

Pre-Occupational Therapy Advising

There are around 150 occupational therapy programs across the United States. Occupational therapy programs are offered as either a three-year Doctor of Occupational Therapy or more often as a two-year Masters of Occupational Therapy after the completion of an undergraduate degree. Purdue University does not have an occupational therapy school. Students interested in pursuing this profession complete their undergraduate degree at Purdue and take the pre-requisite courses needed to meet the entrance requirements. There is no preferred major and students are encouraged to select a major based on their interests and strengths. Students need to make early contact with schools that offer accredited programs and obtain a list of requirements, pre-requisites, and application deadlines and procedures. Your academic advisor, the Internet, and the OT/PT Club on campus can facilitate this research.

General Pre-Occupational Therapy Curriculum

The following courses are required by most occupational therapy programs in the United States. This list is **not** inclusive as schools have different pre-requisites. Applicants seeking admission to an occupational therapy program should contact the institution and utilize online resources that are available. Students may also refer to The American Occupational Therapy Association web site for specific requirements for each institution. <http://www.aota.org>

Typical OT School Requirements

Biology	4 credit hours
Anatomy & Physiology	8 credit hours
Chemistry	3-4 credit hours
Physics	3-4 credit hours
Statistics	3 credits hours
Psychology	3 credit hours
Abnormal Psychology	3 credit hours
Lifespan Development	3 credit hours
Medical Terminology	1-3 credit hours

Purdue Recommended Courses

BIOL	11000
BIOL	20300 & 20400
CHM	11100 or 11500
PHYS	22000
STAT	30100
PSY	12000
PSY	35000
HDFS	21000
HSCI	13100 (2 credits)

Admission Requirements/Considerations

Minimum GPA - Most OT programs have a minimum grade point average required to apply. Each institution sets their requirement. The average GPA of the applicants that are offered admissions is often substantially higher than the minimum GPA required for application. For example, the average GPA of students admitted to IUPUI's Department of Occupational Therapy is 3.7/4.0 and the minimum required to apply is 3.0/4.0.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) - Most schools require students to take the GRE which is a standardized test that gauges a student's ability to do well in a graduate program. The GRE is given year round and is available as a computer-based or paper-based examination. <http://www.ets.org/gre>

Volunteer and Clinical Experience - Most schools will require a certain number of hours volunteering or working under a licensed OT. You should consider getting experience in an inpatient (hospital or nursing home) and outpatient (clinic) setting. The range of required hours is anywhere from 20 to upwards of 200 hours depending on the OT program.

Research Experience - Experience working in a lab environment under a professor or other individual for the purposes of research is not required, but can make you more competitive when applying to OT school. Often times this experience can lead to a relationship with a professor who will get to know you on a personal level and be able to write an informed letter of recommendation.

Applying to Occupational Therapy School

Many occupational therapy schools participate in the Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) which allows students to apply for multiple programs utilizing a web-based application. In addition, many schools have a supplemental application to be submitted to each individual school. Be prepared to cover the costs of the application process as many students will spend well over \$500 between the GRE and application fees. For additional information, visit: <https://otcas.liasoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>.

Employment Outlook and Earnings

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employment of occupational therapists is expected to increase 274 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. The median annual wage of occupational therapists was \$83,200 in 2017. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$54,560, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$120,440. For additional information, refer to the Bureau of Labor Statistics at:

<http://stats.bls.gov/ooh/Healthcare/Occupational-therapists.htm>

Preparation Time Line

Freshman & Sophomore Years:

- Build strong study habits and establish a high GPA
- Utilize Supplemental Instruction (SI) for math and science courses
- Research schools and admission requirements (Min GPA, pre-requisite courses, volunteer hours, etc.)
- Get involved in campus organizations and clubs (OT/PT Club, HK Club, PETE's PALS, etc.)
- Identify volunteer and clinical experience opportunities and keep detailed records of your hours
- Look at online resources available through the Office of Health Professions Advising:
<http://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional>

Junior & Senior Years:

- Get involved in research with a professor
- Visit OT schools you are interested in applying to. It is recommended you plan to apply to 8-10 schools
- Have most of your pre-requisite courses completed by the conclusion of your junior year. Many schools have a limit on the number of pre-requisite courses not completed at the time of application
- Prepare to take the GRE during the Spring semester of your junior year or earlier, if possible
- Become familiar with OTCAS and the application process for all the schools you wish to apply to
- Request letters of recommendation by mid-summer after your junior year
- Utilize the Center for Career Opportunities to finalize personal statements and other application materials
- Start OTCAS application summer after your junior year. Application is made available the beginning of July
- Pay close attention to application deadlines and schools that offer early decisions. Most application deadlines range from October 1st through March 1st

Where Can I Get More Information?

The American Occupational Therapy Association <http://www.aota.org>

Programs in Indiana:

- Huntington University <https://www.huntington.edu/graduate/occupational-therapy> (Doctorate)
- Indiana State University <http://www.indstate.edu/health/program/ot> (MS)
- Indiana Wesleyan <http://www.indwes.edu/Adult-Graduate/Doctorate-of-Occupational-Therapy/> (Doctorate)
- IUPUI – Indiana University <http://shrs.iu.edu/academics/occupational-therapy/index.html> (Doctorate)
- University of Indianapolis <http://www.uindy.edu/health-sciences/ot> (MS and Doctorate option)
- University of Southern Indiana <http://www.usi.edu/health/occupational-therapy> (MS)