UTICA
UNIVERSITY

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Occupational Therapy Application Guide

Introduction

Thank you for considering Utica University for your occupational therapy education. We have been educating OT's since the 1960's and have a nationwide reputation with a network of thousands of OT alumni.

In response to AOTA's decision to support dual entry degrees into the profession, Utica now offers the option of a Master of Science (MS OT) <u>OR</u> an entry-level doctorate in occupational therapy (OTD). Either degree will allow you to sit for the certification exam to obtain your license to practice. Specifics are described starting on p. 2.

The Occupational Therapy faculty is committed to a humanistic and transformative approach to education. Our program stands out due to its collaborative community partnerships, which enable both faculty and students to address societal needs while simultaneously cultivating the professional behaviors and autonomous, critical thinking essential for contemporary practice. We foster a student

culture and classroom environment that promotes critical, reflective questioning of assumptions and supports the earnest pursuit of accurate, evidence-based, and integrated understandings of human well-being, occupation, and the practice of occupational therapy.

We use the OTCAS national application system. The graduate admissions office receives a large number of inquiries and applications each year. Before you apply, please read the information in this guide carefully.

The OTCAS Application

The Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) simplifies the process of applying to occupational therapy programs. You start by selecting the programs you wish to apply to, then you submit one application that includes all necessary materials. Once received by OTCAS, your application and materials go through a verification process before being transmitted to all of your selected programs.

The OTCAS application opens on July 15, 2025 for the Fall 2026 Day and Weekend cohorts.

Utica University's OTCAS deadline is June 1, 2026.

To Learn more about OTCAS and see how to get started please go to:
https://help.liaisonedu.com/OTCAS_Applicant_Help_Center

Degree Options and Requirements in Occupational Therapy

Utica University: Dual Pathways to a Career in Occupational Therapy

In alignment with AOTA's support for dual entry degrees into the occupational therapy profession, Utica University now offers two accredited options for aspiring occupational therapists:
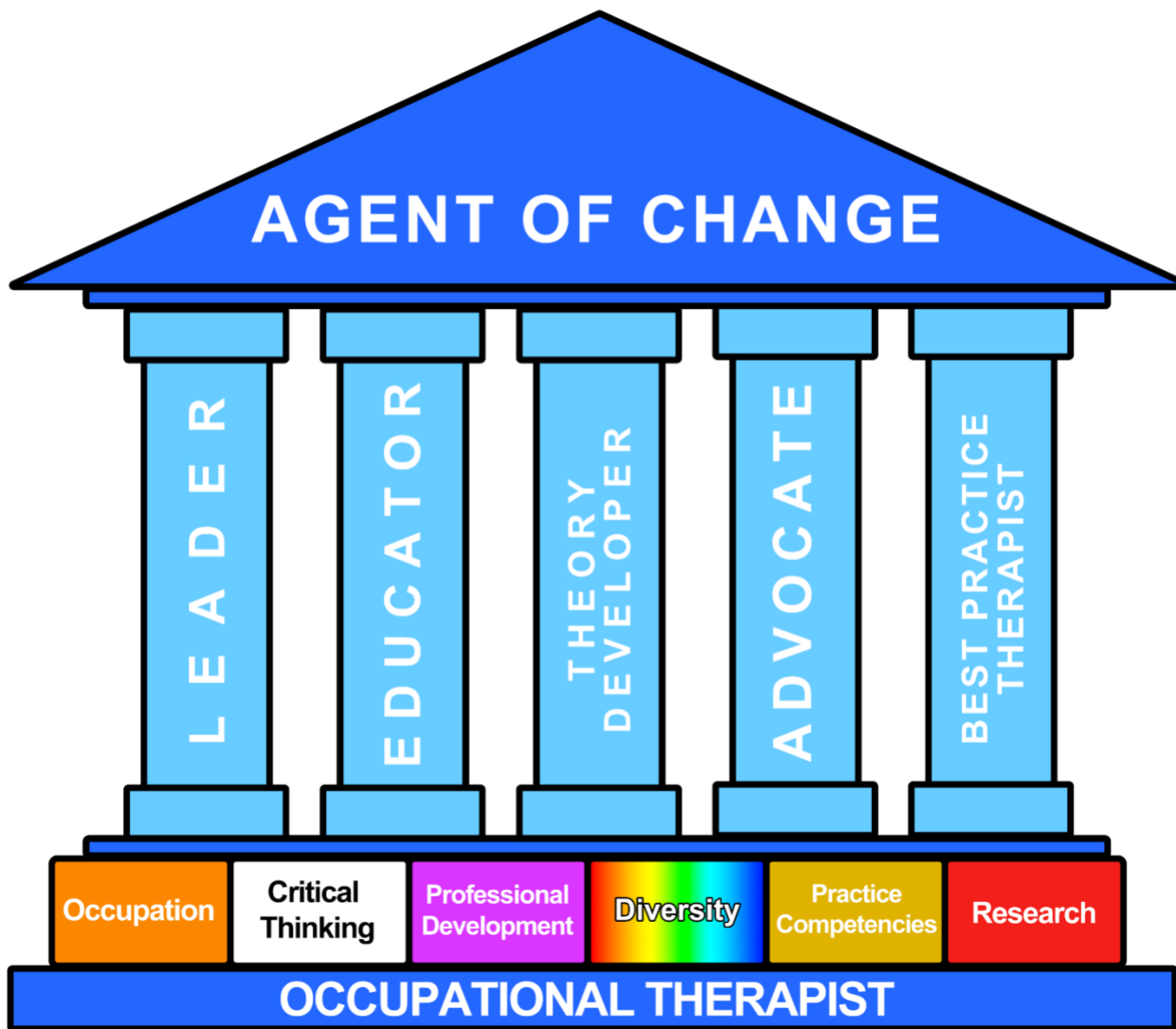
1. Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT)

