Welcome to the Occupational Therapy Assistant program. You have begun the exploration of a profession dedicated to encouraging and restoring individuals with delay or disability to full participation in their daily activities.
This online session will provide you with information to acquaint you with this area of health science and to begin preparation for the requirements and process necessary for admission. The session will also provide you with information on program progression, graduation and certification. You are encouraged to continue through this Information Session. Upon completion, consider making a difference in the lives of others through successful completion of this program and eventual practice in the profession of occupational therapy.

Objectives

- Upon completion of this information session you should have a better understanding of:
  - A career as an OTA
  - The OTA program at Austin Community College
  - The application process and requirements for admission to the OTA program
  - Program progression
  - Graduation and certification requirements
This next section in career information.
The occupational therapy assistant student learns to promote, restore and maintain purposeful and meaningful activities to those who have experienced delay, illness or disability. Your interest in this program will hopefully encourage you to apply for admission anticipating license to practice occupational therapy after two years.
Occupational therapy assistants work in collaboration with an occupational therapist who belongs to a healthcare team consisting of a MD, RN, social worker, physical therapist, speech therapist and others. This licensed therapist supervises the OTA in such work related tasks as interviewing clients, assisting with physical, cognitive/perceptual, mental, psychosocial and developmental evaluations and enabling clients to engage in everyday activities after they had experienced injury or illness. The main goal of the occupational therapy practitioner (both the therapist and the assistant) is to promote independence and well being.
Occupational therapists and assistants work with individuals from infants through older adults. Practitioners may choose to specialize in pediatrics and practice in a variety of settings such as hospitals, outpatient clinics, community-based programs, schools, and home health.

To learn more about the role of OT with infants, children, and adolescents, visit http://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Professionals/CY.aspx
OT practitioners may also work in the area of mental health and practice in a variety of settings such as hospital, outpatient clinics, community based program, schools, and home health.

To learn more about the role of OT with adults and individuals living with mental illness, visit
http://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Professionals/RDP.aspx
and
http://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Professionals/MH.aspx
OT practitioners may also work with the elderly population and practice in a variety of settings such as hospital, outpatient clinics, community based program, schools, and home health.
These are the most current employment projections for the field or Occupational Therapy.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- Job Prospects for Occupational Therapy Assistants should be “very good.”
- Employment is expected to grow “much faster than average.”

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapists</td>
<td>113,200</td>
<td>146,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapy Assistants</td>
<td>30,300</td>
<td>43,200</td>
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http://www.bls.gov/oco/healthcare/occupational-therapy.png
http://www.bls.gov/oco/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.png
As illustrated on the slide, OT practitioners are numerous and work in a wide variety of settings. From newborn care and early childhood intervention to elderly care in nursing homes, OT practitioners offer many individuals the opportunity to develop or return to those activities most purposeful and meaningful to their lives.
Job and Salary Outlook

Wondering about the current job outlook?

Curious about the average salary?
• Visit http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm

Links provided will direct you to the most current salary outlook for OT practitioners.
This next section will provide you the information specific to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Austin Community College.
We are fortunate to have among our OTA faculty occupational therapist educators with many years of experience in both practice and education. Students will be taught by staff faculty as well as those therapists from the community who present special lectures and workshops throughout the program.
Program Outcomes

To learn about our program outcomes, including graduation and certification exam pass rates, visit http://www.austincc.edu/health/ota/program_outcomes.php
The application process will be clearly outlined with step by step instructions. This application process is posted on-line on the OTA website.
If you are thinking about applying these are 2 key items to take action on quickly.

The pre-requisite requirements include:

English Comp I

Introduction to Psychology and it must be taken within the last 5 years
Introduction to A&P and it must be taken within the last 5 years
Human Growth and Development and it must be taken within the last 5 years.

All immunizations must be complete as noted on the website.
Thinking About Applying? (cont.)

Important Points to Consider:

- **Criminal Background Check (CBC)** - Successful completion of a CBC is required for admission and continuation in all Health Sciences Programs. Applicants should not request a CBC until instructed by the department to do so. See additional information here [http://www.austincc.edu/health/background.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/background.php)

- **Drug screening** – Required for all students, at the cost of the student. Successful completion of the ten (10) panel drug screen is required within thirty days of beginning the first clinical course. A positive drug screen, or failure to undergo a drug screen, will result in program withdrawal. Applicants should not request a drug screening until instructed by the department to do so. See additional information here [http://www.austincc.edu/health/drug_screen.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/drug_screen.php)

DO NOT submit the criminal background check or drug screen until notified by the OTA program admission committee.
Important Points to Consider:

- **Technical Standards and Essential Functions** - Students must be able to meet all program Technical Standards and Essential Functions as outlined here [http://www.austincc.edu/health/ota/techstandards.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/ota/techstandards.php)

- **Volunteer Experience** – Required for all students. See details here [http://www.austincc.edu/health/ota/process.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/ota/process.php)

- **Health Insurance** – Once accepted into the OTA program, students must submit proof of health insurance, prior to beginning the first clinical course, consistent with the requirements of our clinical education partners. Additional information can be found here [http://www.austincc.edu/health/health_insurance.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/health_insurance.php)
Students will be expected to use technology to meet learning objectives. Assignments must be typed.

