

**COORDINATING COMMISSION  
FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

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**PROPOSAL FOR NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

Form 92-40

Institution Submitting Proposal:	<b>Southeast Community College</b>
Title of Program:	<b>Occupational Therapy Assistant</b>
CIP Code:	<b>51.0803</b>
Organizational Unit in which Program will be located:	<b>Health Sciences</b>
Name of Contact Person in the event additional Information is needed:	<b>Bruce Exstrom, Acting Vice President of Instruction</b>
Telephone:	<b>402-323-3389</b>
Degree, Diploma, or Certificate to be offered:	<b>Associate of Applied Science degree</b>
Proposal date to initiate program:	<b>August 2021</b>
List the Location(s) where this program will be offered:	<b>Lincoln campus</b>
If the program has a projected ending date, please so indicate:	N/A
Date Approved by Governing Board:	

(Attach all documents related to this proposal upon which the Governing Board made its decision to approve the proposal.)

Chief Executive Officer's or other Authorized Officer's signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **I. Purpose and Description of the Proposed Program**

Southeast Community College (SCC) proposes to add a two-year Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program which will award an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree. This accredited program will be offered on the Lincoln campus beginning August 2021.

The program will train students to work as occupational therapy assistants (OTAs). Occupational therapy is the therapeutic use of customized interventions to improve a person's ability to perform daily activities, including helping people with disabilities participate in school or work activities, helping those recovering from injury to regain skills, and supporting older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes.<sup>1</sup> Under Nebraska statute, OTAs may assist occupational therapists in the development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, direct activity programs, and document the progress of treatments.<sup>2</sup> OTAs work in a variety of settings, including home care, long term care facilities, schools, rehabilitation centers, acute care medical facilities, and community health.

Occupational therapy assistant is designated an H3 (high skill, high wage, high demand) job in Nebraska, with a statewide median salary of \$57,980 and a median salary of \$70,650 in the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area.<sup>3</sup>

The OTA program will be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), an Associated Advisory Council of the Executive Board of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). ACOTE is recognized as the accrediting agency for occupational therapy education by both the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

This program will be offered in face-to-face and hybrid/online options to allow students to have the choice of on-site or remote attendance for the didactic portions of the program. This also increases the ability of students in rural areas of the service area to do course work online and lab/clinical hours within a local facility or short visits to the lab setting on campus.

The coursework is designed to be completed in two years (including summer terms). As part of their program, occupational therapy assistant students must complete at least 16 weeks of fieldwork to gain hands-on work experience.

Graduates of the program will be eligible to take the Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) credentialing exam and apply for licensure with the state of Nebraska.

Below is an outline of the curriculum for the AAS in Occupational Therapy Assistant. This curriculum is based on the accreditation standards of ACOTE (see Appendix). Full syllabi will be developed once a program director is hired. ACOTE requires that a qualified program director be hired 8 to 10 months prior to admitting students in order to develop the program.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Documents/Occupational%20Therapy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://h3.ne.gov/searchResultsDetail.xhtml?soccode=312011>

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>Course Overview/Description</b>
<b>PREPARATORY COURSES – 20 credits</b>		
CPR and First Aid	Non-Credit	Current Non-credit Course
Anatomy with Lab	4	Current General Education Course
Physiology with Lab	4	Current General Education Course
English Composition	3	Current General Education Course
Public Speaking	3	Current General Education Course
Introduction to Psychology	3	Current General Education Course
Human Development	3	Current Credit Course
<b>PROGRAM COURSES – 41 credits</b>		
Principles of Occupational Therapy	3	This course is an introduction to occupational therapy including its historical development and philosophy. Emphasis on the roles of the occupational therapy assistant. Topics include areas of occupation; occupational therapy personnel; current health care environment; and moral, legal, and ethical issues.
Pathophysiology for the OTA	3	This course is the study of the pathology and general health management of diseases and injuries across the lifespan encountered in occupational therapy treatment settings. Topics include etiology, symptoms, and the physical and psychological reactions to diseases and injuries.
Therapeutic Interventions 1	4	This course provides the concepts, techniques and assessments leading to proficiency in skills and activities used in treatment interventions in occupational therapy (OT). Emphasizes the Occupational Therapy Assistant's role in the OT process.
Occupational Performance of the Pediatric/Adolescent	3	This course enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts related to pediatrics and adolescents.
Clinical Level 1	3	This clinical course provides experiences that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts in the clinical setting.
Therapeutic Interventions 2	4	This course provides advanced techniques and applications used in traditional and non-traditional practice settings.
Occupational Performance of the Adult	3	This course enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts related to adults.
Clinical Level 2	3	This clinical course provides experiences that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts in the clinical setting advancing from clinical level 1.

