

Academic Advising and Pre-Occupational Therapy Objective

Each student has an opportunity to be advised by a Pre-Health Advisor in the Office of Academic Advising. Call (541) 346-3211 to schedule an appointment. Please see your academic advisor on a regular basis to confirm you are on track for your degree and occupational therapy school admission.

In order for the Pre-Health Advisors to communicate directly to you and your interests, it is highly recommended to declare a Pre-Occupational Therapy Professional Objective. To do so, email: health@uoregon.edu with your name and UO ID number, or fill out a form in the OAA.

You are also encouraged to sign up for the Pre-Health mailing list, which provides students with timely announcements and a monthly newsletter. OAA also has a facebook page, located at www.facebook.com/uo.prehealthadvising, which is where more health information can be found.

What is an occupational therapist?

Occupational therapist help patient improve motor functions as well as complex daily work skills. They work with people of all ages with mental health problems, Alzheimer's disease, traumatic injuries, learning disabilities, or cerebral palsy. Occupational therapists can work in hospitals, public schools, rehabilitation centers, corporations and communities performing preventative health care and wellness programs. They may work part-time, full-time and on some occasions on-call time is available.

General Requirements

There is considerable variation in Occupational Therapy (OT) programs and it is imperative to begin researching schools of interest as early as possible. To be admitted in an Occupational Therapy program, one must first earn a bachelors degree. There are both entry level Master and Doctoral degrees available in Occupational Therapy (OT). Both require a bachelors degree to be admitted. Advisors recommend asking yourself some impor-

tant questions like: What are my future goals? Does this degree accomplish my short-term and long-term goals? How long do I want to be in school? What is the cost associated with the program? By answering these questions, students should have a better understanding of which type of degree to pursue. There is no research that shows entry-level doctoral degrees earn a higher salary. However, doctoral recipients are more likely to fit “specialized” positions that may tend to pay higher. Doctoral degrees can also lead to gaining tenure as a teacher in the field. For a list of OT schools, see www.aota.org.

Specific Course Requirements

While prerequisite courses vary, some commonalities may include courses in psychology, biology, anatomy and physiology, sociology, college math, and medical terminology. See a Pre-Health Academic Advisor to assist you in planning these prerequisite courses at UO.

Pacific University is Oregon’s only occupational therapy school.

Recommended University of Oregon Curriculum:

The minimum requirements for admissions to Pacific’s OT school and most other OT schools can be met with the following classes:

- English Composition - WR 121, 122 or 123
 - General Chemistry - CH 111
 - General Biology - BI 211, 212
 - Anatomy & Physiology – HPHY 321, 322, 323, 324, 325
 - Physics - PHYS 201 with lab 204
 - Statistics - MATH 243, PSY 302 or SOC 312
 - Psychology - PSY 201, 202
- Developmental Psychology - PSY 376* **OR** PSY 215 @ LCC

Abnormal Psychology - PSY 469* **OR** PSY 239 @ LCC

*These courses are restricted to PSY majors and minors only. Please see Pam Birrel in the PSY department if you are not a major.

Advanced Placement (AP) credits are sometimes accepted for some required courses if such credits appear on an undergraduate transcript. Consult with the Pre-health Advisor for clarification. All of the courses listed above must be taken on a graded basis.

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.

Pre-Occupational Therapy Curriculum:

First Year

Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term
CH 111	BI 211	BI 212
MATH 111	MATH 112	PSY 201
		SOC 204

Consider:

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

Second Year

PSY 202	PSY 376	PSY 302 or MATH 243
---------	---------	---------------------

Consider:

- Continue health-related experience
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements
- Applied arts, performance, physical activity courses*

Third Year

HPHY 321	HPHY 323	HPHY 325
HPHY 322	HPHY 324	
	PSY 469	

Consider:

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

Fourth Year

PHYS 201 + 204 lab	HPHY 409	HPHY 409
HPHY 409 (practicum)		

*Many OT programs require at least one applied arts course and one PE course. Applied arts are "hands-on" courses such as design, ceramics, dance, photography, or music.

This curriculum is not set in stone. Talk to an Advisor for course plans that are right for you.

The Undergraduate Major

Science Majors

Given that the Pre-OT prerequisites are generally science or social science in nature, it is not unusual for students to consider a major in the sciences: biology, human physiology, and general science. Many of the requirements of these majors are satisfied with the Pre-OT prerequisites.

Non-Science Majors

Almost all OT colleges make a special point of welcoming non-science majors. They emphasize their interest in candidates who demonstrate competency in other disciplines, from business to music. Obviously, it demands careful planning to satisfy degree requirements in a non-science major and still complete the pre-OT curriculum. UO records show non-science majors are very successful in gaining admission.

The Major as an Alternative Career

As a Pre-OT student, you should face realistically the possibility of not gaining admission to OT school. What will you do if you are not accepted? Another health career? Reapply? Follow other pathways within your major? Don't be surprised if you are asked this often by friends, advisors and interviewers. It isn't intended to discourage you but to remind you of the realities of OT school application.

Non-Curricular Requirements for Occupational Therapy School Admission

The following information can be found at the American Occupational Therapy Association website (www.aota.org) under the “Students” tab.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

Some schools require the GRE. More information about the test can be found at www.ets.org/gre. You are encouraged to research OT schools to determine whether you need to submit a GRE score to apply.

Letters of Recommendation

All OT schools require letters of recommendation, submitted from a practicing OT, professor, advisor or supervisor. You are encouraged to find individuals who can speak to your maturity, dependability, dedication, compassion, communication skills, leadership and any experience you may have in the field. Check the admission requirements school by school for instructions.

Official Transcripts

All OT schools require official transcripts from every college you have attended. Although few OT schools publically list mandatory GPAs for admission, accumulated statistics illustrate that only applicants with at least a 3.0 and above stand a good chance of admission. The recent national mean for accepted applicants was 3.2 in all college work.

Take all required courses graded.

In general, you should avoid dropping below a full academic load of 15-16 credit hours.

Health Related Experience

OT schools encourage, if not require, students to have varying hours of experience or clinical hours. Earning your CPR and First Aide certification may also be a requirement.

The Application Process

There are 66 of the approximately 150 OT schools that utilize a common application service called the Occupational Therapy Common Application Service (OTCAS). OTCAS cycle generally opens in early August. Information about the application process can be found on the OTCAS website (www.otcas.org), including more about the admissions process and requirements. Students applying to non-participating schools should contact the individual programs for application materials.

Of Special Interest

There are 157 Accredited OT schools in the United States. Students must earn minimally a Masters in Occupational Therapy to practice. There are a few Ph.D. programs. The typical OT program varies, but is roughly 28 months, with 24 weeks of supervised fieldwork as a part of the curriculum. After completing the program, students sit for a national certifying exam administered by the National Board for Certification on Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) which will give a student the license to practice. Successfully passing the exam gives an individual the title of Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). Specific licensure eligibility requirements vary from state to state, so it is vital to contact the state's licensing board of the state in which you hope to practice.

Average undergraduate cum GPA: 3.20

Average salary: \$66,780

Websites for more information and which provided material for this handout include:

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)

www.aota.org

Pacific University School of Occupational Therapy

www.pacificu.edu/ot

The Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Office of Academic Advising

364 Oregon Hall

541-346-3211

health@uoregon.edu

www.facebook.com/uo.prehealthadvising