

Career Focus on...

Occupational Therapy Assistant

Introduction

- Do you want to assist people in developing the skills necessary to live independent and satisfying lives?
- Are you interested in understanding and appreciating the importance of diversity and context factors in an individual's perception of health, illness, disability, and treatment interventions?
- Are you looking for a career where you can use your communication skills, scientific knowledge, and critical thinking to apply occupational therapy principles and intervention tools to achieve expected outcomes?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, you may want to consider a career as an Occupational Therapy Assistant.

Did You Know... ?

- Employment of occupational therapist assistants is expected to grow by 43% from 2010 to 2020, which is considered faster than average.
- 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.
- The median annual salary for a high-school educated occupational therapy aide is \$27,430, but with an associate's degree an occupational therapy assistant's median salary is \$51,000.
- Approximately 15% of occupational therapy assistants work in hospitals. More than 50% work in occupational, physical, or speech therapy offices, and nursing care facilities.

Occupational Therapy Assistant @ QCC

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Quinsigamond Community College prepares the incoming student for a career in occupational therapy, a profession that provides support and treatment to individuals who have suffered physical, psychological or cognitive difficulties, or who have developmental disabilities to achieve maximum independence. Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA) practice under the supervision of Registered Occupational Therapists (OTR) as members of a health care team. COTAs work in hospitals, out-patient clinics, school systems, community agencies, and other settings.

Graduates of QCC's Occupational Therapy Assistant program will be awarded an Associate in Science degree and, upon satisfactory completion of all academic and field work experiences, the graduate will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Upon successful completion of the examination, the graduate may apply for state licensure which is offered based upon the NBCOT Certification examination results.

Career Options

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AIDE

Median Annual Salary: \$27,430

Recommended Education: High School diploma (H.S.) or G.E.D.

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

Median Annual Salary: \$51,010

Recommended Education: Associate's Degree (A.S.) and licensure

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Median Annual Salary: \$72,320

Recommended Education: Master's Degree (M.S.) and certification

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapists.htm

Worcester Area Employers

- UMass Memorial
- Saint Vincent Hospital
- Milford Regional Medical Center
- Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital
- Birchwood Care Center
- Community Healthlink
- Providence Extended Care

Professional Associations

- American Occupational Therapy Association: www.aota.org
- CARF International: www.carf.org
- Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy: www.maot.org

Next Steps

Wondering if the Occupational Therapy Assistant field is right for you?

- Take a Career Assessment to match your interests with potential careers: www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#careerassess
- Research the web links on this page and more: www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#careerinfo
- Conduct an Informational Interview. Speak with a live person employed in this field: www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#infointerview
- Attend a Career Planning Session: www.QCC.edu/images/capsession.pdf
- Speak with an Advisor: www2.qcc.mass.edu/advising/adVCal/advCal/asp
- Speak with QCC Faculty who teach Occupational Therapy Assistant courses.

Sources Used

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition*:

- Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides: www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm
- Occupational Therapists: www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapists.htm

Quinsigamond Community College, "Occupational Therapy Assistant," *2011|2012 Catalog*.

Quinsigamond Community College, *Academic Program Review 2008 for Occupational Therapy Assistant*, October 2008.

Positions Entered by QCC Graduates

- Residential Director
- Case Manager
- Activities Director
- Wellness Trainer

Looking for employment, co-op, internship, or service learning opportunities?

Contact the Career Placement Office:

www.QCC.edu/pages/Career_Placement.html

Possible Transfer Schools

- Worcester State University
- American International College, Springfield
- Salem State University

Looking for Specific Transfer Information?

- Start at the QCC Transfer web site: www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer
- Make an appointment online with the Transfer Advisor: www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer/calendar
- Email questions to: transfer@qcc.mass.edu