

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

### AGS General Studies Pre-Allied Health

#### 1. Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants are in increasingly high demand. In fact, this profession tops the allied health careers list when it comes to job security thanks to a predicted growth of 43% by 2024.

COTAs are medical professionals who work with patients who are recovering from an injury or disease, as well as disabled patients.

They often work in hospitals or outpatient rehab centers with a focus on helping recover or teach patients skills needed to function in daily life.

COTAs work hand-in-hand with their supervising Occupational Therapist. They are most often responsible for monitoring and sometimes executing treatment plans that have been created by the OT.

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#### 2. Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA)

Another one of the fastest growing top allied health careers is as a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA). This role is predicted to see a job growth of 40% in the next eight years.

Working with patients who are recovering from an injury, Physical Therapy Assistants help patients learn how to use functional aides and perform exercises, as well as providing education about aftercare.

These professionals can work in a wide variety of environments, anywhere from hospitals to home health care services and everywhere in between.

PTAs work directly with a Physical Therapist.

Their role is to implement recovery plans outlined by the PT. In addition to this, PTAs also document patient progress for PTs to review. Since the introduction of software and [physical therapy mobile apps](#), this part of the PTA job has become easier for both the professional and the patient.

An associate's degree from an accredited program and a state license or certification are required to become a PTA. PTAs must also complete a significant amount of on the job training while earning their degree.

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### **3. Speech Language Pathologists**

The Speech Language Pathology field is projected to grow by over 21% in the next decade. With a wide variety of professional paths, SLPs can work everywhere from private healthcare offices to the public school system.

Those seeking an SLP career path need a master's degree in speech pathology from an accredited program, as well as a state license.

Speech Language Pathologists work closely with patients who have communication and swallowing disorders. They evaluate, diagnose and treat such patients.

If you enjoy working with children, this is a great field for you. Many SLPs work with children; there is also a large opportunity in the field of stroke recovery.

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### **4. EMTs and Paramedics**

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics are first responders who are responsible for providing emergency care to sick and injured people.

These two careers are highly mobile—working in ambulances or helicopter teams—and usually, have to operate under extremely stressful circumstances.

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the demand for EMTs and Paramedics will increase by 24 percent over the next eight years. As the population grows, so do our towns and cities; with that growth comes a need for these two important emergency service roles.

Besides normal population increases, this much higher than average growth is not only due to the aging population and increase in chronically ill people, but will also be driven by natural disasters and acts of violence.

To become an EMT or Paramedic, you need to complete a one- or two-year postsecondary program in emergency medical technology. In many states, Paramedics need an associate's degree.

These professionals earn approximately \$31,980 annually.

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## 5. Medical Records and Health Information Technicians

These professionals are responsible for recording and managing health data about patients both for the healthcare facility and for insurance purposes.

Medical Records and Health Information Techs work in specific classification systems. A new system called ICD-10, was adopted this year. As a result, there will be an ongoing demand for health information technicians who are fluent in this system and can teach other personnel how to use it.

In addition, with the increased use of wearable technology in treatment, there will be an enormous increase in the amount of data available about each patient. All of this data will need to be stored and managed, too.

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) predicts a job growth of 15 percent by 2024, which is much higher than average.

To become a Health Information Technician, you need to earn a postsecondary certificate or in some states, an associate's degree.

The average yearly salary is \$37,110.

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## 6. Medical Assistants

Medical Assistants work in hospitals, clinics, physician's offices, and other healthcare facilities where they perform clinical and administrative tasks.

Some of their duties include recording a patient's personal information and medical histories, taking vital signs, drawing blood for blood tests, administering vaccinations, and assisting physicians with medical procedures.

You can become a Medical Assistant either by completing a postsecondary education program or through on the job training.

Due to the increasing demand for preventative healthcare, the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects a job growth of 23 percent by 2024.

Medical Assistants typically earn around \$30,590 per year.

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## 7. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers operate medical imaging equipment to create images of parts of patients' bodies or to conduct medical tests.

These images are used by physicians, surgeons, and physiotherapists to diagnose conditions and determine treatment plans.

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the job growth for this profession is 24 percent, which is much faster than average.

If you're interested in this profession, you'll need an associate's degree or postsecondary certificate. In most states, you'll also need professional certification.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers earn around \$63,630 per year.

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## 8. Radiation Therapists

Radiation Therapists are responsible for treating cancer and other diseases by administering radiation therapy locally to patients' bodies.

They usually work in hospitals or clinics.

In most states, an associate's or bachelor's degree is required, along with licensing or certification.

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) predicts a job growth of 14 percent for Radiation Therapists. The annual salary is around \$80,220 per year.

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## 9. Audiologists

You may be surprised to learn that audiologist is one of the top allied health careers but it's actually third on the list for growth! With a projected increase of 29%, audiologists are in high demand.

This profession focuses on patients suffering from ear problems. Audiologists aid patients suffering from:

- hearing issues
- balance problems

- and other conditions in the area of the ear.

With a focus on diagnosing and treating patients with ear problems, their duties include prescribing treatment plans, counseling patients in need of assistive technology, and prescribing hearing aids.

Audiologists can find work in many facilities. This profession is the only one on the list that has the opportunity to work in educational institutions. Audiologists often work in personal care stores, specialists offices, and even hospitals.

You will need to complete a four-year doctorate in audiology from an accredited program and obtain a state license to become an Audiologist.