



**Vice-presidency of Academic and Student Affairs  
School of Health**

**INFORMATIVE MANUAL  
FOR STUDENTS OF THE  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

***Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree***

**2016-2018**

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**Huertas College does not discriminate against any person on account of race, color, gender, religion, age, political ideas or affiliation, ethnic origin, disabilities, pregnancy, or military or civil status.**

## Licenses and Accreditations

1. The Puerto Rico Council of Education has provided the Institution with the corresponding licenses to operate.
2. Huertas College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (267) 284-5000. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is recognized by the Secretary of Education of the United States and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
3. The Technology in Health Information Management Associate Degree is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM).
4. The Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Huertas College is currently pursuing the accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) during a two-year period. ACOTE is located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449. ACOTE'S telephone number is: (301)652-AOTA; email: [hstagliano@aota.org](mailto:hstagliano@aota.org); and website: <http://www.acoteonline.org>. If the institution obtains the accreditation, students admitted to the program will be able to take the National Board Examination of the U.S., otherwise they may take the Puerto Rico Board examination.

## **Huertas Vision, Mission, and Philosophy**

### **Vision**

To be an educational institution of excellence in teaching and service for the benefit of the community.

### **Mission**

Huertas College is a leading institution committed to excellence in postsecondary education and social responsibility. It develops among its constituents intellectual, technological, and human competencies to achieve an inclusive and self-sufficient society.

### **Philosophy**

Huertas College bases its existential purpose on teaching and preparing capable individuals who will be able to compete effectively in the occupational world and to contribute to society. The curricular offer of the College is in harmony with its principles; therefore, it is aimed at satisfying the needs of the occupational market.

Huertas College is committed to a quality teaching-learning process; consequently, it is wholeheartedly dedicated to the incorporation of new concepts and technologies in the daily activities taking place in the classrooms and Laboratories.

To sum it up, the Institution designates itself as a “community college” and, for that reason; its activities are geared to satisfy the needs of its community. The College exists as a living, dynamic, and innovative entity which inspires hope in a modern and competitive Puerto Rico.

## Mission and Philosophy of the Program

### PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree Program is to train students to successfully practice the profession in many scenarios and with different populations and conditions. This under the direction and supervision of an occupational therapist through a varied program of studies, based on the standards of practice and the values and principles of the code of ethics of the Occupational Therapist profession.

### PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree Program (ATO by its Spanish acronym) at Huertas College is based on the seven core values of the Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association (2015).

- **Altruism** - involves demonstrating concern for the welfare of others
- **Equality** - refers to treating all people impartially and free of bias. *Freedom* and personal choice are paramount in a profession in which the values and desires of the client guide our interventions.
- **Freedom** - Respect the decisions and consumer choice when addressing interventions.
- **Justice** - expresses a state in which diverse communities are inclusive; diverse communities are organized and structured such that all members can function, flourish, and live a satisfactory life. Occupational therapy personnel, by virtue of the specific nature of the practice of occupational therapy, have a vested interest in addressing unjust inequities that limit opportunities for participation in society (Braveman & Bass-Haugen, 2009).
- **Dignity - Truth - Prudence** - inherent in the practice of occupational therapy is the promotion and preservation of the individuality and *Dignity* of the client, by treating him or her with respect in all interactions. In all situations, occupational therapy personnel must provide accurate information in oral, written, and electronic forms (*Truth*). Occupational therapy personnel use their clinical and ethical reasoning skills, sound judgment, and reflection to make decisions in professional and volunteer roles (*Prudence*).

These seven core values provide a basis for the Occupational Therapy professional to guide their interactions with others. These values also define the ethical principles to which the profession is committed and what the public can expect from a professional Occupational Therapy Assistant graduated from Huertas College. These core values contribute to the development of an integral and competent person who is conscientious, mindful of individual needs, and capable of fulfilling the expectations of the occupational therapy assistant's role.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant supports, restores, or modifies the environment of individuals with special needs by intervening in all areas of occupational performance and giving them the opportunity to carry out everyday living tasks that could be affected by any physical or emotional condition. The philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree Program enables the student to implement treatment plans to rehabilitate people with special needs under the supervision of a Licensed Occupational Therapist. The Occupational Therapy Assistant works closely with occupational therapists to develop treatment plans and provided rehabilitation services for people with mental and physical challenges to have a better quality of live. The philosophy of the program is based on the science of human behavior and incorporates in its curriculum scientific and clinical evidence based practices.

In every society, being able to work is a synonymous of wellbeing. Participation or involvement in everyday occupations is vital for all humans. As described by the World Health Organization, participation in an occupation has a positive influence on health and well-being. As an academic facility, Huertas College incorporated in the educational philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program the importance of being able to work and the potential of everyday living activities to promote health or maintain well-being.

The program aims to graduate Occupational Therapy Assistant professionals of the highest quality following the trends of the profession in different areas of competence in order to help them practice their profession in different work scenarios.

The faculty of Huertas College will create an environment that encourages experimentation and practice under an atmosphere of respect, taking into consideration individual differences, and providing a variety of educational experiences that allow the graduate to practice the profession using purposeful activities as a base of the treatment while respecting cultural diversity.

To achieve the program's philosophy, we will have educators with the highest quality of teaching standards of higher education. It provides a varied, innovative, and technological curriculum to guide the patient intervention and educating the student on the importance of the use the occupation in the rehabilitation process and the importance to taking into consideration the patient's preferences.

The Philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree (OTA) of Huertas College encourages the students to begin their preparation for the OTA program through a series of general education classes chosen specifically to give them a strong background in the concepts and language of the health professional. The OTA course sequence is fundamentally based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains (Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor) and hierarchical levels of learning within each domain; guides decisions related to course sequence as well as the presentation of content within a course and course objectives. The Occupational Therapy Assistant curriculum at Huertas College includes both classroom education at the College and fieldwork (clinical) training in occupational therapy in community settings that foster critical thinking in the students. The Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree prepares entry-level occupational therapy assistants to work in institutional health care programs and community service organizations. The learning model seeks that students integrate their experiences with different health professionals in order to develop a holistic human being perspective and to promote quality services by developing basic knowledge in the quality of treatment. In this program, the student receives theoretical instructions related to the practice of the occupational therapy assistant. Among the different methodologies of study used in the classroom, the students will have the opportunity to learn and integrate the importance of the client-centered approach, the importance of human occupation and evidence-based practice.

The philosophy of the program integrates the use of different educational strategies and teaching methods such as readings, active and social discussion, classroom demonstrations, portfolios, self-study, laboratories, clinical practice experience in both traditional and community-based centers. Self-study and case discussions are fostered in order to help students gain experiences and learning methods that encourage participation and rehabilitation in client's personal care, work, play/leisure, education, social and life skills according to how an occupational therapy assistant should practice.

According to the Huertas College philosophy, it is important for the program to influence the community. Therefore, the program has integrated in its fieldwork experiences community based practices to promote in the students the ability to respond to the changes in health care services and environment. The students will be able to develop health care promotion through their experiences and this service learning can help students to have direct contact with social issues and public health concerns in the communities. According to the American Occupational Therapy Association, service learning can help students develop an increased cultural competency and increased efficacy with therapeutic use of self. (Maloney & Griffith, 2013).

### **Program Goals**

1. Prepare Occupational Therapy Assistants who can provide quality service in a variety of work settings under the supervision of licensed occupational therapists.
2. Provide a varied curriculum that meets the demands of current practices and prepares students to meet the expectations of future practice.