Specialty Interventions	4	This course provides a study of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology as it relates to neurological conditions commonly treated in occupational therapy. Emphasis on neuro-based occupational therapy intervention techniques. Additional specialty topics are covered including the promotion of mental health and wellness, theory and intervention strategies to enhance occupational performance.
Occupational Performance Elderly	3	This course provides students the knowledge of the occupational performance of elders. Includes frames of reference, evaluation tools and techniques, and intervention strategies.
Healthcare Management for the OTA	2	This course explores the roles of the occupational therapy assistant in health care delivery. Topics include documentation, reimbursement, credentialing, ethical standards, health care team role delineation, and management.
Clinical Level 3	6	This clinical course provides experiences that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts in the clinical setting advancing from clinical level 2.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>	

## II. Review Criteria

### A. Centrality to Role and Mission

Southeast Community College's mission statement is as follows:

*The mission of Southeast Community College is to empower and transform the diverse learners and communities of southeast Nebraska through accessible lifelong educational opportunities. The College provides dynamic and responsive pathways to career and technical, academic transfer, and continuing education programs that contribute to personal, community, and workforce development.*

The addition of the AAS in Occupational Therapy Assistant fits well with SCC's mission to provide accessible and responsive pathways to career and technical education that contribute to personal, community, and workforce development.

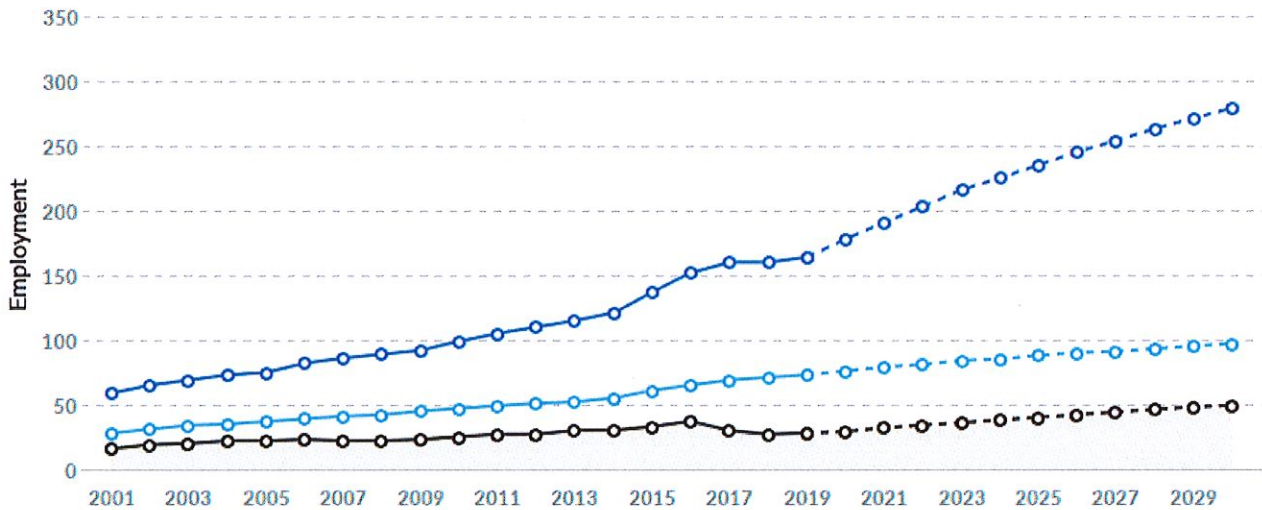
### B. Evidence of Need and Demand

As healthcare moves to expand into the home health setting this profession will be vital in supporting patients both proactively to prevent injury or disability and post-injury to provide treatment and support in rehab and recovery. Acute medical centers are discharging patients more quickly to either home or a rehabilitation center where OTAs are needed to help patients develop skills needed for daily living and

working as they reintegrate into to their home and work environments. Occupational therapy also plays a role in holding down healthcare costs by reducing the need for hospital and nursing home admissions.<sup>4</sup>

