CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MAJORS

SKILLS & ABILITIES OF THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MAJOR

Skills

• Active Listening
• Patient Consultation
• Critical Thinking /Analytical Skills (Data)
• Develop Interpersonal Relationships
• Problem Sensitivity– quickly identifies when things are not right
• Problem Solving– creates the appropriate therapy program based on the patient’s needs
• Creativity– motivates patients who are initially resistant to therapy
• Communication– effectively explains the injury and therapeutic process to patients
• Documentation– keeps detailed records of patients’ injuries and the rehabilitation progress
• Social Perceptiveness– aware of others’ reactions and the reasoning behind them
• Service Orientation– actively looks for ways to help people

Ability (Knowledge)

• Therapy and Counseling
• Customer and Personal Service
• Psychology– human behavior /performance and individual difference in ability/personality
• Education and Training– effective at teaching therapeutic exercises to patients
• Sociology and Anthropology– aware of group behavior and societal influences
• Medicine– understands proper techniques needed to diagnose and treat injuries
• Administration and Management– strategic communicator and leadership
• Biology– competent about body tissues, cells and their functions and interactions with one another

POTENTIAL CAREERS

Field-Based

• Occupational Therapist
• Registered Occupational Therapist
• Staff Therapist
• Assistive Technology Trainer
• Industrial Rehabilitation Consultant

Related Occupations

• Social and Human Service Assistant
• Director of Religious Activities
• Director of Education
• Physical Therapist
• Athletic Trainer
• Recreational Therapist
EARNINGS
Median annual wages of occupational therapists were $72,320 in May 2010. The middle 50 percent earned between $60,000 and $86,930. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $48,920, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $102,520. Median annual wages in the industries employing the largest numbers of occupational therapists were:

- General Medical and Surgical Hospitals- $73,160
- Offices of Other Health Practitioners- $74,910
- Elementary and Secondary Schools- $65,000
- Nursing Care Facilities- $77,700
- Home Health Care Facilities- $83,920

ACTIVITIES ON THE JOB
- Plan, organize and implement occupational therapy programs to rehabilitate those impaired by illness, injury or developmental problems.
- Evaluate patients’ physical and mental abilities while analyzing data to determine realistic rehabilitation goals for patients.
- Select appropriate activities to assist patients in developing work and life-management skills.
- Carefully evaluate and document patients’ progress.
- Train caregivers how to provide for the needs of a patient during and after therapy.
- Recommend changes in the patients’ work or living environments, consistent with their needs and capabilities.
- Develop and participate in discussions to promote client health, alleviate stress, and prevent physical/mental disability.
- Consult with the rehabilitation team when coordinating occupational therapy with other therapeutic activities.
- Develop programs and activities to help patients learn work and school skills while adjusting to their limitations.
- Maintain the athletic training area and ordering necessary supplies.
- Develop good working relationships with players, coaches, physicians, and school administrators.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) www.aota.org
- Ohio Occupational Therapy Professional Association www.oota.org
- Xavier University Occupational Therapy Graduate Program www.xavier.edu/ot/
- Advance (Publication) for Occupational Therapy Practitioners, www.advanceforot.com

Source: Occupational Outlook Handbook