3. Encourage the development of a value system that includes the dignity and rights of the individual to support participation in meaningful occupations of the patients / clients.
4. Provide a curriculum that promotes the personal and professional growth of the student of the occupational therapy assistant program.
5. Create an atmosphere that provides safe exploration of personal and professional attitudes and behaviors.
6. Provide to all faculty and students the opportunities to have direct involvement in the development and assessment of all aspects of the program.
7. Promote investment in lifelong learning, in order to respond to the needs and interests of an increasingly complex and changing society.
8. Provide evaluation processes and planning to ensure that the program's mission is being accomplished.
9. Comply with the accreditation standards and requirements of the program accreditation agencies.

### **Program Objectives**

1. Prepare the students with the most advanced knowledge and skills in the Occupational Therapy field.
2. Provide the students the necessary skills to offer selected components of the Occupational Therapy plan of care proficiently under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist in an ethical, effective, legal, and safe manner.
3. Develop in the students' critical analysis skills for providing Occupational Therapy services of the highest quality aimed at reaching the established goals and at making responsible clinical decisions.
4. Develop in the students' oral and written communication skills in Spanish and English to achieve effective communication in all their interactions as Occupational Therapist Assistants.
5. Develop in the students writing skills aimed at producing clear, precise, and effective documentation using the required formats in Occupational Therapy and following legal and medical insurance regulations.
6. Prepare the students to perform as Occupational Therapist Assistants following the profession Standards of Practice, American Occupational Therapy Association Code of Ethics, and applicable local and federal regulations.
7. Develop socio-humanistic values in the students to prepare them to respond to the individual and cultural differences of the patients/clients with sensitivity, respect, and empathy.
8. Develop in the students the ability to educate patients, relatives, colleagues, coworkers, and the general community using assorted teaching skills appropriate to the audience's characteristics and learning styles.
9. Foster an attitude of commitment and vocation to the profession by participating in activities aimed at their professional development and in professional associations.

10. Foster the participation of the Program's graduates in continuing education activities provided by Huertas College and other accredited institutions.
11. Provide excellent clinical education experiences in which the student is able to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, and ethical values that are necessary to offer Occupational Therapy services.
12. Offer an academic curriculum that prepares the student for obtaining and maintaining the professional license required to practice as an Occupational Therapist Assistant in Puerto Rico.
13. Maintain qualified academic and clinical faculties with the up-to-date competencies required in the Occupational Therapy field.
14. Comply with the program's accreditation standards and those of the accrediting agency.

### **Graduate Profile**

The student who completes the courses of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program will demonstrate the following characteristics and competencies:

1. Exercises Occupational Therapy practice complying with the standards of practice and maintains ethical conduct according with the American Occupational Therapy Association, the College of Occupational Therapy of Puerto Rico, and the laws and regulations governing the profession at the state and federal levels.
2. Shows the values, attitudes, and behavior consistent with the philosophy of the occupational therapy profession, rules, and ethics that rule the profession.
3. Appreciates and adapts to different cultures and alternative processes and ideas that involve attending to the client.
4. Contributes to the assessment processes as delegated by the Occupational Therapist, providing verbal and written reports of observations and client capabilities.
5. Provides information related to the context and current condition of the client according to their occupational performance in order to assist the occupational therapist in the process of planning, intervention, and monitoring client progress.
6. Collects, reports, and requests information relevant to the provision of services.
7. Develops treatment goals under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist.
8. Uses community resources to encourage the occupational role of the customer in the least restrictive environment.
9. Implements intervention processes according to the treatment plan established by the occupational therapist in order to support customer participation in occupational areas.

10. Implements occupational therapy interventions consistent with the standards of practice in the areas of pediatrics, physical dysfunction, and mental health, aimed at achieving functional goals in areas of the occupation.
11. Contributes to the client's assessment processes as delegated by the Occupational Therapist, providing verbal and written reports of observations and client capabilities.
12. Implements the necessary processes to take measurable achievements as delegated by the occupational therapist in order to provide the information necessary for the discharge of services.
13. Implements intervention processes according to the treatment plan established under the supervision of the occupational therapist, in order to support customer participation in areas of the occupation.
14. Implements occupational therapy interventions consistent with the standard of practice in the areas of pediatrics, physical dysfunction, and mental health aimed at achieving functional goals in the patients/customers' occupations.
15. Documents clearly and precisely the implemented intervention, observations, measures taken according to the customer's response to the intervention, changes, and achievements.
16. Communicates relevant information effectively and in a timely manner in verbal and written form to his or her Occupational Therapy Supervisor related to customer response to the intervention process.
17. Applies effective interview strategies for, and observation according to, areas of work and takes into consideration the condition and occupational performance of the patient or client.
18. Demonstrates reasoning skills and clinical judgment for the provision of occupational therapy services and for the application of specific techniques, screening, and intervention processes.
19. Selects, implements, and adjusts activities and therapeutic interventions consistent with the levels of competition, customer goals, and requirements of the clinical practice setting.
20. Considers the assessments' results and treatment goals during the patient/client intervention and provides input based on the needs and priorities of the customer.

21. Implements the necessary processes to measure achievements as delegated by the occupational therapist in order to provide the information necessary for the discharge process.
22. Can communicate relevant information related to customer response in the intervention process, effectively and in timely manner, to the Occupational Therapy Supervisor in verbal and written form.
23. Provides information related to the context and current client condition according to he/she occupational performance in order to collaborate with the Occupational Therapist in the process of planning, intervention, and monitoring client progress.
24. Collaborates with the client, family, colleagues, and other professionals using a patient-centered approach in order to provide quality services using evidence-based practices and the occupational interests of the customer as a cornerstone for the treatment.
25. Incorporates the use of assistive technology for people with special needs, adjusts, and modifies the basic equipment adapted as required, under the supervision of the Occupational Therapist.
26. Meets the service requirements in accordance with the policies and procedures of the institution.
27. Performs Occupational Therapy practice according with the Standards of Practice, the ethical code of conduct of the American Occupational Therapy Association, the College of Occupational Therapy in Puerto Rico, and the laws and regulations governing the profession at the state and federal levels.
28. Shows values, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the philosophy of the occupational therapy profession and the rules and ethical standards that govern the profession.
29. Promotes and participates in continuous professional development activities founded on evidence-based practices to expand and improve he/she skills and knowledge as required for the clinical setting and the roles and responsibilities of an Occupational Therapy Assistant.
30. Demonstrates leadership skills and initiative to perform tasks not related to customer management and accepts criticisms and suggestions.

31. Promotes the participation of the client and their family in the recovery process through education, continuous feedback, and identification of needs in collaboration with the Occupational Therapist.
32. Collaborates with the client, family, colleagues, and other professionals using patient centered approaches to provide quality service through evidence based practices and by considering the occupation and interests of the patient/client as a cornerstone for treatment.
33. Communicates effectively, both verbally and in writing, in English and Spanish at professional level.
34. Uses quantitative skills and logical-mathematical reasoning as a means to understand and solve problems in different fields of professional and personal life.
35. Applies information literacy and technology to effectively use the information in his/her personal and professional life.
36. Develops critical thinking skills for problem solving and decision-making.
37. Develops teamwork skills to cope successfully in daily living.
38. Values diversity in a changing, global, and varied society.
39. Promotes the development of an inclusive and self-sufficient society through commitment and social responsibility.

## **Qualifications and Requirements**

### **Description of the Profession**

Occupational Therapist Assistants work under the direction and supervision of an Occupational Therapist. Their basic responsibilities are the application of selected components of the Occupational Therapy, plan of care in order to promote rehabilitation of people who have special needs related to their self-care, productivity, and leisure. As well as, collecting information from the patients to measure their progress, documenting progress notes, communicating effectively with the Occupational Therapist, physician, or other professionals, educating the patient and relatives, and participating in health promotion, among other things. Some of the techniques that the students will learn are activity analyses, therapeutic use of self, training in the use of assistive technology equipment, and developing daily routines for people with mental or physical needs, among others. The Occupational Therapist Assistant works in hospitals, occupational therapy facilities, private medical offices, home health care services, rehabilitation facilities, and programs for children and schools under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist.