Nationally the U.S. Department of Labor has designated Occupational Therapy Assistant as a “bright outlook occupation” with projected faster than average growth over the next decade.<sup>5</sup> As shown in Figure 1, OTA jobs are expected to grow by 65% in Nebraska and by 73% in SCC’s 15-county area.<sup>6</sup> Figure 2 includes replacement jobs in addition to new jobs, showing a projected 60 openings in SCC’s service area and 344 openings Nebraska over the coming decade.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1 – Occupational Change – Occupational Therapy Assistants (SOC31-2011)



Region	2019 Jobs	2029 Jobs	Change	% Change
● SCC Service Area	28	48	20	72.6%
● Nebraska	164	271	107	64.9%
● National Average	73	95	22	30.9%

\*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Occupational Therapy Assistants and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Professionals/HCR.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.onetonline.org/help/bright/31-2011.00>

<sup>6</sup> Emsi data – [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

<sup>7</sup> Emsi data – [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)

Figure 2

Region	2019 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2019 - 2029 % Change	2019 - 2029 Change	2019 - 2029 Replacement Jobs	2019 - 2029 Openings
SCC 15-county Service Area	28	48	71%	20	40	60
Nebraska	164	271	65%	107	235	344

There is demand for a degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant in SCC’s service area. Based on information from Union College, they received 98 applications for the 24 spots available in first cohort of their OTA program in Fall 2019.

### C. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

#### 1. Faculty and Staff Resources

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program will require the addition of one faculty member who will also serve as program director. As enrollment grows, the College will rely on adjunct faculty to teach some program courses. The College does not anticipate needing to hire another full-time faculty member in the first five years of the program. Health Sciences Division will provide support staffing and administrative oversight.

The Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) requires that a program director be hired approximately 8 to 10 months in advance of starting program delivery in order to develop and put in place all curriculum and planning prior to accreditation.

#### 2. Physical Facilities and Instructional Equipment

The program will be offered in the new Health Sciences building located on the 8800 ‘O’ Street campus of Southeast Community College in Lincoln. During the design stage of the building process, space was allocated for the possible addition of the OTA program. The space is located near the Physical Therapist Assistant program, which will allow for some sharing of equipment and lab space. The program will need an equipment budget of approximately \$25,000 as the program begins; this amount is included below in the 2021-2022 projected budget.

#### 3. Instructional and Informational Resources

Library and technology resources are already in place on all SCC campuses to support the programs currently being offered, including all health science programs. Sufficient library staff, library resources and information technology resources are in place to support the addition of the OTA program. Online learners and those connecting through the learning centers have access to all SCC resources including digital library support and access to the SCC intranet.

#### 4. Budget Projections

As stated above, the OTA program will begin with one full-time faculty member and will be housed in the new Health Sciences building on the Lincoln campus. The tuition rates are projections based on past



trends as no rates beyond the first year have been set by the SCC Board of Governors. Salary increases are projections based on past trends of a 3% total compensation increase.

#### **D. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication**

There is no unnecessary duplication. The proposed Occupational Therapy Assistant program curriculum is distinct from SCC's other Health Sciences programs. Additionally, the only OTA programs currently offered in Nebraska are at Central Community College in Grand Island and Union College, a private Christian college in Lincoln. SCC's proposed OTA program would provide an affordable public option within SCC's 15-county service area and eastern Nebraska more broadly.

#### **E. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education**

The proposed addition of an Associate of Applied Science degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant is consistent with Nebraska's Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education. Specifically, it contributes to the following goals:

##### **Workforce Development**

The Comprehensive Statewide plan directs institutions to "provide specialized certification programs in professional, technical, and vocational fields that address regional and state needs" (pg. 3-3). Given the growing demand for Occupational Therapy Assistants detailed above, SCC's proposed AAS program in Occupational Therapy Assistant is consistent with this goal. Additionally, OTA is an H3 occupation that will contribute to the state's workforce and economic development.

##### **Adequate Health Care**

Another goal of the Statewide Comprehensive Plan is that "institutions with a role in health-care education identify and respond to the changing health-care needs of Nebraska's citizens" (pg. 3-6). The aging of Nebraska's population over the coming decades, as well as shifts to less costly forms of outpatient health care delivery, will increase the need for occupational therapy assistants in the Lincoln metropolitan area as well as the rural areas of the state. SCC's proposed AAS program in Occupational Therapy Assistant will help meet this goal.