

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

FY21 (2020-21) Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

The following is additional information about the WITC's Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program.
This information supplements the program webpage and district catalog.

Degree: Associate in Applied Science-Occupational Therapy Assistant

OTA PROGRAM - 64 semester credits

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program includes 45 technical core (514-xxx) and 19 general studies credits. Students may take some or all of the general education courses prior to beginning the OTA (514-xxx) courses. The program can be completed in 2 years of full-time study, or on a part-time basis requiring 3 to 4 years. You may enroll as a pre-OTA student and complete any required courses, with the exception of (514-xxx) OTA specific courses. They must be taken in sequence. Once you begin your 514-xxx core courses, these courses must be taken in the semester indicated and in the order indicated. Semester 1 of the OTA core program has 8 (514-xxx) credits. Semester 2 of the OTA core program has 13 (514-xxx) credits. Semester 3 of the OTA core program has 12 (514-xxx) credits and Semester 4 of the OTA core program has 12 (514-xxx) credits.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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PROGRAM LOCATIONS

WITC-Ashland (via Web Conferencing instruction)
WITC-New Richmond (via Web Conferencing instruction)
WITC-Rice Lake (via Web Conferencing instruction)

FIELDWORK LOCATIONS

WITC district, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and other states

Due to the limited availability of fieldwork sites, classes are limited to 12 students at each campus.

ACADEMIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS Applicants have 120 days to complete the application process.

Students who are considering the program must meet one of the following items:

- Minimum High School GPA of 2.8
- ACT Score of 21
- Minimum College GPA 2.2 (min 3 cr)
- Associate or Bachelor's Degree
- Accuplacer scores

Additional measures may be considered as determined by the counselor.

You will be admitted to the program, based on the date and time the above admission criteria is met.

PART-TIME (PRE-PROGRAM) STATUS

When you successfully complete the admission requirements, you will be invited to begin your course work. The following courses which apply to the OTA program may be completed prior to the core OTA courses (514-xxx). In planning your approach to these courses, please note that some of them have prerequisites as listed below.

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or status in any group protected by state or local law in employment, admissions or its programs or activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the College's nondiscrimination policies: Amanda Gohde, Director, Human Resources, Administrative Office, 505 Pine Ridge Drive, Shell Lake WI 54871, 715-468-2815 ext. 2240, Wisconsin Relay TTY:711, amanda.gohde@witc.edu.

Courses that can be taken prior to admission to the program include:

COURSE #	COURSE NAME	CREDIT	PREREQUISITE
806-177	General Anatomy and Physiology	4	None
809-198	Introduction to Psychology	3	None
801-136	English Composition 1	3	None
809-196	Introduction to Sociology	3	None
809-116	Developmental Psychology	3	None
801-196	Oral/Interpersonal Communication or Speech	3	None

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE JOB OF AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

Many people assume that occupational therapy assists with employment or career guidance. Below is a video link that offers a complete understanding of what an Occupational Therapy Assistant really does on the job. The video focuses on the skills and personal qualities needed to become an OTA. It also elaborates on the pay levels and personal satisfaction a job as an OTA offers. It is highly recommended that prior to applying to the OTA program, you watch this video. It may answer many questions you have about the profession. The video is 22 minutes in length.

Watch personal interviews with accomplished Occupational Therapy Assistants, along with a wide variety of work settings. See what skill sets, basic knowledge of human anatomy, and proper biology classes may be needed in high school to prepare you for your continued education in this field. ***This video correlates to national and state board certification standards.*** Click here to view this [video](#).

Disclaimer: To access this video you must either be a WITC student with access to MyWITC where login and password information to the Learning Resource Center research databases is located; or visit one of the WITC campuses. Please contact Student Services for assistance when visiting the campus.

SEE WHAT THE OTA PROGRAM IS ALL ABOUT

If you are interested in the OTA program, you may schedule a classroom shadow (observation) of an OTA lab. This observation of the “real” classroom gives you the opportunity to meet an OTA Instructor and current students enrolled in the program. It is recommended that you attend a minimum of 2 hours. Please contact the Admission Advisor on the campus you will attend. The Admission Advisor will work with the OTA Instructor and you to schedule this experience.

WEB CONFERENCING

The OTA program at WITC connects to Ashland, Rice Lake and New Richmond campuses via Web Conferencing instruction. With the use of technology, all campuses can be connected and participate in lecture in “real time”, with the lecture instructor at one of the locations. However, labs are offered at each location with a lab instructor, in person, at that location. Using technology for instruction can be challenging and exciting.

DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

A student must take an OTA course entirely at the campus they are admitted to. For example, a student admitted to the RL campus must take all Web Conferencing courses and lab courses at the RL campus. If the course meets 3 days a week over Web Conferencing, students must be at the RL campus for each of the 3 scheduled sessions each week of the semester. Each campus has a capacity of 12 students. Students may not change campuses during the semester. If an opening occurs at a campus, a lottery will be conducted to determine priority for any available spots. Changing from one campus to another is only possible at the beginning of a semester. The OTA Program Director will conduct the lottery. Students wishing to change campuses must contact the OTA Program Director.

CLASS COMMITMENT

The average amount of time spent in the classroom for a full-time student is between 20 and 25 hours per week. In addition to scheduled class time, it is expected that students spend at least two to three hours studying for each hour of classroom lecture they attend. This represents a significant time commitment and most students find it necessary to reduce work hours during the program.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Official college transcripts must be submitted for any college coursework that has been completed. Official college transcripts must be sealed and sent from the sending institution.

OTA PROGRAM STANDARDS

OTA students must complete all required courses with a 2.0 or better. An OTA student may repeat a core (OTA) or occupational support (science) course only **once**. In addition, students enrolled in the OTA program may repeat only **two** core (OTA) or occupational supportive (science) courses in the program during their progress toward graduation. This policy also applies to coursework taken at other colleges.

COMPUTER NEEDS

As an OTA student at WITC, you are required to have 24-hour internet access. All OTA courses have a Blackboard component where powerpoints, resources, and assignments are posted. Microsoft office is required for completion of assignments. Students need access to a color printer. A digital camera is recommended. (Or a device to take quality photos like a phone or tablet.)

FIELDWORK

OTA students will need reliable transportation to meet the demands of the program. Students are required to complete observation and fieldwork portions of the curriculum off campus. Travel for observation and Level I Fieldwork may be 3 hours (one way) from your campus. Fieldwork IIA and IIB is scheduled off campus. The fieldwork experience is "on the job training" consisting of 35-40 hours per week for 16 weeks of fourth semester.

These placements may be anywhere, including outside of the WITC district, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and other states. Time commitment and travel make employment difficult during Fieldwork IIA and IIB. Fieldwork IIA and IIB will be completed in two different settings under the supervision of a COTA or OTR. The 2 settings offer a different service delivery model. No part of level I Fieldwork may be substituted for Level II Fieldwork. OTA students must complete Level II Fieldwork within 18 months following completion of academic preparation.

ACCREDITATION

The associate-degree-level 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. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA and its Web address is www.acoteonline.org. Graduates of the program will be eligible 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 this 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. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.



BACKGROUND CHECK AND CONVICTION RECORD

Students who have been convicted of a felony, may not be eligible for the national certification exam or state licensure. There is no automatic disqualification from licensure based on a conviction record. The Board has the authority to deny licensure to anyone with a conviction record or pending charge, the circumstances of which substantially relate to the duties of that person's licensure. In making this determination, the Board considers the following factors:

1. The nature and seriousness of the act for which convicted/arrested (as the circumstances relate to the practice of professional or practical OT);
2. The proximity in time of the conviction/arrest to the present;
3. The success of rehabilitation (if any has been indicated);
4. The record since conviction/arrest.

The Board will not offer an opinion of eligibility for licensure until the graduate actually applies. The graduate will need to provide copies of any judgments of conviction and criminal complaints. The Board will investigate and determine whether they substantially relate to the practice of OT.

Students in the OTA program will attend practical sessions in fieldwork agencies that are regulated by state and federal government. The laws state that these fieldwork agencies may not hire anyone with a history of conviction of certain crimes. WITC must contract with these clinical agencies to provide your fieldwork experiences while in the program. In order to do so, the agencies expect WITC to adhere to the same guidelines - in other words, they view students as temporary employees.

At the program orientation, you will be asked about your conviction history and a conviction record will be obtained from the Department of Justice and Wisconsin [Department of Health Services](#); and from the Minnesota [Department of Human Services](#) and/or other states as applicable. Having a conviction history will not necessarily stop you from entering the program. We will need to discuss the charges with you and will make every attempt to confidentially resolve the concern with the fieldwork agencies utilized for the fieldwork courses. Ultimately, the fieldwork agencies reserve the right to determine what is an acceptable background check. The fieldwork location may deny access to their setting based on a negative background check. If this occurs, you would not be able to complete the OTA program requirements.

