

**HAWAI'I  
PACIFIC  
UNIVERSITY**

# Clinician to Academician: A Beginner's Guide

Session 82

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**SCU**  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY  
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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## Our Experiences

*Dr. Buford*

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*Dr. Sadek*

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## Objectives

1. Identify common challenges associated with making the switch from OT clinician to OT academician.
2. Explore avenues to identify if academia is the right fit for you.
3. Describe factors that often define the transition from clinical faculty member to a teaching faculty member.
4. Prepare for the application and interview processes with practical strategies.
5. Examine the onboarding process as it relates to mentorship and scholarship.

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## Teaching Poll

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## Numbers of Programs in the Accreditation Process:

Program Status	OTD	OTM	OTA-B	OTA-A	Total
Accredited	82	166*	1	221**	470
Candidate or Preaccreditation	71	12	6	8	97
Applicant	59	21	12	13	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>672</b>

\*Of the total, 34 accredited master's degree programs are transitioning to the doctoral degree level.

\*\*Of the total, 3 accredited associate degree programs are transitioning to the baccalaureate degree level.

Retrieved from <https://acoteonline.org/all-schools/>

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## Career Change: Common Challenges

- Self-esteem
- Understanding best practices for dissemination
- Undertaking a role change
- Workload
- Not feeling equipped
- Performance driven around service and scholarship
- Other ideas?

(Sparks-Keeney & Jirikowic, 2020)

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## Benefits of a Mentor

- Can guide and encourage you:
  - Skills
  - Knowledge
  - Pedagogy
  - All of which help you teach effectively



(Wakely, 2021)

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## Not sure if Academia is for you, try...

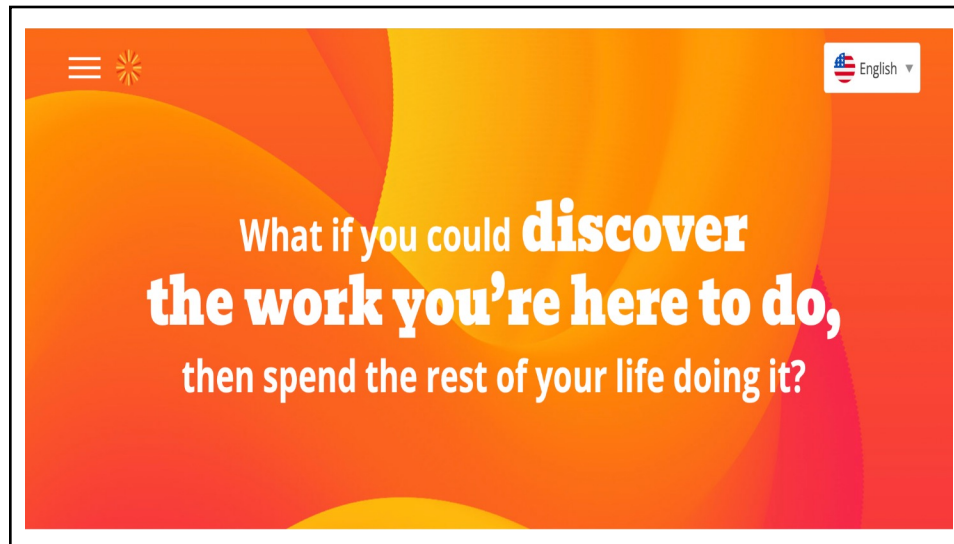
- Guest lectures at OTA or OTD programs
- Give an in service at your work
- Fieldwork educator
- Capstone site mentor
- Community talk
- Conference presentation
- Adjunct a course
  - Online or in person

(Crist, 1999)

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## Bringing the Clinic to the Classroom

- Role of clinical faculty
  - Less emphasis on teaching, scholarship, and service
- Explore new teaching role
- Try teaching at:
  - The community level
  - Other institutions
  - Student bodies
- Consider your rank as clinical faculty as an asset to your rank and promotion journey

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## Application Process: Where do I Begin?

- Look up existing programs on ACOTE website
- Higher Ed Jobs
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Inside Higher Ed Jobs
- Indeed
- OTAC (or your state association) Career Center
- AOTA Career Center
- LinkedIn
- Colleagues

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## Occupational Self-Reflection

- Why do you want to go into academia?
- Is it due to clinical burnout?
- Is it from a desire to teach?
- What type of program do you want to teach in?
  - OTA or OTD
  - Online/hybrid or Campus based



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## Pros and Cons: New Programs

### Pros:

- Building from the ground up
- Innovation
- Creativity
- **Accreditation nuts and bolts**
- Building community partnerships
- **Team building and rapport**
- **Faculty and student recruitment**

### Cons:

- Learning curve
- Pressure for admissions
- First time for everything
- Multiple roles, multiple meetings
- **Institutional knowledge of OT Practice**
- Unexpected budget changes
- Faculty handbook revisions

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## Pros and Cons: Established Programs

### Pros:

- No need to reinvent the wheel
- Program has established presence
- Can learn from existing faculty
- Policies and procedures already in place
- Accreditation often already in place/motion
  - Bulk of leg work done
- More role clarity

### Cons:

- Less say in courses taught
- Team integration
- Less opportunity for adaptation
- Less involvement with prospective students
- More students, less rapport
- Decreased accreditation process knowledge

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## Hybrid versus In Person Programs

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## Preparing to Apply

- Cover letter
- Updated curriculum vitae
- Teaching philosophy
- Faith statement (depending on institution)
- Diversity, equity, inclusion statement (depending on institution)
- Proofread at least 3 times
- Make connections between your interests, experiences, expertise and the program's mission, vision, and values
  - It needs to be clear why you and why them

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## Cover Letter Template

Title of Position  
Institution name  
Address

Date

Dear Selection Committee Members,

Introduction:

It is with pleasure that I submit this application for the position of [title] at [Institute]. I have been a licensed Occupational Therapist for...[years]. My clinical expertise [list of certifications etc] make me well qualified to meet your department/program's desired qualifications.

