

PREOCCUPATIONAL THERAPY INFORMATION SUMMARY

Academic Preparation

Your performance in college is the best indicator of your performance in an OT program. As such, plan to take a rigorous, yet balanced course load which allows you to demonstrate both your proficiency in science and balance of academic interests. Academic preparation for an OT program requires a bachelor's degree and completion of a set of prerequisite classes that vary from school to school. Common classes are listed on the last page of this summary.

Occupational Therapy Preparation

Demonstration of OT Traits & Academic Preparation

Maturity & Professionalism

OTs work with clients from a variety of backgrounds. It is important to demonstrate you can maturely interact with all clients with good interpersonal and communication skills. Demonstration of strong work ethic through various activities will show your professionalism as a future healthcare professional.

Creativity & Flexible Thinking

One of the OT's roles is to come up with a solution for clients who lost the ability to do things they used to do. It is important to have flexible thinking and come up with creative solutions. Try new activities or challenge yourself to demonstrate this ability!

Observing and Clinical Experience with Occupational Therapists

This should be one of your first experiences as a preOT student. Observing Licensed Occupational Therapists in action, working in different environments will help you understand the profession. Shadowing will also help you get to know OTs. This is important, as many OT programs require at least one recommendation letter from an OT. Many students find shadowing opportunities through volunteer experiences at medical facilities. Most students observe an OT long enough to get a strong recommendation letter.

Extracurricular Activities

Many OT programs also encourage students to engage in **service to their community** and have **leadership** experiences prior to their application to OT programs. Want to find activities? Check out:

<https://www.umsl.edu/studentinvolvement/service/index.html>

Things to Remember

- Make sure you have contact information for supervisors and health professionals you shadow or work with, in case you need to have them write recommendation letters. Even if you discontinue an activity, try to keep an open relationship with them.
- Keep a record of all hours of service and experiences. Writing your reflections in a journal will be helpful when you write a personal statement.

• APPLICATION PROCESS

Your application process begins in spring or summer at the end of your junior year, if you have completed the necessary requirements. Most OT programs admit students once a year, for fall matriculation. You'll take the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) and submit an application about a year in advance of the year for which you are applying.

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
GRE	Take exam. Deadline for the last GRE score accepted depend on program. It is usually the same as the application deadline.																
Reco m. Letters	Request letters & get contact info. from letter writers at least 3 months before your application submission.																
Application	Prep Write draft of Personal Statement & research Programs.		OTCAS is available Online in mid-July till spring of following year. many programs' deadline is fall to early spring.														
	Supplemental Requirements & Interviews are depend on OT programs. Check their websites for more information.																

• GRE

Many OT programs require the **GRE**. **The GRE is administered throughout the year**. Taking the exam by spring will enable you to apply earlier. OT programs require the GRE scores must be less than 3 (sometimes 5) years old. The GRE is divided into three sections which are: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning (multiple choice scored on a scale of 130-170), and Analytical Writing (essay format score out of 6 points). The exam may be repeated, but the best strategy is to prepare thoroughly and take the GRE once. For more information about content and structure, visit http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/content/.

• OTCAS (Occupational Therapy Central Application Service)

- Most OT programs are part of **OTCAS**, which is available at <https://otcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>.
- Application requirements include transcripts, personal background information, extracurricular experiences, personal statements, and fees.
- Because many programs use a "rolling" admission process (they begin reviewing applications and admitting before deadlines), it will enhance your chances if you **submit your application early**, regardless of when you take the GRE.
- Completing the application will take at least a week; most students take several weeks. Make sure you will have plenty of time to fill out the application, and to have somebody **review** your entire application before you submit.
- To help us advise other students, we would appreciate it if you would release your information to the Health Professions Advisor. This information will always be kept confidential.

• Letters of Recommendation

Students are required to submit **Letters of Recommendation** through the OTCAS. OTCAS limits applicants to 5 letters, but most programs just require 2-3 letters. Almost all OT programs require a letter from an OT. In addition, some schools require a letter from a professor or any supervisor of your choice, or both.

• USEFUL WEBSITES

- * American Occupational Therapy Association <http://www.aota.org/> --- Find OT programs in the nation.

GRADING POLICIES

CLEP Credit & Correspondence Study	You are required to report all of the courses and credit hours that you earned through CLEP exams or Correspondence/Independent Study courses. However, those credits may not be accepted as completed prerequisite coursework. Check each program's requirements online.
AP Credits	You are required to report all of the courses and credit hours that you earned through AP credits. However, those awarded hours may NOT be accepted as completed prerequisite coursework. Check each program's requirements online.
Online Courses	Depends on program. Ask programs you are considering applying to directly.
Repeats	OTCAS will include all of the grades, but how each OT program view repeated courses varies. It is better to take it once and do well.
Withdrawals/Excused	W's or EX's should be used only for non-academic emergencies, though W's or EX's will not affect GPA.
Minimum Grade Requirement	Most programs set a minimum grade requirement for prerequisite courses of C or better.
Grade Expiration	Many programs require certain prerequisite courses to be completed within 5 to 7 years of entering a OT program. Check each program's requirements for more information.
Community College Courses	Many programs will accept prerequisite courses taken at a 2 year community college, but some may have a preference for courses from 4 year university over from a community college.
International Students	Depends on program. Most schools which accept international students usually require taking TOEFL in addition to GRE.

- **GPA**

Most OT programs require minimum overall AND prerequisite GPA of 3.0. Competitive applicants for most programs have higher GPA in both the overall and prerequisite GPA.

- **Bachelor's Degree**

Most OT programs require a bachelor's degree before students matriculate to an OT program. There is no specific major you need to pursue in order to increase your chances of admission to an OT program.

PreOT Course Guide

This guide is designed for students preparing to apply to a range of OT programs. Some courses may not be required by all programs; some program requirements may have changed.

- Biol 1012: **General Biology**
- Biol 1013: **General Biology lab**
- Biol 1131: **Human Physiology and Anatomy I**
- Biol 1141: **Human Physiology and Anatomy II**
- Psych 1003: **General Psychology**
- Psych 2268: **Lifespan Developmental Psychology**
- Psych 2245: **Abnormal Psychology**
- Soc 1010: **Introduction to Sociology**
- Statistics Course such as Psych 2201: **Psychological Statistics**
- Comm 1040: **Public Speaking**
- Engl 1100: **First Year Writing**
- Engl 3100: **Junior Level Writing**
- PHIL 2256: **Bioethics**
- Anthro 1011: **Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**