## Requirements for Clinical Practice Centers

The contracts of Huertas College with practice centers will certify that our students are committed to complying with the rules and procedures of the facilities concerning the care and handling of patients, their behavior, required documents, and uniforms, among others. Students will receive orientation about the center to which they are assigned before initiating their clinical practice. Students must refer to the Clinical Practice Handbook to identify the required documents and the specific policies in order to participate in the clinical experiences.

To see more details regarding the clinical practice, such as objectives, pass policies, and grades, students must refer to the specific syllabus of each clinical practice. Some of the required documents may be a criminal background certificate, evidence of hepatitis immunization, drug tests, and others. Students must understand that if they fail to provide any of these documents, they will not be able to participate in the clinical experience, which will delay their progress in the Program.

A student with a criminal record may not be able to complete the clinical experiences and take the licensing exam, which is required to obtain the OTA license and to practice the profession.

Students who get a positive result in a drug test will not be able to advance to clinical experiences and through the program. These students will be referred to the Counseling and Orientation Office. Students, who do not comply with the established procedures to manage their cases, will not be allowed to continue in the Program or to reenter the Program at a future date. For more information, contact the Program Director.

## License and Credentials

1. An Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree Program that is accredited and approved by the Puerto Rico Council of Education and other national agencies is required to practice as an Occupational Therapist Assistant in Puerto Rico.
2. In order to practice the profession in the United States, the Occupational Therapy Program must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®)
3. The professional license and professional certification and re-certification are a requirement for practicing the profession in Puerto Rico.
4. Once an Occupational Therapist Assistant obtains the license, he/she is responsible for renewing it every three years. The OTA must complete 24 credits of continuing education during the three-year period.
5. To practice in the United States, the graduate must pass the licensing exam administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
  - a. (NBCOT) (<http://www.nbcot.org>)

## **Professional Association Memberships**

Huertas College and the faculty of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program are committed to foster in our students the interest and desire for supporting and participating in professional organizations. Enrolled students are candidates to request membership to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA®). The latter offers the benefits of a monthly subscription to OT Practice Magazine and the Journal of the American Occupational Therapy Association. The local organization named "*Colegio de Profesionales de Terapia Ocupacional de Puerto Rico*" also has some benefits for students. Both organizations offer discounts for conventions and continuing education courses, reference books, and others. Students will pay around \$75.00 a year for the membership of AOTA.

## **Physical and Psychological Requisites**

### **1. Physical skills and aptitudes**

The working conditions that Occupational Therapist Assistants may find in their line of work could include: a high number of patients, overcrowding, stressful environment due to a temporary lack of personnel, lack of essential equipment, momentary shortage of materials, and a patient's or coworker's unpleasant behavior. These situations will be discussed and simulated in specific courses of the Program. The students and graduates will be required to perform tasks that entail moderate effort for safely lifting and carrying equipment and materials of up to 50 pounds without assistance and over 50 pounds with assistance. The students and graduates must be able to use adequate body mechanics to lean, push, pull, move, and position a patient or equipment to apply the occupational therapy components of treatment. Constant awareness about the high risk of suffering back injuries in this profession is necessary.

### **2. Sensory and Motor Abilities**

Students must have the following characteristics:

- Visual and auditory acuity – An accurate perception of colors and average hearing ability to be aware of the patient's reactions to the treatment and to identify potential hazards and changes in the patient's condition. Students must be capable of responding and adapting to changes and able to read instructions, treatment plans, and safety precautions.
- Written and oral comprehension and documentation abilities to understand and interpret medical terminology as it applies to occupational therapy; to communicate with patients/clients, colleagues, occupational therapists, and physicians; to prepare

precise reports, progress notes, and record patient treatments and reactions; and to evaluate the patient's progress by reading notes.

**General Responsibilities of an Occupational Therapist Assistant:**

- Respect the confidentiality and privacy laws that protect the patients while interacting with them and while reviewing their medical information and other documents.
- Plan and organize the daily burden of patients and other tasks under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist.
- Collaborate in the evaluating process and targeting intervention outcomes, with a primary focus of engagement in occupation under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist.
- Keep current with the best evidence based practices.
- Communicate effectively with patients, relatives, referring professionals, or other specialists involved in the patient's care such as: physical therapist, psychologist, and teachers, among others.
- Adhere to the rules and procedures of his/her employer, as well as the laws and standards that regulate the profession.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 –Reasonable Accommodations Act**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on physical or mental disabilities. It stipulates that educational institutions will make all their study programs available to students with disabilities. If a student has a physical disability that could interfere with his/her progress in the study program, the student is responsible for notifying the Program Director in advance to request reasonable accommodations so that modifications may be made according to his/her needs. The student must also refer to the Counseling and Orientation Office, to receive assistance and guidance regarding reasonable accommodations. This office is located in the main building and the telephone number is 787-746-1400, extensions 1503, 1500, and 1501.

**Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification**

While students are enrolled in the Program, they must obtain and maintain the CPR Certification. Arrangements will be made for the certification of new students before their admittance to Fieldwork I.

**HIPAA Certification**

In compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Huertas College is committed to ensure patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality. In keeping with this policy, students will receive a complete training in HIPAA Policy before their admittance to Fieldwork I. The date of the workshop will be coordinated by the Program Director and announced at least a week in advance. Students must arrange to attend the workshop on the designated date or notify the faculty about any situation that may interfere with their

attendance. Students will not be allowed to initiate their clinical practice or to participate in any type of activity that includes visits to practice centers without the HIPAA Certification.

### Practice Insurance

All students admitted to the Program must pay approximately \$20.00 every year to acquire the Institution's insurance policy (it could be a little more or less). This policy covers the students for accidents related to the Program's educational activities outside the Institution, equipment damage, and malpractice/liability insurance. Students who do not pay this insurance policy will not be allowed to participate in clinical experiences. We recommend that students pay for this insurance at the beginning of their fourth semester.

### Estimated Program Costs

The Institutional Catalog provides information regarding tuition costs, credit transcripts, and other general expenses. The following itemization of expenses is only an estimate for the Associate Degree in Occupational Assistant Program. For information regarding other institutional fees, such as enrollment cancelation and document duplicates, among others, students must refer to the Institutional Catalog ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)) or seek assistance in the Registrar's Office.

Description	Estimated Cost
6 semesters with a minimum of 12 credits	\$3,250 per semester Total: 19,510
Admission Application	\$10.00
Uniforms	\$100.00
Books and materials	\$500.00
Practice Insurance	\$20.00
Costs related to clinical practice (immunizations, certifications, transportation, etc.)	\$500.00
Graduation	\$75.00
<b>Total estimated costs</b>	<b>\$20,715</b>

### Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office offers an assortment of alternatives for students who want to study in the Institution. Students must visit this office in order to receive orientation about available options. For more details, please refer to the Institutional Catalog ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)).