WISCONSIN CAREGIVER BACKGROUND CHECK

All OTA students enrolled in core (514-xxx) courses are required to complete a Wisconsin Caregiver Background Check. You pay a fee and submit an application to the Program Director between August 1 and September 1 of the year you begin the core (514-xxx) courses. Forms and directions are located on the [OTA program web page](#). Some facilities require a National Criminal Background Check, which can be completed through Verified Credentials, Inc. In addition to that, if you are a student who will complete OTA Fieldwork or course activities another state, you will also be required to complete a Caregiver Background Check in that state. Prior to OTA Fieldwork, your Program Director or Fieldwork Coordinator will inform you if the National and/or state Caregiver Background Check is needed. All costs related to required background checks are the responsibility of the OTA student.

OTA HEALTH FORM

Prior to the start of the first (Fall) semester of core (514-xxx) courses, you must complete the WITC health form including immunizations, medical history, a physical. CPR for health care providers is required prior to the start of 2nd semester. Forms and directions are located on the [OTA program web page](#). This form is discussed at OTA Orientation.

OTA ORIENTATION

The Program Director and OTA Faculty provide a mandatory orientation before Fall courses begin. This is required for students enrolling in core (514-xxx) courses for Fall semester. The orientation provides an overview of the OTA program at WITC including policies and strategies for success. The program and fieldwork are discussed.

GRADUATE SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Current graduates earn between \$17,183 - \$57,300 annually. The most recent graduate follow-up study indicates the average yearly salary to be \$39,841.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

Full time students are eligible for financial aid. Scholarships are available.

FACTS ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS

WHAT DO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS DO?

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA's) treat patients of all ages who have physical, cognitive, or psychological impairments. Occupational therapy utilizes purposeful activity to treat people who are limited in performing their daily living activities. The goal of occupational therapy is to help the individual function as independently as possible. COTA's work under the supervision of a Registered Occupational Therapist (OTR) and implement treatment; educate patients, family and staff; document patient progress; and assist with evaluating patient performance.

WHERE DO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS WORK?

COTA's work in hospitals, schools, skilled nursing facilities, mental health centers, home health, and other community service settings. COTA's also work as activity directors in long term care, adult day programs, and senior centers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) the projected percent change in employment for COTA's for 2014-2024 is 40% or much faster than average. COTA's may also be employed in specialty areas of occupational therapy such as work hardening, hand therapy, and assistive technology. Jobs exist in emerging areas of practice where supervision from an OTR is not needed.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES WOULD ASSIST ME IN BEING A SUCCESSFUL COTA?

Above average oral and written communication skills are needed to develop therapeutic relationships with patients and to work within the health care system. Therapists need to be flexible, personable, creative, and ethical in order to provide quality patient care. COTA's need to accept supervision and work closely with an OTR. An occupational therapy assistant will need to think quickly, problem solve situations, make decisions regarding patient care, and deal with stressful daily situations. Potential therapists should be dedicated to helping others while still allowing them to be as independent as possible. COTA's will have frequent contact with other health care providers, including doctors, and will need to function both independently and as a member of a team.

HOW DO I BECOME A CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT?

To become certified, occupational therapy assistants must graduate from an accredited educational program, receive an associate degree, and pass the certification exam. Accredited programs are located in technical and community colleges. Following graduation, students take a national certification exam administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). The student must pay a fee and register to take the exam. The student must receive a passing score to be eligible for employment as a COTA. Most states then require state licensure or certification. Graduates may gain employment while going through the certification and licensure process.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAMS?

All programs require that students complete a minimum of 16 weeks of Level II Fieldwork. This is required prior to graduation. Students are assigned to 2 different settings where they work full-time, without pay, applying the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the classroom to a practical setting. Students are supervised by an occupational therapist (OTR) or an occupational therapy assistant (COTA). Fieldwork placements require travel. Fieldwork locations are within the WITC district and out of state. Work during fieldwork is difficult due to the demand and time constraints. Reliable transportation is required for fieldwork.

WHAT IS THE EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK LIKE?

The Department of Labor has predicted that employment for Occupational Therapy Assistants is expected to grow much faster than average through 2024. Current graduates earn between \$17,183 - \$57,300 annually. The most recent graduate follow-up study indicates the average yearly salary to be \$39,841.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Contact the OTA Program Director: Becky Mika, 800/243-9482 x3184 or becky.mika@witc.edu