- **Minimum required degree** for **entry-level practice**.
- **Program Length**: 5 semesters.
- **Curriculum**: Coursework and fieldwork to prepare for general OT practice.
- **Outcome**: Eligible to sit for the national certification exam and pursue licensure as a registered occupational therapist at the end of the degree.

2. Entry-Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD)

- Designed for those who want to be **leaders and change agents** in the profession.
- **Program Length**: 8 semesters.
- **Curriculum**: Coursework, fieldwork, and a capstone project and experience that provides general and advanced knowledge.

- **Outcome**: Also qualifies you to sit for the national certification exam and pursue licensure at the end of the degree.

Both degree options qualify students for national certification and licensure, offering flexibility to choose the path that best aligns with their career goals.

The foundational colored bricks represent the OT program curricular threads. Each thread represents an area of **genera**l knowledge and skills required for **entry-level practice** in the profession.

The pillars represent the OT program curricular themes. Each theme represents an area of **in-depth** knowledge and skills. For students who select the doctoral program, the themes will prepare them to become **agents of change** in the profession.

Master of Science Curricular Threads and Program Goals
The curricular threads are woven throughout the coursework to achieve the following program goals. At the completion of the program students will demonstrate the following:

- an understanding of how engagement in **occupatio**n supports participation in context.
- **critical thinking** and analysis for innovative, evidence-based practice.
- ethical and **professional behaviors.**
- cultural responsiveness and an appreciation of **diversity** to promote occupational justice and inclusion.
- **competent occupational therapy practice** in settings across the occupational therapy process for people, populations, and communities and in collaboration with other professionals.
- skills necessary to assume the role of beginning **research** investigator.

Doctoral Program Curricular Threads, Themes and Graduate Competencies

The doctoral curriculum builds upon the foundational threads of essential knowledge and skills required for entry level practice. The pillars represent the areas of in-depth knowledge cultivated to become agents of change in the profession. By the third year, students engage in advanced learning experiences and a capstone project that reflects expertise in one or more of these pillars. This progression supports our mission of preparing students to become transformative leaders and agents of change within the field.

