OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY RESOURCES

This handout is designed to provide students a general guide to applying to OT and OTA programs. For further assistance, please schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor.

QUICK FACTS

Occupational therapy is a healthcare profession focused on helping individuals of all ages achieve independence and improve their quality of life through meaningful activities. It addresses physical, cognitive, emotional, and social challenges, enabling people to perform daily tasks, work, and leisure activities effectively.

While programs vary, in order to enter practice it is required to successfully complete a **master's degree in occupational therapy or a professional doctorate in occupational therapy.**

Here are some general aspects to consider when looking into specific programs:

- View a list of accredited programs via the **American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)** website
  - www.aota.org/education/find-a-school
- Applications usually require some combination of these materials: **minimum GPA, GRE scores, observation hours, letters of recommendation, a personal statement, a cover letter, and an interview.** Thoroughly read through the requirements each school/program has for admission.
- **Common Application:** Many schools require your application to be submitted through the **Occupational Therapy Common Application System (OTCAS)**, https://otcas.liaisoncas.com.
- **Shadowing Hours:** The amount of required hours varies by program. Check the program's admission requirements when obtaining hours.
  - View AOTA's article on diversifying your OT experiences throughout your undergraduate career
    - https://www.aota.org/publications/student-articles/career-advice/resume-building
  - Some programs require hours to be verified by the OT you shadowed. Be sure to verify each program's requirements.
- **Interview Preparation:** When preparing for professional school interviews, it is important that you practice ahead of time.
  - **Be prepared to answer common questions: "Why do you want to be an occupational therapist?" or "Why our program?"**
  - Utilize resources in Handshake and book an appointment with a pre-professional advisor to further assist you. Keep in mind that not all programs require interviews and the process varies from school to school.
- **Letters of Recommendation**
  - When requesting letters of recommendation, OTCAS requires students to submit at least 3 references and no more than 5.
  - You should also seek occupational therapists and other industry professionals you've worked with.
  - Certain schools may have specifications on letter amounts/writers—check the website of each program you're applying to.

GRE PREPARATION

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
- Applicants are required to take the GRE only by some programs, but **required minimum scores vary**.
- You can register for the GRE through the ETS site, www.ets.org/gre.html.
- The exam is made up of 3 sections including: **Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing.**
- Be sure to take the test in enough time to make the application deadlines.

Prepare in advance!
- Spend time prior to your test date familiarizing yourself with the types of questions in each section.
- You can study through taking a course with a company like Kaplan or Princeton Review, or you can purchase study books online that contain practice tests and examples.

COMMON PREREQUISITES

Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II
Principles of Biology I
Principles of Chemistry I
Introductory Physics I
Introduction to General Psychology
Introduction to Human Development

Abnormal Psychology
Sociological Perspectives,
Fundamentals of Sociology, or
Introduction to Anthropology
Probability and Statistics
Medical Terminology

*This is not an exhaustive list. Please research each program's requirement, and please consult with your academic advisor prior to registering for classes.

KEY NUMBERS

- Minimum GPA Range: **2.75-3.25**
- 2024-25 Average GRE Score: verbal **151.29;** quantitative **156.93**; written **3.49**
- Minimum Observation Hours Range: **25-70**

*Check with each individual school for their GPA and score requirements.
Keep in mind that **quality outweighs quantity when obtaining hours.

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APPLICATION SERVICES (OTCAS)

Occupational Therapy Common Application System (OTCAS)
- Many schools require your application to be submitted through this system.
- An account has to be made to utilize this application service. **Familiarize yourself with the site, the applications themselves, and what materials are necessary for each application.**
- **Keep in mind that not all schools use OTCAS/OTACAS!** Thoroughly read through each program's admission procedures.

APPLICATION ESSAY PREPARATION

Personal statements used to apply to schools through OTCAS should be general and not program specific.
- Pay attention to the character count (including spaces) allotted for the essay.
- OTCAS asks that you **"Explain why you selected occupational therapy as a career and how this degree relates to your immediate and long-term professional goals. We invite you to share how your lived experiences (e.g., personal, professional, cultural, etc.) have influenced your interest in pursuing OT."**
- You should start writing your personal statement early and follow the instructions listed carefully to ensure you follow all the parameters set.
- **Some programs will require an additional essay** that will pertain to their program after receiving your OTCAS application.

RESOURCES

AOTA: Find an OT or OTA School:
https://www.aota.org/education/find-a-school
AOTA: 32 Creative Ways to Gain OT Experience and Diversify Your Resume:
https://www.aota.org/publications/student-articles/career-advice/resume-building
Interpreting GRE Scores:
https://www.ets.org/pdfs/gre/interpreting-gre-scores.pdf
Georgia State Board of Occupational Therapy:
https://sos.ga.gov/georgia-state-board-occupational-therapy
OTCAS: Applicant Login:
https://otcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login
OTCAS: Filling Out Your OTCAS Application:
https://help.liaisonedu.com/OTCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Filling_Out_Your_OTCAS_Application
The GRE Tests:
https://www.ets.org/gre.html