the OT didactic courses offered in each semester, concurrently and in the prescribed sequence, since the curriculum is a progressive learning model. Level II fieldwork is completed only after the OT didactic courses and all general education requirements are successfully completed. Level II fieldwork must be completed within 18 months after completion of didactic coursework.

Ongoing Progression in the OTA Program

As per ACOTE Standard 3.4 Criteria for Successful Completion and A.3.5 Evaluation with Student on a Regular Basis, the faculty and administration will provide students regular feedback about their academic standing. Regarding successful completion of the OTA program there are instances where progression in the program is non-negotiable as follows:

1. A student who earns a D or F in any two OT didactic and/or fieldwork courses will not be allowed to continue in the program. Examples

include but are not limited to: Failure of (OT 103 and OT 295E) or (OT 195E and OT 395A) or (OT 101 and OT 210W).

2. A student may be disenrolled from the program for a violation of the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics and/or Penn State Academic Integrity Policy G-9 .
3. A student may not progress to the 3rd semester of the curriculum until BIOL 161, BIOL 162, BIOL 163, and BIOL 164 have been successfully completed with a C or better. If BIOL courses are not successfully passed by 3rd semester, the student may withdraw from the University or remain active and return to 3rd semester of prescribed OT courses the following year with the approval of Program Director.
4. Students must maintain a minimum grade point of 2.0 to be eligible to engage in Fieldwork Level I & II (OT 195E, OT 295E, OT 395A and OT 395B).

Degree Requirements

For the Associate in Science degree in Occupational Therapy, a minimum of 71 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	21
Requirements for the Major	62

12 of the 21 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3 credits of GWS courses; 6 credits of GS courses; 3 credits of GN courses.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
BIOL 161	Human Anatomy and Physiology I - Lecture	3
BIOL 162	Human Anatomy and Physiology I - Laboratory	1
BIOL 163	Human Anatomy and Physiology II - Lecture	3
BIOL 164	Human Anatomy and Physiology II - Laboratory	1
ENGL 15	Rhetoric and Composition	3
OT 100	Structural Foundations of Occupational Therapy	1
OT 101	Conceptual Foundations of Occupational Therapy Practice	2
OT 103	Occupational Performance Across the Life Span	3
OT 195E	Fieldwork Level I Experience in Occupational Therapy	1
OT 205	Group Process Across The Lifespan	3
OT 207	Assistive Technologies and Methods of Adaptation	3
OT 209	Management, Leadership and Ethics in Occupational Therapy	3
OT 210W	Clinical Reasoning and Documentation in Occupational Therapy	3
OT 212	Occupational Therapy for Child & Adolescent Health	4

OT 214	Occupational Therapy for Psychosocial and Behavioral Health	4
OT 216	Occupational Therapy for Physical Health and Rehabilitation	4
OT 295E	Fieldwork Level I Experience in Occupational Therapy	2
OT 395A	Fieldwork Level II Experience in Occupational Therapy	6
OT 395B	Fieldwork Level II Experience in Occupational Therapy	6
PSYCH 100	Introductory Psychology	3

Additional Courses

Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better

HDFS 129	Introduction to Human Development and Family Studies	3
or PSYCH 212	Introduction to Developmental Psychology	

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all associate degree students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/associate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 3 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 3 credits

Knowledge Domains

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Note: Up to six credits of Inter-Domain courses may be used for any Knowledge Domain requirement, but when a course may be used to satisfy more than one requirement, the credits from the course can be counted only once.

Exploration

- **Any General Education course (including GHW and Inter-Domain):** 3 credits

University Degree Requirements

Cultures Requirement

3 credits of United States (US) or International (IL) cultures coursework are required and may satisfy other requirements

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 60 degree credits must be earned for a associates degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 60 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

Berks

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Occupational Therapy, A.S. at Berks Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
OT 100*	1 OT 103*	3
OT 101*	2 HDFS 129 or PSYCH 212*†	3
BIOL 161 (GN)*†	3 BIOL 163*	3
BIOL 162*	1 BIOL 164*	1
ENGL 15 or 30H (GWS)‡	3 General Education Course (GA)	3
PSYCH 100 (GS)*†	3	
	13	13

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits Summer	Credits
OT 205*	3 OT 210W*	3 OT 395A*	6
OT 207*	3 OT 212*	4 OT 395B*	6
OT 209*	3 OT 214*	4	
OT 195E*	1 OT 216*	4	
General Education Course (GH)	3 OT 295E*	2	

General Education Course (GQ)‡	3		
	16	17	12

Total Credits 71

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Advising Notes:

As per ACOTE Standard A.4.6 (2018) Notice to Applicants related to Criteria for Successful progression, retention, graduation, certification, and credentialing requirements of the Associate in Science in Occupational Therapy Degree.

