

Occupational Therapy Assistant

Associate of Applied Science

Occupational Therapy uses meaningful and purposeful activities and occupations to promote health and independence. Under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist (OT), the occupational therapy assistant (OTA) works directly with individuals, families, groups, and communities to facilitate health and well-being through engagement in meaningful activities and occupations. In addition to direct patient care, occupational therapy practitioners are involved in addressing the impact of social, political, and environmental factors that contribute to occupational deprivation.

The OTA program is located in the Health and Natural Science building on the main Panola College campus and is operated under the guidance of the American Occupational Therapy Association. The OTA curriculum is taught by seasoned occupational therapy practitioners who are experienced in a variety of settings. OTA faculty specialize in adult education techniques that emphasize hands-on learning, mentorship, meaningful and job-related assignments, and the use of technology to enhance instruction.

Chair

Julie Green, (903) 694-4000, jgreen@panola.edu

Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

Jessica Rittenberry

Instructors

- Julie Green, OTR
- April Kruger, COTA - Teaching Assistant
- Jessica Rittenberry, COTA

Department Mission

The mission of the Panola College OTA program is to prepare skilled, introspective professionals who are committed to providing effective OT services in traditional and emerging practice settings.

Department Objectives

Students who successfully complete the OTA program of study will

- Have a thorough understanding of the clinical reasoning process required throughout the OT process.
- Understand the value of community service as a professional responsibility.
- Develop the ability to engage clients in the OT process through skilled “therapeutic use of self” as an intervention technique.
- Understand the importance of occupation-based interventions that are client-centered and evidence-based.
- Integrate a strong understanding of both the domain and process of the OT profession in order to implement the OT philosophy across population groups and contexts both in traditional and emerging practice areas.

Employment Opportunities

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) - many settings

- Skilled nursing facilities
- Assisted living centers
- Hospitals (acute care, long term acute care, rehab)
- Rehabilitation centers (inpatient and outpatient)

- Pediatric therapy clinics
- School system therapy services
- Private business ownership

Other Related Occupations

- Activities Director
- Director of Therapy Services (skilled nursing facilities, etc.)
- Job Coach
- Life Skills Trainer
- Durable Medical Equipment Sales and Service
- Adult Day Care Coordinator

Job Outlook

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (accessed 3/5/21), employment of occupational therapy assistants is projected to grow 35% from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. This occupation is projected to produce 16,300 new jobs over the next decade. Demand for occupational therapy services is expected to rise significantly in response to the health needs of baby-boomers and a growing elderly population.

Program Accreditation

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. AOTA's phone number is (301) 652-6611. In 2002, the OTA Program was accredited for ten years, the longest time span awarded by ACOTE. The OTA program underwent rigorous re-accreditation renewal processes in July of 2013, and again in June of 2023 and earned a ten-year re-accreditation at each renewal evaluation. The program holds current accreditation through 2033.

Upon completion of the OTA program, graduates will be able to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapy assistant administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of the exam, the individual will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). In addition, all states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to take the NBCOT exam or attain state licensure. Students with a criminal history are not guaranteed fieldwork placement.

Applying to the OTA Program

The Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program is a "closed" program and requires additional application and acceptance into the program. Admission to Panola College does not guarantee admission to specific courses or programs of study. Graduates of this program will earn an Associate of Applied Science degree. Additionally, graduates are eligible to take the national certification examination, which upon successful completion, the graduate will be a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA).

The OTA program does not require observation hours, volunteer experience, or work experience for admission. After completing educational prerequisite courses, the OTA program can be completed in five academic semesters, including two eight-week Level II fieldwork experiences. Level II fieldwork experiences must be completed within 18 months following the completion of academic courses.

Please review the Admission Point System (below) to learn how your application to the program will be scored.

BEFORE Applying to the OTA Program

1. You must apply and be admitted to Panola College.

2. Fulfill all Texas Success Initiative (TSI) reporting requirements.
3. Complete prerequisite courses (per the degree plan) with a minimum grade of “C” in each course.
4. Have a minimum 2.5 overall GPA based on core course grades.

How to Apply to the OTA Program

1. Complete the online application on the OTA program link at <https://www.panola.edu/ota>.
2. Submit application, along with official transcripts from each college or university attended, by deadlines. Send official transcripts from all other colleges and universities attended (send to: Records Office, 1109 W. Panola St., Carthage, TX 75633)
3. Submit a Letter of Good Standing from Director/Dean of previous health science programs attended (if applicable).
4. If in the top 50 students selected, participate in an interview process.

Requirements of the OTA Program

- Must have a clear drug screen (to be completed after admission to program)
- Must have all required immunizations (to be completed after admission to program).
- A background check will be completed on all students accepted into the program. A charge or conviction of a felony offense may prevent you from being eligible for OTA licensure in Texas and/or certification by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. A criminal history may affect fieldwork placement.