Graduates of our program will demonstrate the following advanced competencies:

- **Best-Practice Occupational Therapists**
  Graduates will critically analyze and evaluate best practices in occupational therapy. They will synthesize knowledge from diverse sources to effectively apply best practices across individuals, populations, and systems in varied contexts.
- **Educators**
  Graduates will understand and apply educational theory and instructional design to develop meaningful and evidence-informed learning experiences across settings.
- **Advocates**
  Graduates will use systems analysis to identify barriers and facilitators to occupational justice and health equity. They will be equipped to evaluate and implement effective advocacy strategies that promote systemic change.
- **Theory Developers**
  Graduates will engage in the development of theory to address gaps in current models or perspectives. Their work will aim to support occupational justice and innovation in practice for individuals, populations, and communities.
- **Leaders**
  Graduates will assess and apply leadership models appropriate to specific contexts. As leaders, they will be prepared to drive sustainable, impactful change within organizations, systems, and communities.

Admissions Requirements

1.   Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT)

This degree level is the minimum required for entry level practice. This accredited program includes five semesters of coursework and fieldwork experiences to prepare you for general practice. Completing this program will provide you with the degree to be eligible to sit for the certification exam and become licensed to practice as a registered occupational therapist.

Applicants to the MS program in Occupational Therapy must have a bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale from a regionally accredited institution. If your GPA is slightly lower, please contact graduate admissions. gradadmissions@utica.edu

The following 11 courses with a minimum grade of **C or better** are required for applicants**.**

• A four-hour credit course in Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab or equivalent (i.e. Human Anatomy, Human Physiology)

• A four-hour credit course in Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab or equivalent (i.e. Human Anatomy, Human Physiology)

• An applied anatomy (gross anatomy, neuroanatomy, or equivalent)*

• Kinesiology or Biomechanics

• An Introductory course in Sociology or Anthropology

• General or Introductory Psychology

• Abnormal Psychology

• Lifespan Psychology/Human Development/Developmental Psychology (must cover birth through adult)

• Medical Conditions and Implications/Pathophysiology/a three credit course in Medical Terminology

• Statistics

• Research Methods (psychology or sociology-based)

Prerequisite coursework must be successfully completed by July 1 of the year you would like to enter the program. Coursework may be taken from any regionally accredited community college, college or university. Online coursework from these institutions is acceptable as long as they fulfill the prerequisite requirements.

The following prerequisite courses need to have been taken within seven years of the date of application:

• an applied anatomy*

• Abnormal Psychology

• Research Methods

• Medical Conditions and Implications or Pathophysiology or a three-credit hour course in Medical Terminology

You will need to retake these courses if they are older than seven years.

2. Entry-Level Occupational Therapy Doctor (OTD)

This degree level is optional for practice. This program includes 8 semesters of coursework, fieldwork and a capstone experience to prepare you with general and in-depth knowledge for practice. Completion of this program will also make you eligible to take the certification exam and become licensed for practice.

In-depth learning in the third year builds upon these foundational threads. Keeping with the intent of the curriculum and mission of the program, students continuing to year three will develop advanced competencies in the roles of an agent of change.

Applicants to the Doctor of Occupational Therapy must have a bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.2 or higher on a 4.0 scale from a regionally accredited institution. If your GPA is slightly lower, please contact graduate admissions. gradadmissions@utica.edu

The following coursework must be completed with a minimum grade of B-

- A four-hour credit course in Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab or equivalent (i.e. Human Anatomy, Human Physiology)
- A four-hour credit course in Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab or equivalent (i.e. Human Anatomy, Human Physiology)
- An applied anatomy (gross anatomy, neuroanatomy, or equivalent)*
- Kinesiology or Biomechanics
- An Introductory course in Sociology or Anthropology
- General or Introductory Psychology
- Abnormal Psychology
- Lifespan Psychology/Human Development/Developmental Psychology (must cover birth through adult)
- Medical Conditions and Implications/Pathophysiology/a three credit course in Medical Terminology
- Statistics
- Research Methods (psychology or sociology-based)

The Graduate Admissions Office is happy to do a transcript evaluation for you. Please email copies to gradadmissions@utica.edu

Prerequisite coursework must be successfully completed by July 1 of the year you would like to enter the program. Coursework may be taken from any regionally accredited community college, college or university. Online coursework from these institutions is acceptable as long as they fulfill the prerequisite requirements.