The Blackboard Learning Management System is used for submission of on-line assignments, discussion forums, blogs and other interactive tools that may be used to meet course learning objectives.
Thinking About Applying? (cont.)

Important Points to Consider:

- **Estimated Program Costs** - The following information is an estimate only and is subject to change
  [http://www.austincc.edu/health/Occupational%20Therapy%202013.pdf](http://www.austincc.edu/health/Occupational%20Therapy%202013.pdf)
  - Financial aid and grant information can be obtained through ACC’s Financial Aid Office at
  - Scholarship information can be found at
    [http://www.austincc.edu/health/scholarships.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/scholarships.php)

Begin exploring your financial aid resources. We have provided the link to our most current estimated cost for the program.
Thinking About Applying? (cont.)

Important Points to Consider:

• **Positive Criminal Background** - If a student has a positive criminal record, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the state licensure board (TBOTE) as well as the national certification board (NBCOT) to determine whether he/she will be eligible for certification/licensure upon completion of the academic program.
  - TBOTE website: [www.ptot.texas.gov/id/ID2303250-74FF-D517-7D90-06056A107068](http://www.ptot.texas.gov/id/ID2303250-74FF-D517-7D90-06056A107068)
  - NBCOT website: [www.nbcol.org](http://www.nbcol.org)
• It is recommended that this step be completed prior to the start of the first program semester.
• If an individual does not meet one or more of the criminal background standards found at the following site [http://www.austincc.edu/health/background.php](http://www.austincc.edu/health/background.php), she/he may pursue a declaratory order process with her/his licensing/registry body.
• If the licensing/registry body approves the individual to take the licensing/credentialing exam, the individual may participate in the clinical rotation.
• Successful completion of a criminal background check for a health sciences program does not ensure eligibility for licensure, future employment, or clinical placement.

It is imperative that attention be paid to this requirement. If you have any concern about something in your criminal background, contact the Texas state licensing board for OT practitioners and contact the National Certification Board for OT practitioners as soon as possible.
Current OTA Students’ Perspective

“With having just one child (2 years) lots of family support is needed to help me. The days that we are in class for 6-8 hours and then go home to study are the hardest. It’s really hard to balance school and a family when they are young.”

“I would say to expect to spend at least the same amount of time working outside of class as you spend in class. That may vary student to student but it is a realistic expectation. I think this program would by very difficult to complete, without an extremely active and supportive network.”

“It is physically and mentally demanding and I have had to find time to get some exercise and learn strategies to manage stress.”

“There is a lot of support from the faculty and college but you have to be willing to ask for help and make the necessary adjustments that will help you succeed.”

These quotes are from students who have been in the program and have first hand experience of the rigors and demands of the program.
Current OTA Students’ Perspective

“I have to continue to work on the weekends and the only way I have been able to manage the rigors of the program is because I have a network of support and a job that allows me flexible hours.”

“I am single, with no support network. I don’t have children but even caring for pets with this schedule is challenging and stressful due to the long days and time commitment. It is worth all of the sacrifices but it will call on you to use all of your resources.”

“You have to be comfortable speaking in public and working in groups. There is a lot of interpersonal communication required.”

“I am a single-parent and have a 14-year-old and it’s been very challenging! The hardest thing for me has been trying to balance my home life and school! Each semester your schedule times changes so flexibility is a must. Yes, there is a lot of studying and homework involved. It can be very stressful and you pretty much have to give up a lot of things to succeed and make it. I don’t get to spend a lot of time with my family and that’s been hard for me. It can be done, if you have a strong support system to be there and help you out and finding that balance that works for you to keep you and your family happy and at peace!”
The application process, viewed on the OTA website, takes you through a STEP by STEP progression in order to submit a complete packet to the OTA Admissions Committee. Remember, admission to ACC does not guarantee admission to the OTA program.

Immunization documentation is vital for a complete admission packet. Make sure your nurse or doctor initials, signs or stamps EACH immunization requirement on the line designated for that immunization. All immunizations must be completed and included with the application packet.

As stated above **DO NOT submit** the criminal background check **until notified** by the OTA program admission committee.
The faculty want to see every student progress from semester to semester and meet all the necessary requirements for success.
OTA students must pass all program courses with a 73% (C) or better in order to advance to the next program semester.

Once admitted into the program, all courses must be completed in the sequence outlined in the degree plan.

A Note on WECM:

- Courses for the OTA program at ACC are selected from the course list developed by the Workforce Educational Course Manual (WECM).
- All programs, within a discipline such as OTA, have the same courses from which to choose thus allowing each program to select courses best suited to its curriculum design.
- Titles and course descriptions of courses are the same throughout the state allowing the student smooth transfer from one program to another if necessary.
- WECM in no way supersedes the ACOTE guidelines for curriculum development. It merely provides standard courses and course titles that are interchangeable if and when a student finds it necessary to transfer from one program to another.

