

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Occupational Therapy Assistant education began in Tennessee in 1967 in Rutherford County as a certificate program and was originally administrated by the Rutherford County Board of Education. In the early 1970's, the Tennessee State Department of Education took over management of the program, placing it under the direction of the Vocational Education Division. 1978 brought about more changes for OTA education when the program was moved to its current home at NSCC.

In 1979, the American Occupational Therapy Association accreditation committee (ACOTE) recommended that the OTA program transition from a certificate program to a two-year Associates Degree program. In 1984, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Regents agreed with that recommendation. The AAS degree program admitted its first students in the fall of 1985; the certificate program graduated its last participant in 1987. The certificate graduates were not forgotten however, the program continued to provide bridge courses for interested certificate students so that they could earn the AAS degree. To this day the NSCC OTA Program continues to work with its alumni through continuing education opportunities and NBCOT exam review courses.

In 2001, the Program was visited by ACOTE and accreditation was granted for the third time. 2002 saw the college change from a "Technical Institute" to a "Community College". The Program was reaccredited in 2006, and was awarded a ten year reaccreditation, the highest level of reaccreditation possible. Accreditation status was affirmed at the five year interim report in 2020.

The future will hold many more exciting opportunities and challenges. We are looking forward to the future with high hopes and great expectations.