The following prerequisite courses need to have been taken within seven years of the date of application:

- an applied anatomy*
- Abnormal Psychology

- Research Methods
- Medical Conditions and Implications <u>or</u> Pathophysiology <u>or</u> a three-credit hour course in Medical Terminology

You will need to retake these courses if they are older than seven years.

<u>Please Note: Successfully completing all prerequisites is not a guarantee of admission. Our program is highly competitive and has limited seating.</u>

The Graduate Admissions office will do a prerequisite course review for you. Please email copies of your transcripts (unofficial ones are fine for this purpose) to lcope@utica.edu or [jrowe@utica.edu.](mailto:jrowe@utica.edu) You will then be emailed a transcript review showing missing coursework. If you are selected for an interview, it will be up to you to keep the Graduate Admissions office informed of your prerequisite progress each semester.

You may apply through OTCAS while you complete prerequisite coursework. <u>Taking prerequisite coursework is usually done as a non-matriculated student, so you will most likely not have access to any financial aid and will have to pay for them out of pocket.</u>

Utica University offers Medical Conditions and Implications, A&P 1 and 2, and Research Methods online. <u>Please note that taking prerequisite coursework at Utica will not influence admission decisions.</u>

If you find a course you would like to take but are unsure if it meets requirements, please email us a copy of the course description for review. <u>Utica University reserves the right to reject a course that does not meet our prerequisite requirements.</u>

*An applied anatomy course can be gross anatomy, neuroanatomy or a specialized biology-based course that focuses on human anatomy above A&P 1 and 2. Utica University offers gross anatomy over seven Saturdays during the fall semester. Neuroanatomy and kinesiology are offered over seven weekends during the spring semester. Because these courses have limited seating, contact graduate admissions if you are interested in taking them or if you are looking for alternatives.

Advanced Placement, Transfer of Credit, and Credit for Experiential Learning

Advanced placement and transfer of credit is evaluated and determined at the pre-professional phase only. The OT graduate program does not give credit for experiential learning.

Recommendations

Two personal recommendations are required (one from a currently practicing occupational therapist and one from an academic professor). These will be done through the OTCAS application.

<u>Observation Hours</u>

Utica University is currently not requiring observation hours. While not a requirement, observation

hours are **highly recommended.**

We understand it is often a challenge for prospective applicants to obtain observation hours at many facilities. We **encourage** applicants to observe in a minimum of two different OT settings to get a better understanding of the possibilities within the profession**.**

There are online observation modules available for a fee if interested in learning more about the profession. This is one option, however--- not a requirement.

https://www.committobettering.com/students1

International Applicants

Utica University welcomes OTCAS applications from qualified international students. If you are an international applicant, contact graduate admissions before starting an OTCAS application.

Note to International Students---Tests of English language proficiency such as TOEFL or IELTS are required if English is not your first language -- Utica requires a TOEFL score of 525 written, 195 computer-based, or 69-70 internet-based. For IELTS, the minimum score is 5.5.

Candidate Selection

OTCAS applicants will be reviewed by graduate admissions once they are verified. Unverified applications cannot be reviewed. Please track your application through OTCAS to ensure that there are no processing issues that are holding up verification. Note: Graduate admissions does not have access to your completed application until it is verified.

Selected candidates who meet Utica University admissions requirements or are in the process of doing so will be contacted by OT faculty members to set up a virtual interview meeting.

OT Day Program

The Utica University Occupational Therapy program day cohort option is a traditional Monday-Friday program that runs 5 straight semesters for the MSOT. These include summers between the academic years that are reserved for fieldwork experiences and coursework. The day program starts in August.

OT Weekend Program

Utica University is only one of fifteen schools in North America that also offers a weekend cohort MSOT option. OT Weekend at Utica is entering its third decade. It offers career changers and COTA's the opportunity to become OT's while they continue to work at their current jobs. It is limited to 12 seats per cohort.