Body:

In the body discuss what you are passionate about...

Discuss roles that demonstrate your expertise...

Highlight any teaching, guest lecturing, community education etc that you've done...

Areas you've gained experience in...

Next, discuss what interests you and what you look forward to being involved in or contributing to at this particular institution...

For example, I look forward to being involved in...

Having experience in [x] I will be able to thoughtfully contribute to [y]...

Closing paragraph:

Reiterate your interest in the position and tie it all together with your cumulative experiences educationally and professionally...

Advocate for yourself by saying something such as: I believe I have much to offer the position of [x] as it relates to [y and z]. I look forward to hearing from you and discussing this opportunity in greater detail.

Sign off with your name and credentials

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## Group Practice on Mission, Vision, and Values

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### Interview Process

- Initial interview with program director and/or search committee
- Second interview with search committee
  - Teaching presentation
  - Showcase research (if applicable)
- Third interview with upper administration
  - Examples: President, Dean, Provost
- Always have your own set of questions



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## Questions to Ask the Search Committee

- What mentorship is available given I am new to academia? Are there programs on campus that are geared toward assisting new teaching faculty in course development? Is there a center for teaching and learning?
- What are the faculty load expectations around teaching, service, and scholarship? And what courses would I most likely teach? (Note: this is called the three-legged stool, and is often carved out in percentages or teaching credits.)
- As a new faculty member, is there a reduced course load for my first year of teaching?
- How much input do faculty have over the courses they teach?
- Can you tell me about student resources, such as the counseling center, student affairs, the disability office, OTs and OTAs on site, and the writing center?
- How do you manage and address burnout?
- [To current faculty] What do you find are the institution's and department's greatest strengths? What are the biggest challenges?
- What are the expectations of my role as it relates to fieldwork and capstone experiences?
- Are there opportunities for me to continue clinical practice in some capacity—even while serving as teaching faculty?
- Are there opportunities for collaboration with other schools and programs within the institution and in the community?
- Are there opportunities for interprofessional education?

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## Questions to Ask Human Resources:

- What is your onboarding process?
- Is this a tenure track position or contract position? How long would my contract term be? (Note: Ask this if it is not made clear in the Human Resources documents).
- Can you provide details regarding the performance review process?
- How does the institution support professional development, continuing education, licensure, and professional membership activities?
- Does your university offer sabbatical? If so, how often are they granted?
- What types of research funds are available for faculty?
- What library resources are available to faculty and students?
- What will my office space entail? Is it a shared or individual office? May I tour the campus during the interview process and see what the office space looks like?
- What is your institution's technology package? (e.g., laptop, external monitors, webcam, external mouse, headset).
- Can you provide details about time off, holidays, and breaks?

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## Think, Pair, Share: Sample Interview Questions

- What are three things your former team would say about you?
- How might you help students who are struggling in your class?
- Can you share a time where you had conflict with a colleague or student and how you went about resolving it?
- Can you share about your current or upcoming scholarship projects?
- What is your leadership style?
- Describe is your teaching philosophy
- What makes you unique for this position?
- What are your personal values?

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## Types of Scholarship: Boyer's Model

- Scholarship of Discovery
- Scholarship of Integration
- Scholarship of Application
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning



(Nibert, 2001)

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## Learning Styles & The Importance of Critical Self- Reflection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=855Now8h5Rs>

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## What does service look like?

- Ask about percent of service in the “three legged stool”
- Department level
- University level
- Community level
- Professional associations/organizations



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## Settling into Your Role

- Familiarize yourself with the institution’s learning management system.
- Build relationships inside and outside of your department.
- Carve out time on your calendar for scholarship and professional development.
- Join only committees and member interest groups that align with your professional goals.

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## Settling into Your Role

- Attend campus events and mixers.
- Make time for self-care.
- Engage in reflective practice.
- Be open and receptive to feedback as an opportunity for growth.
- Be patient with yourself, as it takes years to develop your craft of teaching.

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## Summary & Takeaways

- Engage in reflective practice on your why for teaching
- Get practice and experience in teaching related activities
- Collaborate with mentors
- Update your CV
- Update LinkedIn
- Network as often as possible
- Research institutions with openings
- Start drafting teaching philosophy
- Take time to prepare for interviews

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## Resources

- ACOTE: <https://acoteonline.org/all-schools/>
- AOTA Clinician to Educator Online Course Series: [https://myaota.aota.org/shop\\_aota/product/OL5100K](https://myaota.aota.org/shop_aota/product/OL5100K)
- AOTA Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Program: <https://www.aota.org/education/scholarship-of-teaching-and-learning>
- AOTA Academic Education Special Interest Section: New Educator Mentorship Program (AESIS NEMP): <https://www.aota.org/community/special-interest-sections/academic-education>

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## Thank You

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