

### *What is OTCAS?*

OTCAS is a centralized application service supported by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and Liaison. It simplifies both the application process to graduate school for prospective students, and the review and admissions process for programs. Programs can review and evaluate applicants online, in real-time. Programs can also effectively manage communications with applicants. OTCAS allows for automated reports to be generated, based upon programs' and school's unique review criteria.

### *How does OTCAS benefit students?*

- OTCAS streamlines the application process and reduces duplicative efforts by providing a standardized online interface that allows students to use a single application to apply to multiple programs.
- Official transcripts are requested only once by students for programs participating in OTCAS, saving students time and money.
- Program-specific admission requirements and information requests are tracked in one online location offering students real-time status updates on all application materials.
- Students receive dedicated customer service for all OTCAS inquiries throughout the application process.

### *How does OTCAS benefit programs?*

- Time and effort dedicated to administrative tasks (e.g., opening mail, verifying transcripts and test scores, calculating GPAs, coordinating reviews, etc.) is reduced by the single online interface offered by OTCAS.
- Participating departments gain exposure to a broader range of applicants through a searchable directory in OTCAS.
- Robust communications tools allow programs to send targeted communications to prospective applicants throughout the process.
- Flexible and customizable analytic tools enable departments to compare data and rank applications on various self-determined criteria.
- OTCAS provides a user friendly and modern interface adaptable to program's existing application review workflow.

### *How much does it cost?*

Programs do not pay any fees to participate in OTCAS. Students create an account and pay \$140 to receive one application designation and then pay \$60 for each additional application designation they choose to apply to.

### *How is this different from the process we have now?*

Participating departments gain access to a suite of powerful analytics through OTCAS. Reviewers and staff members are able gain efficiencies, viewing an application once created by a prospective student. Throughout the application process, they can send emails to prospective students, invite selected applicants to interview, or send reminders to applicants who have not completed their submission. Unlike traditional processes, transcripts, recommendation letters, and supplemental materials are all contained securely within the online platform. Customized settings ensure that only those individuals involved in the review process have access to the relevant information and at the appropriate phase in your workflow.

### *Can we keep our own review process?*

Yes, the flexibility of OTCAS allows individual programs to maintain their unique review process within the online platform. Common information from students is collected in a root application and each participating department has

a unique space within OTCAS where applicants can submit any additional information requested by that particular program. Programs will only see the root application and their own additional information when reviewing an applicant's materials.

### ***Is it possible for our program to accept applications outside of OTCAS?***

A program may elect to use OTCAS for as many of its graduate programs as it chooses. As one of the benefits of participation, students who may not be aware of your program can search for programs by degree type, state, and other criteria. Other departments utilizing CAS products for other professions and disciplines (e.g., nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, etc.) have noted increases to applicant pools once enrolled in the program. Thus, it is to your advantage to direct all of your department's applications through OTCAS in order to reach a broader spectrum of applicants.

### ***Why is AOTA advocating for a centralized graduate study application process?***

OTCAS will span the breadth of graduate education across occupational therapy permitting the AOTA and organized occupational therapy to access data necessary to generate studies and analyses of the nascent disciplinary workforce, demographics of the graduate application pool, and allow AOTA to capture changes in areas of study that graduate level students pursue. In turn, these data will be useful to programs' and departments' strategic planning efforts, and benefit the discipline and profession with greater understanding of its workforce.

### ***What programs are eligible to participate in OTCAS?***

Departments participating in OTCAS must offer graduate degrees in occupational therapy and are housed within a regionally accredited institution and holds state authorization to offer the degree programs. Programs with accreditation candidacy status are also eligible to participate in the service, given an AOTA specific notification is included in their program home page.

### ***Our department does not have any AOTA-accredited programs. Are we able to participate in OTCAS?***

Yes, provided the eligibility criteria described above are met. OTCAS is designed for graduate programs in occupational therapy from across the discipline and is a service for both students and departments.

### ***Will I still be able to download complete applications from prospective students?***

Yes. OTCAS permits downloads of complete student applications in PDF format. This is an option for departments who wish to save documents for internal workflow needs or institutional requirements.

### ***Does OTCAS help faculty and students with submitting recommendation letters?***

OTCAS participating departments will have the option to accept a common recommendation form for faculty to evaluate a prospective student's potential for graduate study. Students will only need to request that their evaluators complete the common recommendation form once and upload it to OTCAS. The process is entirely online, streamlining the experience for evaluators.

### ***How do data from OTCAS integrate with my school's current student information system?***

All ERP and SIS systems tailored for institutions of higher education have the ability to import external applicant data via one or more configurable tools native to each system. OTCAS provides simple- to-configure exports of any subset of applicant data an ERP/SIS system needs, filtered by any criteria schools may choose to apply. These exports are available in numerous formats to simplify the import process for the school. The most common systems used by CAS schools include Banner, Datatel, PeopleSoft, and Jenzabar, among others.