The weekend option is still 5 semesters, including one summer. Typical OT Weekend Classes are held online one evening during the week and 8 weekends including Friday, Saturday & Sunday. Four of these weekends are on campus and four online (synchronous).

Classes are very concentrated and require a great deal of personal academic discipline and independent learning in order to be successful. ***Please carefully consider your learning style and time management skills when considering this option. The faculty are more than willing to discuss this option with you.***

Classes for OT Weekend usually start in mid-August**.**

Note: According to FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), cost of attendance is defined as total amount of attending the program, which includes tuition and fees, book, supplies, transportation, loan fees as well as fees associated with distance education.

OTD Program

The OTD program runs a total of 8 semesters including two summers. During the first four semesters, students may select to be in the day or weekend cohort. **The final four semesters will be offered in hybrid format.**

Housing for OT Weekend

At this time, the university does not offer on-campus housing for OT Weekend. Local hotels (Holiday Inn, Days Inn, etc) offer special discounted rates to weekend OT students. Many OTW students share rooms or Airbnb's to reduce costs.

Technology Requirements:

As an online learner, you'll need regular access to an internet-connected computer—your own or a public access one, such as at your local library.   If possible, we recommend purchasing a laptop to increase your flexibility to learn on the go. See www.utica.edu/computer-information for more information about what computers are recommended. Courses may include live video conferencing or other high bandwidth needs at times, and it is recommended that you have an internet download speed of at least 15Mbps. You can check your current internet speed at https://speedtest.xfinity.com.

Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are recommended and are provided free to you while you are a student. See instructions for setup at hwww.utica.edu/msoffice. Completing a distance learning course requires the student to be familiar with email (Microsoft Outlook), a web browser (like Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge), and word processing. While students need not be computer experts, basic computer skills are important and required.

Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) Curriculum

This program is a total of 69 credits over 5 semesters, including Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. Day and weekend cohort options.

Academic Requirements and Course Sequence (69 Credit Hours)

First Year

First Semester (19 credit hours)

  OCT 505 - Theoretical Basis of Occupational Therapy (3)
  OCT 506 - Human Occupations (3)
  OCT 525 - Fundamentals of Transformative Learning (2)
  OCT 526 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adolescents and Young Adults (2) •
  OCT 543 - Fieldwork Level IA Prep (0)
 OCT 551 - Fieldwork Level IC: Impact of Social Context on Practice (1)
  OCT 553 - Fieldwork Level IA (1)
  OCT 571 - Occupational Performance: Adolescents and Young Adults (0,4) •
  OCT 573 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice I (2)
  IPE 504 – Interprofessional Practice (1)

Second Semester (17 credit hours)

  OCT 521 - Documentation in Practice (1)
  OCT 527 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adults (2)
  OCT 549 - Research Seminar I (1)
  OCT 552 - Fieldwork Level IC: Psychosocial Factors Influencing Occupations (2)
  OCT 561 - Professional Roles: Development (3)
  OCT 567 - Fieldwork Level IIA Preparation (0)
  OCT 568 - Occupational Therapy Research Analysis and Integration (2) •
  OCT 572 - Occupational Performance: Adults (0,4)
  OCT 574 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy II (2)

Third Semester - Summer (6 credit hours)

  OCT 654 - Fieldwork Level IIA (6) (May/June through July/August, 12 weeks @ 40
     hrs/wk)

Second Year

First Semester (17 credit hours)

OCT 601 - Occupational Performance: Children (0,4)
OCT 604 - Case-Informed Discussion: Children (2)
OCT 605 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy III (2)
OCT 622 - Writing for the Profession (2)
OCT 623 - Fieldwork Level IB Preparation (0)
OCT 633 - Fieldwork Level 1B (1)
OCT 637 - Occupational Therapy Manager (3)
OCT 649 - Research Seminar II (1)
OCT 668 - OT Research Dissemination (2)

Second Semester (10 credit hours)

OCT 6O2 Synthesis: Occupation-based Practice with Children

OCT 615 Synthesis: Theory into Practice

OCT 651 - Fieldwork Level IIB Preparation (0)
OCT 656 - Fieldwork Level IIB (6)

Students will graduate with a Master's degree in May, following successful completion of second-year courses and being eligible to sit for the certification exam.