## General Description of the Study Program Sequence

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree at Huertas College is an academic program that prepares students to serve as Occupational Therapy Assistants. This program aspires to graduate health allied professionals of the highest quality following the standards of practice of the profession in the different areas of competence to enable them to exercise the profession successfully in different work scenarios. In its educational philosophy, the program incorporates the importance of the occupation and the potential of everyday living activities to promote health and well-being. The program is based on the science of human behavior and incorporates in its curriculum scientific and clinical evidence based practices. The Occupational Therapy Assistant restores, supports, and modifies the environment to reinsert the individual with physical or emotional challenges into everyday life. The Occupational Therapy Assistant intervenes in all areas of occupational performance through the implementation of treatment plans under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist. All graduates of the program must take and approve licensing examination established by law to work as an Occupational Therapy Assistant in Puerto Rico. They must submit to the Board of Examiners of Occupational Therapy the diploma or graduation certificate, an official transcript of credits, and Criminal Background Certificate from the Puerto Rico Police Department.

The Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Huertas College is intended to provide a specific progression throughout its development. It is an integrated program that must be completed within six semesters. The program includes general courses such as, Spanish, English, General Psychology, Mathematics, Human Anatomy, and concentration courses. Some general and concentration courses may include additional laboratory hours. As the curriculum advances, the student will encounter courses that are more complex and could entail more practice time in the clinical areas, the classrooms, and the Laboratories. Students **must** read and sign the Student Consent Form for Classroom, Laboratory, and Clinical Experiences (refer to Occupational Therapy Assistant Student Laboratory Manual, appendix A) which will be handed out during the first week of classes.

As of their fourth semester, the students will have the opportunity to visit the practice centers. This is intended to provide the student with the opportunity of observing basic occupational therapy procedures in a real setting and being exposed to professional socialization. The experience will be a community based one and will take place in a variety of scenarios. The Fieldwork Coordinator, outside of class time, will coordinate these visits; they are also subject to the availability of the centers at the time.

Students will begin to participate in limited clinical experiences as of the fourth semester. However, students are expected to demonstrate some specific skills in accordance with the courses already taken; these skills will be assessed formally and discussed with the students in order to contribute to their professional development. By the sixth semester, students will participate in full-time clinical practice, in order to complete 630 hours. Students will be assigned to two different practice scenarios that could be pediatric, physical dysfunction, or mental health. The clinical practice helps the student to apply and integrate the theory principles and skills he/she learned in the didactic courses. The student will be supervised by an experienced and licensed Occupational Therapist. At that time, the student is expected to demonstrate greater skills and aptitudes in the responsibilities of an OTA. This fieldwork practice experience will be the final practice and will be completed within 8 weeks for each assigned scenario.

**The program of studies will take place from Monday to Friday, daytime hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except for clinical practices whose hours range from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** Consequently, students who are admitted to the Program are expected to set aside this time and not use it for other activities or personal commitments. Punctuality, attendance, and compliance with established schedules are of crucial importance for effective progression in the Program.

Students will be admitted to the Program only once a year in the month of September. Accordingly, concentration courses are offered only once a year, which means that a student who fails a technical concentration course will have to wait until the following year to repeat it and consequently the student progression through the program will be affected. If, at any time during their progression in the program, students are affected by personal problems or any situations that interfere with their effective advancement, they must seek assistance and counseling from the Program Director in order to make an acceptable decision consistent with the situation.

**Curricular Sequence for the Associate Degree in Occupational Assistant Program****PROGRAM CURRICULAR SEQUENCE****FIRST SEMESTER**

CODE	TITLE	CREDITS
ATOC 4301	Introduction to Occupational Therapy	3
BIOL 1124R	Anatomy and Physiology I	3
BIOL 1134	Anatomy and Physiology I Laboratory	1
SOC 1015	General Psychology	3
REME 2201	Medical Terminology	3
		<b>Total 13</b>

**SECOND SEMESTER**

CODE	TITLE	CREDITS
ATOC 4302	Applied Kinesiology Occupational Therapy	1
ATOC 4302L	Applied Kinesiology Occupational Therapy Laboratory	2
ATOC 4303	Psychosocial Area Occupational Therapy	3
BIOL 1125	Anatomy and Physiology II	3
BIOL 1135	Anatomy and Physiology II Laboratory	1
ESP 1021	Basic Spanish I	3
		<b>Total 13</b>

**THIRD SEMESTER**

CODE	TITLE	CREDITS
ATOC 4304	Pediatric Occupation Theory	3
ATOC 4305	Occupational Therapy Applied to the Psychosocial Area	1
ATOC 4305L	Occupational Therapy Applied to the Psychosocial Area Laboratory	2
ATOC 4306	Health Concepts in Physical Dysfunction	2
ATOC 4306L	Health Concepts in Physical Dysfunction Laboratory	1
ESP 1022	Basic Spanish II	3
		<b>Total 12</b>

**FOURTH SEMESTER**

CODE	TITLE	CREDITS
ATOC 4307	Pediatric Therapeutic Media	2
ATOC 4307L	Pediatric Therapeutic Media Laboratory	2
ATOC 4308	Psychosocial Therapeutic Media	1
ATOC 4308L	Psychosocial Therapeutic Media Laboratory	2
ATOC 4309	Clinical Experience Level I	2
ING 1031	Basic English I	3
MAT 1041	General Mathematics	3
		<b>Total 15</b>

**The courses of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Associate Degree Program should be approved with a minimum grade of C (70%), other laboratories must be approved with a minimum grade of B (80%).**

<b>DISTRIBUTION OF HOURS / CREDIT</b>	
General Education	18
Related courses	11
Concentration Courses	34
Internship/Practice	16
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>79</b>

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is currently undergoing the two year accreditation process with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). ACOTE is located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449. ACOTE'S telephone number is: (301)652-AOTA and its Web Address is: [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org). If the institution obtains the accreditation, students admitted in the program will be able to take the National Board examination of the U.S., otherwise they may take the Puerto Rico Board examination.

Rev. 8/02/2016

## Course Description

<b>ATOC 4301</b>	<b>Introduction to Occupational Therapy</b>	<b>3 cr/45hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	N/A	
COREQUISITE:	N/A	

The course Introduction to Occupational Therapy includes historical aspects, theoretical structuring, and organization of the clinical practice in occupational therapy. Its basic content covers the generic and specific skills an occupational therapy assistant must possess; in addition to, the ethical aspects associated with the professional practice. The conceptual origin and evolution of the clinical practice of occupational therapy is also studied; also its basic conceptual precepts and the theoretical frameworks and practice models that underlie the practice of Occupational Therapy. The course emphasizes the study of the code of ethics, the laws and regulations that affect the practice of occupational therapy, and generally includes a description of the effects of illness and disability on the individual within the cultural context of family and society. The course describes the meaning and the dynamics of occupation and activity in the patient's recovery process; additionally, it teaches the importance of the individual's interaction in the areas of occupation, the skills and patterns of occupational performance of the individual, and how the context and environment can impact ongoing health/illness of the individual and his/her family. The course aims to enable the student to articulate the importance of balancing the occupational areas to promote health and wellness; also to explain the role of the occupation in health promotion and prevention of disease in individuals, families, and society.

<b>ATOC 4302</b>	<b>Applied Kinesiology Occupational Therapy</b>	<b>1 cr/15hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	BIOL 1124R, BIOL1134	
COREQUISITE:	ATOC 4302L	
<b>ATOC 4302 L</b>	<b>Applied Kinesiology Occupational Therapy Laboratory</b>	<b>2 cr/60hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134	
COREQUISITE:	ATOC 4302	

This course covers the basic principles of kinesiology of the human body. Relevant information about the anatomical and functional aspects of human movement emphasizing the role of neuromuscular and skeletal structures and their interrelationship is detailed. Through demonstrations and supervised practice, the following aspects are studied: techniques for measuring the range of motion, anthropometric measurements, as well as probing and identification of the most important musculoskeletal structures. It also covers the study and analysis of the ambulation process, functional regions of the musculoskeletal structure, normal movement, deviation, and body mechanics of the human body.