OTA students must pass all program courses with a 73% (C) or better in order to advance to the next program semester. All learning objectives must be met. All technical standards must be upheld.
Students enrolled in the OTA program at ACC complete a two year, full-time, intensive course of study (including summers).

A sample weekly schedule is outlined below for consideration (subject to change)

- 1st semester OT courses:
  - Monday/Wednesday 8:15am-1:00pm; Tuesday/Thursday 8:30 am-1:00 pm
- 2nd semester OT courses:
  - Monday/Wednesday 8:30am-6:15pm; Tuesday/Thursday 9:00am-3:30pm
- 5th and 6th semester fieldwork courses:
  - Monday-Friday 40 hours per week, 8 hours per day, unpaid experience
  - Semesters which include fieldwork courses require student travel to clinical sites in Austin and the surrounding areas (transportation and all associated travel expenses and are the responsibility of the student).
  - The 6th semester fieldwork experience occurs simultaneously with the final academic course. Students should therefore expect to complete all academic course requirements in addition to all fieldwork requirements.

This is a steady, sequential course of study. Once enrolled in the program, students progress from one semester to another uninterrupted for two years including summers. A sample weekly schedule is presented for your benefit. All students MUST pass ALL OT courses with a 73 “C” or better to progress to the next level of study.
Next section is on graduation, certification and licensure requirements.
Program Completion

Graduation Requirements
In order to graduate from the program, an OTA student must:
1. Successfully complete all courses outlined in the degree plan with a “C” or better,
2. Complete all program fieldwork requirements with a “pass”,
3. Upon admission to the program, have official transcripts from all other colleges sent to ACC Admissions and Records for evaluation, if student has taken courses at other colleges that apply to the degree plan, and
4. Fulfill all college requirements for graduation and submit an application as outlined at: [http://www.austincc.edu/degrees-and-certificates/earn-a-degree-and-transfer/apply-to-graduate](http://www.austincc.edu/degrees-and-certificates/earn-a-degree-and-transfer/apply-to-graduate)

Completion Ceremony
Upon successful completion of all program requirements, graduates, as well as their families and friends, will be invited to attend a pinning ceremony at which time the faculty will award graduates with OTA pins.
- Only those students who have completed the degree plan may participate in the ceremony.

In addition to the graduation requirements contained in the ACC College Catalog (See “Graduation”), the prospective graduate must:

1. Complete all courses listed in the official degree plan with a minimum grade of “C.”
2. Upon admission to the program, have official transcripts from all other colleges sent to ACC Admissions and Records for evaluation, if student has taken courses at other colleges that apply to the degree plan.
3. Apply for graduation in accordance with college policies.
A felony conviction may affect a graduate’s ability to sit for the NBCOT Certification Examination or attain state licensure. See NBCOT website for specific eligibility requirements.

If you have any questions or concerns about something that is on your criminal background, please take action now and contact the Texas OT licensing board and the National OT certification board.
ACOTE stands for the Accrediting Council of Occupational Therapy Education; the educational branch of the American Occupational Therapy Association. SACs stands for the Southern Association of Colleges which is the accrediting body of Austin Community College.

Program Accreditation

In order to be eligible to sit for the NBCOT certification examination, students must graduate from an Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) accredited program.

- The OTA Program at Austin Community College is currently ACOTE accredited with the next visit scheduled for 2014/2015.
- The program is also accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges (SACS) from January 2005 through 2015.
Next section includes other considerations when applying to the program.
Students often ask if they will be able to work full time and attend OTA classes. This is an intense, rigorous two year program and should be the student’s main focus in terms of time and resources for the two-year duration. It is strongly recommended that students work a part time schedule if necessary. Again, ACC’s financial aid office is available for consultation throughout the program.
Success in the OTA program usually carries over to OT practice. Students with mature, responsible, work ethics apply those characteristics not only to our program but to their clinical fieldwork experiences and their entry level work positions. The educational experiences in the OTA program promotes a strong sense of self awareness and develops clinical reasoning skills necessary for sound decision making. Effective communication both verbal and non-verbal is essential and the use of the English language is a critical part of communicating with patients, families, colleagues and other healthcare professions.
Contact Information and Additional Resources

Next section will provide contact information and additional resources.
Karoline Gebert located at the Health Science Division is the contact for the OTA program. You may rely on her information and guidance through your application process. If you have a situation that falls outside the OTA admissions policies and procedures and requires special consideration please call the department chair at 512-223-5934.

Austin Community College
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
3401 Webberville Road
Austin, Texas 78702

For general questions, email healthsciences@austincc.edu

You can also contact Karoline Gebert, Health Sciences Supervisor, Administrative Assistant, by email at gebert@austincc.edu or by phone at (512) 223-5865.
These resources are the national and state associations most often referenced by both OT/OTA students and practitioners. Please visit all these websites to find out more about our profession.

Additional Resources

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA):  www.aota.org

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE):
www.acoteonline.org

Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA):  www.tota.org

Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners (TBOTE):
http://www.ptot.texas.gov/page/home

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT):
www.nbcot.org