Deadline to Apply

- The third Friday in May each year

Admission Point System

- Overall GPA - 15%: The applicant’s overall grade point average is calculated based on core curriculum course grades per the degree plan. The GPA is divided by 4.0 and multiplied by .15.
- Residency - 5%: The applicant earns 1 point for residency outside of Texas, 2 points for residency within Texas and 3 points for residency with the College’s service area (Panola, Harrison, Shelby and Marion counties).
- Application Narrative - 15%: OTA faculty score application narratives using a 20-point rubric which equally considers the writer’s mechanics, vocabulary, content, organization and knowledge of the OT profession.
- Core Points - 35%: Applicants earn core points by completing core courses as outlined in the degree plan. Points accrue based on the number of core courses completed AND the letter grade earned in each course. The points associated with each course are multiplied by the value of the letter grade earned in the course. For example, an “A” in BIOL2401 earns 20 points, a “B” earns 15 points and a “C” earns 10 points. Two additional points are earned if the applicant has completed an Associate’s degree. Four additional points are earned if the applicant has completed a bachelor’s degree or higher. The applicant’s total score is then multiplied by .35.
 BIOL 2401 - 5 points
 ENGL 1301 - 2 points
 PSYC 2301 - 3 points
 HUMA 1301 - 2 points
 BIOL 2402 - 10 points
 PSYC 2314 - 6 points
- Interview - 30%: The importance of the therapist-patient relationship is an essential element of the mission and philosophy of the OTA program. A well-established therapeutic connection between the OTA and the patient is the key to establishing and reaching successful patient outcomes. Face-to-face interviews provide insight into the applicant’s ability to relate to and communicate effectively with others. The interview raw score is divided by the maximum possible score and multiplied by .30.

Selection Process Summary

Each completed application is considered and applicants are ranked according to his or her overall score. The top 50 applicants are selected and scheduled for an interview. Once the interviews are completed, the top 24 students are offered a position in the program.

For program-specific information and FAQs, please visit the Occupational Therapy Assistant program link: <https://www.panola.edu/ota>.

Expenses of the OTA Program

Upon acceptance into the program, students should expect to incur expenses in addition to tuition, fees and textbook expenses for the following:

1. Current immunization records: MMR and Rubella titer, T-dap, varicella titer, hepatitis B vaccine and titer, TB screening and influenza (seasonal flu) vaccine
2. Criminal history background check (assessed during registration)
3. A recent (within the last 12 months) physical examination record
4. Liability insurance (assessed during registration)
5. CPR certification (\$65)
6. Uniforms, rubber soled shoes and a digital watch or timer
7. NBCOT practice Certification Exam Fees (assessed during registration)
8. Clinical and lab fees (assessed during registration)
9. Drug screens (\$40 depending on fieldwork placement sites)
10. Travel to and from clinical and practicum fieldwork sites. Distances may be as far as 90 miles or more from the main campus to fieldwork sites
11. Graduation expenses (cap, gown, stole, pin, etc.)
12. National certification expenses, including the NBCOT exam (\$590+)
13. State licensure fees (\$100) plus fingerprinting (\$40)
14. Additional background check expenses up to \$150 (including fingerprinting) required for fieldwork completion
15. Health insurance expenses required for fieldwork completion
16. Fieldwork management fee (assessed during registration)

Note: All OTA courses are enhanced by the use of Canvas. Students are required to have access to a computer with high speed internet connectivity and Microsoft Word. Program expenses may change without notice.

System of Grading

A student may not progress to the next level of OTHA classes without successfully completing all OTHA courses at the previous level. Students are responsible for completing required coursework as listed in the OTA curriculum.

The OTA program requires a grade of 75 to earn a "C" in any OTA course. If a student earns a grade of "D", "W" or "F" in any required curriculum course, the student will be dropped from the program and must reapply for admittance. A student may be readmitted once, on a space available basis. If readmitted, the student will be required to repeat the course in which the unsatisfactory grade was earned and pass that course with a "C" or better in order to continue. The student will be required to repeat co-requisite OTA courses as identified in this catalog.

Skills Examinations

Critical skills that must be mastered will be tested throughout the program. Students must achieve a score of 75% or better in order to successfully complete the course in which the skills are tested. Detailed grading rubrics for skills exams are provided prior to testing. Students are given three opportunities to pass each skills exam.

Prerequisite Semester

_____	BIOL 2401	Anatomy and Physiology I
_____	ENGL 1301	Composition I
_____	HUMA 1301	Introduction to the Humanities
_____	PSYC 2301	General Psychology

13**Semester I**

_____	BIOL 2402	Anatomy and Physiology II
_____	OTHA 1360	Clinical I
_____	OTHA 1405	Principles of Occupational Therapy
_____	PSYC 2314	Lifespan Growth & Development

14**Semester II**

_____	OTHA 1341	Occupational Performance from Birth Through Adolescence
_____	OTHA 1415	Therapeutic Use of Occupations or Activities I
_____	OTHA 2360	Clinical II

10**Total Credits 60****Summer I (10 Weeks)**

_____	OTHA 1409	Human Structure and Function in Occupational Therapy
_____	OTHA 2335	Health Care Management in Occupational Therapy

7**Semester III**

_____	OTHA 1349	Occupational Performance of Adulthood
_____	OTHA 2361	Clinical III
_____	OTHA 2402	Therapeutic Use of Occupations or Activities II

10**Semester IV**

_____	OTHA 2230	Workplace Skills for the Occupational Therapy Assistant
_____	OTHA 2266	Practicum I (8 Weeks)
_____	OTHA 2267	Practicum II (8 Weeks)

6OTHA 2266 and OTHA 2267 are capstone courses.