Successful completion of each segment of the OTA Program requires the following:

- Student must earn a C or better in the OTA major coursework:
 - Each OT Course, BIOL 161, BIOL 162, BIOL 163, BIOL 164, HDFS 129 or PSYCH 212, PSYCH 100
- As per Penn State policy, student must earn C or better in Foundation Courses: ENGL 15(GWS) & MATH (GQ).
- OT course must be taken in the semester designated on this Suggested Academic Plan for OTA.
- Student must pass BIOL 161, BIOL 162, BIOL 163 & BIOL 164 prior to entering 3rd semester.
- Student must pass ENGL 15, PSYCH 100, and HDFS 129 or PSYCH 212 prior to entering the 3rd semester.
- When a student fails an OT course, they may not progress to next semester. Student will need to meet with adviser to discuss options of progression in the program.
- Student must maintain 2.0 GPA, to engage in OT 195E or OT 295E: Level I Fieldwork Experience.
- GQ, GH & GA can be moved around with the curriculum; however, must be completed by end of 3rd semester.
- All didactic degree requirements must be completed with a 2.0 GPA or better prior to enrolling in OT 395A/OT 395B.
- OT 195E, OT 295E, OT 395A, and OT 395B date & site of experience will be scheduled by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

To graduate with an Associate in Science in Occupational Therapy degree:

- Student must maintain a 2.0 GPA per Academic Progress Policy 54-00, "To graduate, a degree candidate must complete the requirements for the candidate's major and earn at least a C (2.00) average for all courses taken at this University as stated in 82-40, subject to the conditions of 51-00."
- Student must complete OT 395A & OT 395B within 18 months of completing the didactic requirements.
- A felony conviction on your record, may affect your ability to sit for the certification examination administered by NBCOT® after you graduate; this can subsequently affect your ability to attain state licensure. Before applying for the OTA program, you can contact NBCOT® for information on their early determination program to assess examination eligibility. Go to NBCOT and read the "Early Review" section for details (<https://www.nbcot.org/exam/edr/>).

Career Paths

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA's) work in numerous practice settings. Across the lifespan, individuals engage in meaningful occupations. Learning, playing, working, resting, and caring for self and others are among the occupations of life. A physical or psychological challenge may hinder an individual, group, and/or community from participating fully in meaningful occupations. Occupational therapy makes it possible for people to maintain or reclaim independence. Following graduation from the nationally accredited program, students are eligible to take the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) exam.

Careers

A Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) supports individuals of all ages develop, recover, improve, or maintain the skills necessary for daily living, leisure, play, and work. COTA's work in public and private schools, early intervention programs, general, psychiatric, and pediatric hospitals, day treatment centers, hospices and home health agencies, rehabilitation hospitals and centers, skilled and intermediate care facilities, community living programs, community wellness centers, and/or hand therapy clinics.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Once a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) has completed the associate in science in occupational therapy degree, they may decide to further studies by obtaining a baccalaureate degree. Common degrees include biology, psychology, occupational science, biobehavioral health, integrated social sciences, and other health related degrees.

Many COTA's decide to complete a baccalaureate degree secondary to the benefits of advancing their education as applied to occupational therapy and/or as part of positive progression of employment. Additionally, some COTA's complete a baccalaureate degree to prepare for graduate studies at the master's or doctoral degree entry-level to become occupational therapists.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://www.aota.org/education/find-a-school/>)

Professional Resources

- American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) (<https://www.aota.org>)
- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) (<https://acoteonline.org>)
- National Board for the Certification of Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT) (<https://www.nbcot.org>)

Accreditation

The Penn State Occupational Therapy Assistant programs are fully accredited by ACOTE, which can be reached at:

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)
7501 Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 510E
Bethesda, MD 20814
email: accred@aota.org
[www.acoteonline.org](https://acoteonline.org) (<https://acoteonline.org>)

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) is an Associated Advisory Council of the Executive Board of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA®). ACOTE® is recognized as the accrediting agency for occupational therapy education by both the United States Department of Education (USDE (https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg7.html#health)) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA (<https://www.chea.org/>)).

Program Accreditation Status by Campus

- **Berks:** 2023-2024

Professional Licensure/Certification

Many U.S. states and territories require professional licensure/certification to be employed. If you plan to pursue employment in a licensed profession after completing this program, please visit the Professional Licensure/Certification Disclosures by State (<https://opair.psu.edu/plc/dashboard/>) interactive map.

Contact

Berks

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<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/associate-degrees/occupational-therapy> (<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/associate-degrees/occupational-therapy>)

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<https://dubois.psu.edu/academics/degrees/ota> (<https://dubois.psu.edu/academics/degrees/ota/>)

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