<b>ATOC 4303</b>	<b>Psychosocial Area Occupational Therapy</b>	<b>3 cr/45hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	ATOC 4301, SOC 1015	
COREQUISITE:	N/A	

Occupational Therapy in the psychosocial area is a course designed to study the history and process of occupational therapy intervention in patients/clients facing challenges in mental health. Characteristic of clinical features are studied as well as diagnosis in the area of mental health that affect adolescents, adults, and seniors in different areas of occupational performance. This is the first part of a sequence of courses designed to discuss the theory and application process of Occupational Therapy (OT) to a variety of situations and human conditions related to psychosocial and cognitive dysfunction that affect the performance of individuals in the activities of everyday living. Integrating clinical reasoning skills and evidence-based practice to guide decisions regarding the selection of an appropriate model of practice is promoted. The description and use of appropriate reference frames to perform the intervention in occupational therapy with patients / clients with challenges in mental health are also included.

<b>ATOC 4304</b>	<b>Pediatric Occupation Theory</b>	<b>3 cr/45hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, SOC 1015	
COREQUISITE:	N/A	

The course includes the study of human development from birth through adolescence, with emphasis on the occupational performance of typical and atypical individuals. Topics include the theory and application frameworks, the process of occupational therapy, evidence-based practice, and functions of Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants in providing services to the pediatric population. Different diagnoses and conditions that affect the pediatric population and its impact on the tasks of everyday living are discussed. It emphasizes the importance of early stimulation in the growth process and psychomotor development of human beings. The course also discusses the evaluation and screening processes for guiding the intervention plan in pediatric occupational therapy.

<b>ATOC 4305</b>	<b>Occupational Therapy Applied to the Psychosocial Area</b>	<b>1 cr/15hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	ATOC 4301, ATOC 4303, BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, SOC 1015	
COREQUISITE:	ATOC 4305L	
<b>ATOC 4305L</b>	<b>Occupational Therapy Applied to the Psychosocial Area Laboratory</b>	<b>2 cr/60hr</b>
PREREQUISITE:	ATOC 4301, ATOC 4303, BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, SOC 1015	
COREQUISITE:	ATOC 4305	

This course covers the application frameworks, processes of screening, evaluation and assessment in the area of mental health and their involvement in different practice settings. It integrates practical experiences using different assessment tools, methods, and treatment techniques. The documentation process and sources of repayment in the area of mental

health practice is also discussed. It also integrates the description of ethical and contextual health factors and the provision of health services to individuals with psychosocial limitations. Topics include interventions, techniques, and equipment to maximize participation in meaningful occupations, improve independence, and ensure safety.

**ATOC 4306**                      **Health Concepts in Physical Dysfunction**                      **2 cr/30hr**  
 PREREQUISITE: ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4303, BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, SOC 1015  
 COREQUISITE: ATOC 4306L

**ATOC 4306L**                      **Health Concepts in Physical Dysfunction Laboratory**                      **1 cr/30hr**  
 PREREQUISITE: ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4303, BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, SOC 1015  
 COREQUISITE: ATOC 4306

This course focuses on the study and analysis of the methods, techniques, tools, and specific activities of assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation/adaptation of the person with physical dysfunction taking into consideration how individual life and human and non-human context surrounds them. This course is designed to study the theoretical process of occupational therapy relating to the people with physical dysfunction throughout life. The history of the health service system in Puerto Rico and the United States is discussed; as well as the different components of implementation and practice models used in the area of physical dysfunction. It helps the students to relate with different clinical diagnoses they may face in the area and their symptoms. In addition, it prepares them to integrate concepts, fundamentals, practice models, frameworks, techniques, and methods applicable in occupational therapy treatment processes in people with physical and / or sensory disabilities. The course enables the student to understand, from a holistic view, the needs arising from different situations that cause physical disability. The course includes 30 hours of laboratory.

**ATOC 4307**                      **Pediatric Therapeutic Media**                      **2 cr/30hr**  
 PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4304, SOC1015  
 COREQUISITE: ATOC 4307L

**ATOC 4307L**                      **Pediatric Therapeutic MediaLaboratory**                      **2 cr/60hr**  
 PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4304, SOC1015  
 COREQUISITE: ATOC 4307

This course focuses on continued development of observation skills, screenings, assessment, and application of frameworks, practice models, teaching, adaptation and classification of self-care, work, play, occupation/leisure for people with development problems. Topics include interventions, techniques, and equipment to maximize participation in meaningful occupations and improve independence and ensure safety. It will continue with the training processes in the activities of everyday life. Cognitive stimulation and perceptual processes, as well as identification of technical assistance regarding the population with

development disabilities, will also be discussed. Intervention techniques will be studied through purposeful activities. Topics include intervention techniques and laboratory experience.

**ATOC 4308**                      **Psychosocial Therapeutic Media**                      **1 cr/15hr**  
PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, SOC 1015  
COREQUISITE: ATOC 4308L

**ATOC 4308L**                      **Psychosocial Therapeutic Media Laboratory**                      **2 cr/60hr**  
PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, SOC 1015  
COREQUISITE: ATOC 4308

This course discusses, demonstrates, and practices the different intervention methods and techniques performed by the Occupational Therapy Assistant in the mental health area. It includes the observation, analysis, and implementation of human occupation in different areas. The student will have the opportunity to learn about different therapeutic modalities and generally demonstrate these applications through supervised labs and scenarios. It includes the study of the environment and surroundings and the identification of basic everyday life activities. Functional activities are integrated as selected according to the functional and/or cognitive requirements and interest of the person with a mental disorder. In addition, cognitive stimulation techniques and identification of technical support are integrated. Topics include intervention techniques, equipment to maximize participation in occupations with purpose, improvement of independence, and promotion of safety.

**ATOC 4309**                      **Clinical Experience Level I**                      **2 cr/90hr**  
PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 40302L, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4304, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, ATOC 4306, ATOC 4306L, SOC 1015, REME 2201,  
COREQUISITE: N/A

In this course students, will have the opportunity to attend clinical services facility for observation and guided practice in a variety of scenarios of the occupational therapy process such as children or adults with physical problems, developmental problems, or difficulties in the area of mental health. The student will attend a clinical center eight hours a week to complete a total of 90 hours and will be supervised by clinical educators or teachers at health services, and education or community centers. The course will be complemented with activities and/or topics in the classroom, laboratory, and experiences outside of the Institution, such as field visits. The student is expected to demonstrate professional behavior according to the standards of practice, basic communication skills, and begin to establish effective interpersonal skills with professionals, patients, and people in the community. The student may practice some intervention skills as may be required by the clinical educator.

**ATOC 4310**                      **Occupational Therapy Ethics and Effective Documentation**                      **2 cr/30hr**  
PREREQUISITE: ATOC 4301, SOC, 1015, REME 2201, ESP 1022  
COREQUISITE: N/A

This course delves into the study of all aspects of professional ethical behavior and clinical documentation. The course is intended to reinforce all the concepts previously learned about these issues by integrating various activities such as practice exercises and simulations. Topics include ethics in the workplace, integrating the code of ethics of occupational therapy, roles and functions of regulatory agencies, funding and reimbursement systems, and health care systems. Furthermore, it focuses on different techniques and strategies to write progress reports and appropriate treatment plans in various formats according to the practice scenario. It is expected that students understand and achieve the process of documenting with integrity, in an understandable, measurable way, based on behavior and realistic, achievable goals.

