

*2009-2010*

**Pre-Occupational Therapy  
Education at the  
University of Oregon**

**Prepared by:**

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## **What is Occupational Therapy?**

The primary focus of occupational therapy is the development of a person's adaptive skills and performance capacity. Therapists help with a person's ability to function in meaningful daily life activities or occupation. Occupational therapy also studies the factors that promote, influence or enhance such function, as well as those that create barriers or impediments to function. Occupational therapists may work with infants with developmental problems, older persons facing health challenges, persons with disabilities, or persons with mental illness.

## **What are the educational requirements for a career in occupational therapy?**

Educational requirements for an occupational therapy career may take place at either the professional or the technical level. The professional level education prepares one to become an occupational therapist, while the technical level education prepares one to become an occupational therapy assistant.

Preparing for a career as an occupational therapist requires a student to complete either a bachelor's degree or postbaccalaureate degree (i.e. professional master's degree or entry level doctoral degree). Beginning January 1, 2007, all new occupational therapy candidates will need a postbaccalaureate degree. Preparing for a career as an occupational therapy assistant requires completion of a 2-year associate degree. In addition to these degrees, all candidates will be required to complete a period of supervised fieldwork and pass a national certification exam.

**Other Requirements:** If you are interested in applying to an occupational therapy program, you must obtain specific requirements, prerequisites, and program content from the schools to which you are applying. Junior year is when you should identify programs you would like to attend to prepare for application deadlines. Both occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant candidates will be required to fulfill a number of prerequisites, which may include anatomy, physiology, and sociology. Most programs also require volunteer or paid work experience with persons with disabilities.

**What is the difference between a postbaccalaureate degree and a baccalaureate degree for becoming an occupational therapist?** Both are currently routes of entry to the profession and accredited using

the same Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards. A decision was made to require postbaccalaureate degree entry as of January 2007. Successful completion of a baccalaureate or postbaccalaureate degree program currently qualifies an individual to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) certification examination.

### **What is the job outlook for occupational therapy?**

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook demand for occupational therapists is growing much faster than the average for all professions, the median annual earnings of occupational therapists were \$54,660 in May 2004. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of occupational therapists in May 2006 were home health care services (\$67,600), offices of other health practitioners (\$62,290), nursing care facilities (\$64,750), general medical and surgical hospitals (\$61,610), and elementary and secondary schools (\$48,580). Median annual earnings of occupational therapist assistants were \$42,060 in May 2006.

### **What type of jobs are available?**

Occupational therapy is one of the most diverse of health care professions. Jobs are available in hospitals, public school systems, rehabilitation facilities, home health agencies, hand therapy clinics, assisted living facilities, residential treatment facilities, injured worker clinics, community-based early intervention programs, and in corporations and communities performing preventative health care and wellness programs. Part-time, full-time, traveling, and on-call work is available.

### **Where do occupational therapy practitioners work?**

Occupational therapists work in a variety of job settings. Public schools, hospitals, mental health centers, nursing homes, physician practices, and home health agencies are all job settings that may employ occupational therapy practitioners. With career advancement, occupational therapists may move into management, specialization, teaching, research, or private practice positions.

For more information, please visit the American Occupational Therapy Association Web site: [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)

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# Pre-Occupational Therapy Sample Course Plan<sup>1</sup>

## **Freshman Year:**

### **Fall Term**

CH 221 + 227 lab (6)

MATH 111 (4)

WR 121(4)

### **Winter Term**

CH 222 + 228 lab (6)

MATH 112 (4)

WR 122/123 (4)

### **Spring Term**

CH 223 + 229 lab (6)

PSY 201 (4)

SOC 204 (4)

### **Consider:**

- Begin health-related experience as soon as possible
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements (*if a major has been chosen*)

## **Sophomore Year:**

BI 211 (4)

BI 212 (4)

BI 213 (4)

PSY 202 (4)

PSY 302<sup>5</sup> (4)

PSY 376<sup>4</sup> (4)

HO 100 (3) (at LCC; Medical Terminology, not offered at UO)

### **Consider:**

- Continue health-related experience
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements
- Applied arts, performance, physical activity courses<sup>3</sup>

## **Junior Year:**

ANAT 311 + 314 lab (5) ANAT 312 + 315 lab (5)

HPHY 313 + 316 lab (5) HPHY 314 + 317 lab (5)

ENG 200<sup>2</sup> (4)

PSY 469<sup>5</sup> (4)

### **Consider:**

- Continue health-related experience
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements

## **Senior Year:**

PHYS 201 + 204 lab (6) PHYS 202 + 205 lab (6) PHYS 203 + 206 lab (6)

HPHY 409 (1)

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1. This plan is a suggested set of courses. Pre-requisites to occupational therapy programs vary. It is important for you to check individual school requirements via their websites. Many schools do not require a year of general chemistry, and most schools require only one physics course with lab.
2. This is a public speaking course.
3. Many OT programs require at least one applied arts course and one P.E. course. Applied arts are “hands-on” courses such as design, ceramics, dance, photography, or music.
4. This course is Child Development. Pacific University requires Life-span Development, which can be completed at LCC with PSY 215.
5. These courses are restricted to PSY majors and minors. See Pam Birrel in the PSY department if you are not a major.