Entry Level OTD program (OTD) Curriculum

This program is a total of 105 credits over 8 semesters. During the first four semesters, students may be in day or weekend cohorts. The next four semesters will be offered in a hybrid format. In addition to fieldwork level I and II experiences, the OTD also requires a capstone project and a 14-week full-time capstone experience. This capstone experience requires the students to implement their knowledge and skills in the areas of best practice, theory, advocacy, leadership and education to become an agent of change within society and the profession.

Program Curriculum

Academic Requirements and Course Sequence (105 Credit Hours)

First Year

First Semester (19 credit hours)

OCT 505 - Theoretical Basis of Occupational Therapy (3)
OCT 506 - Human Occupations (3)

OCT 525 - Fundamentals of Transformative Learning (2)

OCT 526 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adolescents and Young Adults (2) •

OCT 543 - Fieldwork Level IA Prep (0)

OCT 551 - Fieldwork Level IC: Impact of Social Context on Practice (1)

OCT 553 - Fieldwork Level IA (1)

OCT 571 - Occupational Performance: Adolescents and Young Adults (0,4) •

OCT 573 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice I (2)

IPE 504 – Interprofessional Practice (1)

Second Semester (17 credit hours)

OCT 521 - Documentation in Practice (1)

OCT 527 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adults (2)

OCT 549 - Research Seminar I (1)

OCT 552 - Fieldwork Level IC: Psychosocial Factors Influencing Occupations (2)

OCT 561 - Professional Roles: Development (3)

OCT 567 - Fieldwork Level IIA Preparation (0)

OCT 568 - Occupational Therapy Research Analysis and Integration (2) •

OCT 572 - Occupational Performance: Adults (0,4)

OCT 574 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy II (2)

Third Semester - Summer (6 credit hours)

OCT 654 - Fieldwork Level IIA (6) (May/June through July/August, 12 weeks @ 40 hrs/wk)

Second Year

First Semester (17 credit hours)

OCT 601 - Occupational Performance: Children (0,4)

OCT 604 - Case-Informed Discussion: Children (2)

OCT 605 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy III (2)

OCT 622 - Writing for the Profession (2)

OCT 623 - Fieldwork Level IB Preparation (0)

OCT 633 - Fieldwork Level 1B (1)

OCT 637 - Occupational Therapy Manager (3)

OCT 649 - Research Seminar II (1)

OCT 668 - OT Research Dissemination (2)

Second Semester (14 credit hours)

OCT 608 Foundations in Occupational Science (3)

OCT 651 - Fieldwork Level IIB Preparation (0)
OCT 656 - Fieldwork Level IIB (6)
OCT 688 – Capstone Project I: Becoming an Agent of Change (2)
OCT 736 Best Practice in Emerging Practice for Children and Adolescents(3)

Third semester (12 credits)

HCA521 – Health Care Systems: Continuum of Care (3)

OCT698 – Capstone Project II: Project Exploration & Proposal Development (3)
OCT735 – Best-Practice with Persons, Groups & Populations (3)
OCT745 – Advanced Theory and Theory Development *(3)*

Third Year

First semester (12 credits):

BUS611 and BUS612 -Principles and Practices of Leadership (1.5/1.5)
OCT755 – Advocacy for Groups and Populations (3)
OCT765 – Educator (3)
OCT721 – Capstone Project III: Project Proposal Defense and Experiential
Component Preparation (3)

Second semester (8 credits):

OCT788 – Capstone Project IV: Experiential Component and Project Dissemination– 14 week, full-time experience (8)

Students will graduate with a doctoral degree in May, following successful completion of third-year courses, and be eligible to sit for the certification exam

The Utica University Occupational Therapy program has been approved by the New York State Education Department. It is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 510E Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number, c/o AOTA, is 301-652-6611 x2042. AOTA can be reached at 800- SAY-AOTA (800-729-2682) or local calls: 301- 652-2682; Fax: 240-762-5150. The ACOTE website is www.acoteonline.org ; AOTA's website is https://www.aota.org