**ATOC 4311**                      **Physical Dysfunction Therapeutic Methods**                      **1 cr/15hr**  
PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4304, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, ATOC 4306, ATOC 4306L, SOC 1015, REME 2201  
COREQUISITE: ATOC 4311L

**ATOC 4311L**                      **Physical Dysfunction Therapeutic Methods Laboratory**                      **2 cr/60hr**  
PREREQUISITE: BIOL 1124R, BIOL 1134, BIOL 1125, BIOL 1135, ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4304, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, ATOC 4306, ATOC 4306L, SOC 1015, REME 2201  
COREQUISITE: ATOC 4311

This course focuses on developing skills to provide solutions to the problems of people with physical problems in the area of Occupational Therapy. It emphasizes assessment processes, documentation, education, treatment, adaptation, classification of self-care, and work, as well as play and leisure activities for people with physical disabilities. It also includes various treatment techniques and the use of assisted equipment to accomplish the following: maximize the patient's with physical dysfunction participation in meaningful occupations, promote independence and security, as well as prevent deformity. The student will have the opportunity to learn all the resources available for patient management in the area of physical dysfunction and to practice different techniques of intervention and evaluation in this area.

**ATOC 4312                      Geriatrics Occupational Therapy                      2 cr/30hr**

PREREQUISITE: ATOC 4301 ,ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, ATOC 4306, ATOC 4306L, ATOC 4308, ATOC 4308L, ATOC 4309, SOC 1015, REME 2201

COREQUISITE: N/A

This course is designed to study the implications for occupational therapy in relation to aging populations. The physical aspects and cognitive and emotional processes that change in adulthood are discussed. Emphasis is placed on the impact of the specific characteristics of the geriatric population in the practice of occupational therapy under a holistic intervention. The main functions of occupational therapists are also discussed at different levels of implementation and assistance to the geriatric population. Throughout the course, students will be trained to apply techniques of safe treatment for this population, identify risk factors, implement and collaborate in the processes of screening and assessment, as well as identify community resources to help elderly people.

**ATOC 4313                      Occupational Therapy Assistive Technology                      2cr/30hr**

PREREQUISITE: ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4304, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, ATOC 4306, ATOC 4306L, ATOC 4307, ATOC 4307L, ATOC 4308, ATOC 4308L, ATOC 4309, SOC 1015, REME 2201

COREQUISITE: N/A

This course will introduce students to a variety of assistive technology used in occupational therapy environments. Topics include theory of technological assistance, services, splints, computer software, switches, adaptations of low vision devices and high and low technology in the areas of people with mobility problems, posture, communication, vision, hearing, and/or cognitive problems.

**ATOC 4314                      Clinical Experience Level II                      14cr/630hr**

PREREQUISITE: ATOC 4301, ATOC 4302, ATOC 4302L, ATOC 4303, ATOC 4304, ATOC 4305, ATOC 4305L, ATOC 4306, ATOC 4306L, ATOC 4307, ATOC 4307L, ATOC 4308, ATOC 4308L, ATOC 4309, ATOC 4311/4311L, ATOC 4312, ATOC 4313, SOC 1015, REME 2201, ING 1032, MAT 1041, ESP 1022

COREQUISITE: N/A

In this course, students will have the opportunity to attend two different scenarios of clinical practice. One where occupational therapy services are offered and complete a minimum of 630 hours of supervised clinical practice. Another, where students will be assigned to two different scenarios of practice from the following: pediatrics, physical dysfunction, or mental health center. Clinical practice helps the student to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills learned in the didactic courses. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate the processes of occupational therapy and practice the skills of an occupational therapy assistant at an entry level. Students will be supervised by

professionals in the field of Occupational Therapy duly certified and experienced. It is expected, among other things, that students develop professional identity as an occupational therapy practitioner, aligning their judgments and decisions with the American Occupational Therapy Association and the practice standards and code of ethics of occupational therapy. The practice will be divided so that the student can practice in at least two different scenarios of practice according to the availability of facilities and/or student interests. The practices will be divided into two periods of eight weeks per practical scenario.

### **Characteristics of the Occupational Therapist Assistant Student**

The faculty of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program expects students to exhibit the following characteristics:

- A. Aspiration to work with people to help them achieve their full potential
- B. Responsibility for their own learning
- C. Commitment to completing the Program
- D. Values consistent with those of a health care professional
- E. Responsibility for demonstrating the attitudes and behaviors expected from an Occupational Therapy Assistant according to the Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association
- F. Effective interpersonal relationship skills, including sensitivity and tolerance for diversity
- G. Responsibility for communicating with the faculty and administrative personnel in an assertive and timely manner
- H. Responsibility for adhering to institutional rules and policies, as described in the catalog of the institution and the Program's handbooks and manuals
- I. Active participation in the planning and preparation of the clinical experience
- J. Openness to constructive criticism, suggestions, and recommendations from the faculty and fellow students
- K. Respect toward faculty, staff members, and fellow students
- L. Acceptance of responsibility for their own actions
- M. Responsibility for participating in the continuous evaluation process of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.
- N. Possess excellent interpersonal communication skills as well as the ability to easily understand what has happened to a particular patient
- O. Inspire confidence to encourage and convince the patient
- P. Have the ability to explain things clearly, for example: make sure the patient has understood perfectly how to use assistive equipment
- Q. Be patient
- R. Have the ability to empathize and to understand the feelings and thoughts of the patient: for example, when he or she experiences frustration or anxiety
- S. Be dynamic and have observational skills in order to collaborate in the patient's assessment and track his/her progress

- T. Know how to keep records and use computer systems
- U. Have ability to read and write for reports.
- V. Possess teamwork skills

## Academic Standards

### 1) Admissions Criteria and Process

All persons who request admission to the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Be a High School graduate or its equivalent.
2. Complete the College Admission Application and pay the non-refundable application fee
3. Have a High School or transfer Grade Point Average of at least 2.50
4. Attend an interview with faculty members on the stipulated date and pass it with at least 70%

The admission offices will provide specific deadline dates to submit an application to enroll in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. When approximately 50 applications have been submitted, the students who meet the minimal criteria of high school diploma and a minimum graduation GPA of 2.50 will be called for an interview with the program's faculty. The interview is intended to evaluate skills such as writing, communication skills, leadership, and critical analysis, among others. It will be divided into an oral section and a written section. The purpose of the oral section is to evaluate communication, analysis, and interpersonal relations skills; the purpose of the written section is to evaluate the prospect's knowledge about the profession and his/her writing skills. Both the oral and the written sections have a value of 15 points each, for a total of 30 points. Students who have volunteer experiences in the observation of occupational therapy procedures will have 2 extra points, however this is not a requirement to enter the program.

The score obtained in the written section will be added to the score obtained in the oral section at the end of the interview. Then a total score will be calculated to include the academic grade point average of the student and the interview punctuation. The GPA will account for 40% and the interview for 60% of the weight of the total score. For example, if the student has a GPA of 2.80 and the total percentage of the interview was 85% (equivalent to an interview score of 25.5 to 30), his/her total score would be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{GPA} &= 2.80/4.00 \times .40 = 0.28 \\ \text{Interview} &= 85/100 = 0.85 \times 0.60 = 0.51 \\ \text{Total} &= 0.28 + 0.51 = 0.79 \times 100 = 79 \\ &\textbf{The student's final score will be 79.} \end{aligned}$$

Once the process is completed, the 25 students with the highest scores will be chosen. They will be notified via regular mail and/or telephone call. The students will also be summoned to receive a detailed orientation about the Program. In this orientation, the students must read and sign the consent form to participate in the educational activities and experiences of the Program.