OR

Jennifer Bednarik

Admissions Advisor

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Shawn Larson

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Jobs a COTA Can Do

Activity Program Manager
Assistive Technology Consultant
Case Manager for Clients in Supported Living
Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist
Community Integration Specialist
Corporate Wellness Director
Daily Living Skills Counselor for Clients with Eating Disorders
Director of Day Care for Children with Special Needs
Group Home Manager
Home Modification Consultant
Inclusion Specialist for Recreation Programs
Inclusive Apparel Seamstress
Independent Living Skills Trainer
Job Coach for Clients with Disabilities
Job Site Evaluator
Office/Factory Ergonomics Consultant
Orthotics Fabrication Specialist
Paraprofessional for Students with Special Needs
Rehab Equipment Salesperson
Specialist in Lifestyle Redesign
Vision Intervention Specialist
Web Site Designer for Consumers with Disabilities
Wheelchair Vendor

FY21 (2020-21)
Checklist for Occupational Therapy Assistant Admission

**** All criteria in Phase 1 must be met before moving to Phase 2 ****

Phase 1: Application for Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

_____ WITC **application** including the nonrefundable \$30 application fee (fee waiver may apply if previously submitted)

_____ **ACADEMIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS** Applicants have 120 days to complete the application process.

Students who are considering the program must meet one of the following items:

- Minimum High School GPA of 2.8
- ACT Score of 21
- Minimum College GPA 2.2 (min 3 cr)
- Associate or Bachelor's Degree
- Accuplacer scores

Additional measures may be considered as determined by the counselor.

_____ Provide an official **high school transcript** or equivalent (HSED/GED). Current high school seniors must provide both a current high school transcript and a final transcript with confer date.

_____ Review and sign Background Check **Disclosure**

_____ Review and sign the Functional Ability **Disclosure**

_____ **Admissions meeting** with WITC counselor

Phase 2: Entry to Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

Will be collected by Occupational Therapy Assistant instructors:

_____ Submit Background Check fee

_____ Have an acceptable Wisconsin Caregiver Background Check. National Criminal Background Check, Minnesota Caregiver Background Check (if applicable), and other states, if applicable

_____ Pass a physical exam, have current immunizations, and demonstrate negative status for tuberculosis (Tb) (at start of Fall Semester of Core Courses)

_____ Possess current certification "CPR for Healthcare Providers" or equivalent (at start of Spring Semester of Core Courses)

_____ Review and sign Nursing & Allied Health Division Confidentiality Statement

_____ Participate in a mandatory Occupational Therapy Assistant program orientation

FY21 (2020-21) OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Prices listed are approximate costs and subject to change

Application	\$30.00
WI Caregiver Background Check	\$10.00
Uniforms & Equipment	\$100.00
Textbooks (OTA technical studies courses)	\$1,220.00
10-806-140 Chemistry	\$155.30
CPR for Health Care Provider (AHA)	\$52.53

FIRST TERM - TUITION/FEES: \$2,728.40

10-514-171 Introduction to Occupational Therapy	\$455.40
10-514-172 Medical & Psychosocial Conditions	\$449.40
10-514-173 Activity Analysis & Application	\$303.60
10-801-136 English Composition 1	\$449.40
10-806-177 General Anatomy & Physiology	\$621.20
10-809-198 Introduction to Psychology	\$449.40

SECOND TERM - TUITION/FEES: \$2,491.80

10-514-174 OT Performance Skills	\$607.20
10-514-175 Psychosocial Practice	\$455.40
10-514-176 OT Theory & Practice (including \$75 AOTA membership fee)	\$530.40
10-514-178 Geriatric Practice	\$449.40
10-809-188 Developmental Psychology	\$449.40

THIRD TERM - TUITION/FEES: \$2,720.40

10-514-179 Community Practice	\$303.60
10-514-189 OT Physical Rehabilitation Practice	\$607.20
10-514-190 OT Pediatric Practice	\$607.20
10-514-184 OTA Fieldwork I	\$303.60
10-801-196 Oral/Interpersonal Communication or 10-801-198 Speech	\$449.40
10-809-196 Introduction to Sociology	\$449.40

FOURTH TERM - TUITION/FEES: \$1,894.10

10-514-185 OT Practice & Management (including \$75 AOTA membership renewal fee)	\$376.10
10-514-186 OTA Fieldwork II-A	\$759.00
10-514-187 OTA Fieldwork II-B	\$759.00

Exam Study Guide	\$60.00
Practice Exams (Optional)	\$45.00
National Certification App Fee (\$555 + \$40 reporting fee)	\$595.00
Wi State Licensure	\$150.00

APPROXIMATE PROGRAM TOTAL

\$12,252.53

Transportation costs to and from fieldwork agencies will vary

Computer, other required hardware, or upgrade costs will be discussed on an individual basis.

Students are responsible for additional fieldwork agency requirements.

Students are responsible for health form costs (Tb test, Immunizations, titres, exam, etc.)