## **2) Policy of Satisfactory Academic Progress**

In order to advance effectively in the Program, all enrolled students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.00. All Program technical courses must be approved with at least a "C"; if the student receives a lower grade, he/she must repeat the course. The student will have up to two additional opportunities to repeat the course. To determine the academic progress of the student in the case of repeated courses, the highest grade will be taken into consideration; however, the original grade will remain in the academic record. Clinical practices and laboratories must be approved with at least an 80% score. The grading curve that will be used for this program will be the following:

A – 90-100  
B – 80-99  
C – 70-79  
D – 60-69  
F – 0-59

The grading curve for clinical experiences will vary according to the Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) expectations. For more details regarding satisfactory academic progress, please refer to the Institution's catalog 2009-2012 ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)).

## **3) Attendance and Tardiness Policy**

The student's progress in the Program as well as the quality of his/her educational experiences, depend on class attendance. Attendance to classes in the stipulated schedules and compliance with the laboratory rules established in the manual are mandatory. Absences, tardiness, or leaving the class early may affect the student's performance and that of his/her fellow students, as well as the final grade in the course. Each professor may have specific requirements regarding attendance. Please refer to the syllabus of each course for attendance requirements.

For clinical practices, each absence represents a 10% reduction from the final grade. Please refer to the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Occupational Therapist Assistant Students for more details.

## **4) Competency Assessment**

During the student's progression through the Program, he/she will be evaluated on the assorted skills and competencies that an Occupational Therapist Assistant must master.

The primary methods for the development and evaluation of these skills and competencies are laboratory practices guided and supervised by the professor as well as theoretical and practical exams. In each technical course with a laboratory, the professor will complete a Rubric of Laboratory Skills that will include the skills that the student must master at the end of that particular course. To approve the course satisfactorily, the student must demonstrate proficiency in the different skills. Before engaging in the first clinical experience, students will be assessed by core faculty members in the minimal required skills for this clinical experience.

The students will also be periodically assessed in their professional behavior and the integration of professional values in their activities. The American Occupational Therapy Association has established a set of core values in the practice of occupational therapy that include altruism, equality, freedom, justice, dignity, truth, and prudence. These values will be explained and promoted in the different courses of the Program by the academic and clinical faculties. Rubrics will be used to evaluate the integration of these values at different levels throughout the student's progression in the Program. If the student does not reach the minimum expected levels in the Rubric of Skills or in the Rubric of Professional Values, his/her progress toward clinical practices will be affected. All professors will be responsible for carefully following the established procedures for the use of each of the rubrics and for explaining them to the students.

## **5) Academic Counseling**

In Huertas College we are committed to help our students achieve their goals and objectives and to encourage their development to reach their potential. The Occupational Therapy faculty is also committed to prepare students who demonstrate high standards of ethical, safe, and responsible practice. Consequently, counseling services will be available for OTA students by the program faculty in addition to the mentoring services provided by the Institution. Each student should go through the process of counseling once per semester. The counseling meeting is intended to discuss the next semester's schedule and the student's progress in the Program.

The Program Director will present the available counseling schedule for each semester. Students are responsible for communicating with the Fieldwork Coordinator to reserve their space.

## **6) General Procedures for Retention, Recruitment, and Early Detection of Needs**

One of the main goals of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is to graduate Occupational Therapist Assistants who are committed to offering services of the highest quality. To attain this goal, the recruitment of committed students who are capable of meeting the demands of the Program, and eventually, the demands of the

profession is essential. For the Program, it is also important to offer students the tools that they will need to achieve effective progress throughout its sequence. This will result in keeping a stable enrollment and in achieving a graduation percentage, which meets the expectations of the profession and the needs of the community. For these reasons, in addition to the policies and procedures that the Institution practices for student retention, the Occupational Therapy Associate Degree Program carries out a series of actions whose main purpose is to keep a good retention percentage as well as to ensure that students' progress effectively through the curriculum and meet the expectations of the Program.

The procedures described below are applicable to the Program's students and the Program's faculty will implement them. The Program Director will be in charge of ensuring full compliance with these procedures in collaboration with the Dean of the School of Health.

#### 1. Recruitment:

- a. Each student interested in entering the Program will go through a general orientation and evaluation process before going through the admission process.
- b. The initial evaluation will be carried out by personnel from the Guidance and Counseling Office and will be aimed at evaluating the following:
  - Feasibility of the student being a full-time daytime student
  - Graduation or transfer GPA of 2.50 or above
  - Possibility of the student being able to travel long distances to attend the assigned practice center
  - Up to date immunizations
  - Viability of covering the Program's necessary expenses and financial aids
  - Reasons for wanting to study the profession
- c. Once the student goes through the initial orientation and evaluation, he/she will be summoned for the interview process (please refer to the *Admissions Criteria and Process* section of the manual).
- d. When the students are chosen, they will be summoned to receive orientation regarding the policies and procedures related to classes, laboratories, and clinical practices. Students must sign an informed consent form about their participation in the activities of the Program.

#### 2. Early Detection of Needs

- a. Each student enrolled in the Program must go through the guidance and counseling process once per semester (see section above, *Academic Counseling*).

- b. The Program will offer a tutoring program for concentration courses each semester. Students with academic deficiencies will be referred for tutoring to the Program's faculty. Each professor will be responsible for identifying these deficiencies and for referring the student immediately.
- c. Huertas College has a tutoring program for general education courses, including anatomy and human physiology. The student who has difficulties in any of these courses will also be referred for tutoring.
- d. Each student referred for tutoring related to laboratory skills will be reevaluated and must demonstrate improvement in his/her performance and competency level in order to advance in the program; otherwise the student will not approve the course.
- e. All students will go through a process of formal evaluation of competencies prior to the start of their first clinical experience. This evaluation is meant to verify if students have the skills that are required for clinical practice and to detect pre-existing deficiencies or weaknesses.
- f. The student who does not approve the formal evaluation of competencies will not be able to start the clinical practice at the appointed time, even if he/she has completed the pre-requisite courses. A tutoring plan will be established for this student and upon satisfactorily completing it the student will advance to clinical practice.
- g. Each professor is responsible for maintaining effective communication with students, so if a student incurs in absenteeism without previous notice he/she will be called by the professor of the course to verify his/her status. If the professor is unable to locate the student, the issue will be documented and referred to the Guidance and Counseling Office.
- h. Any student who is having academic, behavior or absenteeism problems will be summoned for counseling with the Program Director or the Clinical Education Coordinator.
- i. The following cases will be referred to the Guidance and Counseling Office once they have received orientation by the faculty but do not demonstrate changes or improvements in their performance:
  - Students with more than 3 consecutive and unjustified absences to a class or laboratory
  - Students with more than 4 random absences to laboratories within a one month period
  - Students who are below the minimum expected GPA at mid-semester
  - Students who have been referred to tutoring and have not complied

- Student with behavior and attitude problems who are not complying with the Program's policies
  - Students with personal problems and situations that are affecting their performance and progress in the Program
  - Any other situation or problem that is identified as a risk to the student
- j. The Program's faculty will always be available to address any situation that may be affecting the student. Students must always approach the Program Director first to notify him/her about situations or problems or to seek his/her advice. If the problem concerns clinical practice situations, students must approach the Clinical Practice Coordinator first, and then the Program Director if necessary.

For specific policies or procedures regarding the evaluation of laboratory competencies and clinical practice requisites, students must refer to the *Policies and Procedures for Laboratories Handbook* and the *Clinical Practice Handbook* respectively. They must also refer to the syllabus of each particular course.

For other retention policies and procedures of Huertas College applicable to all students, please refer to the Student Handbook, available at [www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu).

### **Other Policies and Procedures:**

#### **Student Privacy and Confidentiality:**

The Registrar's Office has the fundamental responsibility of safeguarding student records that contain personal and academic information. Each file will be kept in strict confidentiality in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

In addition to the academic file, the OTA Program will maintain a student file with information regarding academic and clinical performance, medical information, and other information such as the informed consent, and copies of documents required for clinical practices. This file will be kept in a locked file cabinet located in the Program Coordinator's office; the disclosure of any information to other parties will be carried out only upon the student's written authorization.

Additionally, in keeping with this privacy policy, the program will attempt to maintain privacy/confidentiality in the following manner:

- Exams and quizzes will be returned in a manner that does not expose the resulting grade.
- After practical exams and skill checks, the professor must provide immediate feedback with only the student present. When necessary and appropriate, with the student's permission, the professor may provide feedback in front of other students.

- Students must have a private username and password to access their grades electronically. Each student will only have access to his/her grades specifically.
- The OTA program courses require classroom attendance, however online instructional programs, like the Moodle platform, will be used to make program handbooks and specific course documents accessible. For this program, the login process also requires a username and password, which only the student should know.

## Off Campus Activities

In order to provide quality educational experiences, some off-campus activities will be scheduled by faculty of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. Activities are only for educational purposes and can include field trips to Occupational Therapy Facilities to observe specific procedures and to participate in college community activities, among others. For Huertas College, security is a priority. In order to secure an on-campus comparable security level for off-campus educational experiences, students must comply with the Institution's policies and procedures. The following are general policies that will be applied to this kind of activities:

- The student must sign the Responsibility Release Form
- The Institution will provide transportation to the scheduled activities whenever possible.
- In order to minimize risks when students are engaged in off-campus educational experiences, a faculty member will accompany them to all off campus laboratory, field trips, or community activities.
- The faculty member will assess the overall safety of the environment and will remove students if it is found to be unsafe or inappropriate.
- The student's attendance will be taken at the event. Each professor will be responsible for supervising a maximum of ten (10) students.
- For emergencies, the faculty member will follow the emergency protocol established in the Institution's First Aid Protocol for the management of emergencies.
- Students must approach the professor in charge to notify any kind of situation that occurred during the activity.
- The student will be covered by the Institution's insurance.

## **Policy for Dismissal from the Program for Inappropriate Conduct or Dishonesty**

The faculty of the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program and the Institution's personnel expect the students to exhibit honest and disciplined behavior. The Occupational Therapist Assistant Student is expected to observe the Institution's rules of behavior and the ethical standards for Occupational Therapist Assistants. If a member of the academic or clinical faculties identifies inappropriate behavior or dishonest actions in a student, he/she must notify the Program Director (PD) and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) immediately. The professor or instructor must also document the incident in detail.

- If the incident occurred during the clinical practice, the Clinical Instructor (CI) must notify the AFWC who will visit the practice center or ask the student not to attend the practice and then summon the CI and the student to a meeting.
- The PD will meet with the faculty, AFWC, the course's professor, and if necessary, members of the clinical faculty.
- The student will be allowed to present his/her point of view or version of the facts.
- The PD, faculty, and CI will meet to decide if the inappropriate conduct or dishonest action of the student (cheating in a test, stealing an exam, falsification of documents, etc.) represents a conflict for executing the fundamental responsibilities of an Occupational Therapist Assistant Student (OTAS).
- If The PD determines that the inappropriate conduct or dishonest action of the student infringes the rules and regulations of the Institution and the clinical facility and is an obstacle for performing the responsibilities of an OTAS in compliance with ethical standards, the student will be dismissed from the Program.
- If the student wants to appeal this decision, he/she must follow the process stipulated in the Institutional Catalog.
- Refer to the Institutional Catalog for other disciplinary rules and procedures, disciplinary actions, appeal process, and procedures for submitting grievances.

## **Comments and Grievances from Individuals Outside the Institution**

Huertas College is a community college that engages in continuous and systematic evaluations and improvement. For this reason, we are committed to welcome all comments, complaints, suggestions, ideas, and constructive criticism as part of that process. Individuals in the community who do not have a formal affiliation with this institution, including but not limited to, clinical education sites, employers of graduates, and the general public will be able to provide comments according to the following policy:

- Comments must be submitted in writing and signed by the author. Anonymous submissions will not be acknowledged.

- Comments must be submitted to the following:  
**Huertas College**  
**Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program**  
**PO BOX 8429**  
**Caguas, PR 00726**
- Clinical Instructors, Occupational Therapy Supervisors, or others are asked to initially direct complaints to the AFWC. If adequate response is not received within a reasonable period, the complaint should be directed to the Program Director.
- The Program director shall respond to all comments within ten (10) days to further discuss and resolve the issue. If satisfactory resolution is not or cannot be reached, an appeal may be made to the Dean of Academic Services within seven (7) days. The Dean of Academic Services will not become involved until all attempts to resolve the issue with the Program Director have been exhausted, unless the comment is directly related to the performance of the Program director.
- Records of all correspondence will be confidentially maintained by the Program Director for three (3) years. These records will not be open to the public.

## Withdrawal Policy

Students considering withdrawal from the program for any reason whatsoever should discuss this matter with the Program Director. Students must follow the rules established by Huertas College policies, which are detailed in the Institutional Catalog ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)).

## Readmission Policy

A student who interrupts his/her studies for a semester or more and wishes to continue is considered a reentry student. The Program faculty and personnel of the Orientation and Retention Office will evaluate the candidate to determine his /her Satisfactory Academic Progress. A maximum interruption of two years is recommended for this program. The process below must be followed:

- The student must complete the application provided at the Registrar's Office for that purpose and pay the non-refundable reentry fee.
- Personnel of the Orientation and Retention Office will evaluate the student to determine his /her Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- The student must complete a form provided by the program explaining the reasons for the interruption of his/her studies and the justification for readmission to the Program. The form must be submitted to the Program Coordinator.
- The Program's faculty will determine the appropriateness of allowing the student to reenter, taking into consideration the reasons and justification offered by the student, the availability of space, and the student's potential to complete the Program. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

- If the interruption was for a period greater than two years, the student must be audited on previously completed technical courses approved with at least a “B”. This will be subject to the availability of space and to course instructor availability.
- The student reentering the Program will begin in the semester in which he/she did not approve the courses. The student is responsible for maintaining and demonstrating the ability to perform satisfactorily all previously learned skills. The student may have to take some practical exams before reentering the program. The appropriateness of this option will be discussed and determined by the faculty of the Program according to the student's case.

### **Dress Code**

Students are required to attend classes in appropriate attire; casual and comfortable clothing is recommended. For the laboratories, the students must wear a special uniform, which is described in the Laboratory Safety Manual. A uniform conforming to the rules of the practice centers must be used for clinical practice. It is possible a specific uniform will be adopted for the Health School program with each program label. The Institution will provide the student a free uniform; the student will be responsible for acquiring additional uniforms. The student will be notified in advance to allow him/her to obtain the uniform in a timely manner. In general, the following is forbidden:

- Short pants (above the knees)
- Low necklines in women
- Open and loose sandals
- Artificial fingernails
- Jewelry (except for small earrings, wedding or engagement ring, and watch)
- Earrings in men
- Visible body piercings
- Hair must be a normal and natural color (blue, green, pink, or orange hair, among others, will not be allowed)

Students who do not abide by these rules will not be allowed to participate in classes, laboratories, or clinical practice. Persistent infringement of these rules will significantly affect a student's progress and may even result in dismissal from the Program. Please refer to the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Occupational Therapist Assistant Students and to the Laboratory Safety Manual for more details.

**The information contained in this manual applies exclusively to the Associate Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. For other policies and procedures, please refer to the Student Handbook, to the Institutional Catalog 2013-2018, or seek assistance from the Program Director, the Dean of the Health School, or any of our students' services offices.**

