Live
Laugh
Enable

Occupational Therapy (OT)
What is Occupational Therapy?

- Occupational Therapy is an evidence-based, scientific profession that helps individuals of all ages to recover from injury, disability or illness and participate in activities of daily living.

- Occupational Therapists practice from a holistic perspective, considering the patients’ contexts to design customized activities in pursuit of their needs.

For example:
- helping children with disabilities to participate fully in school and social situations
- helping people recovering from injury to regain skills
- supporting older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes

AOTA.org/About-Occupational-Therapy.aspx
Things to Consider...

- Occupational Therapy is a career for individuals who care about people and have a desire to learn, achieve, and contribute their best to society and the profession.
- The US News & World Report ranks OT as 17th among health care jobs and 23rd among all jobs overall.
- The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the job outlook for OTs will improve substantially in the next several years relative to other fields.
- OTs can practice in diverse settings with patients of diverse ages, from working with premature newborns at pediatric hospitals to supporting people with traumatic injuries, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease, or mental health problems at rehabilitation hospitals and nursing homes.

AOTA.org/Education-Careers/Considering-OT-Career/Resources/Consider-Becoming-OT.aspx
Students must complete a master’s (MSOT) or doctoral (OTD) degree.

Princeton grads will most likely pursue:

- Graduate Entry-Level Master’s programs (typically 2-3 years)
- Entry-Level or Post-Bac OTD programs (typically 4-5 years)

Search for programs online: [AOTA.org/Education-Careers/Find-School.aspx](http://AOTA.org/Education-Careers/Find-School.aspx)
Preparing for Admission

- **Pre-requisite courses**
  - Vary by program but often include Anatomy & Physiology; Abnormal Psychology; Developmental Psychology; Statistics; liberal arts foundation (general education courses)
  - Grades of B- or better often required
- Observation hours in an OT setting may be required or recommended.
- The [GRE](https://www.ets.org) is the most common entrance exam.
- Essays and letters of reference are required by most programs.
- Some programs will require interviews.
- Applicants will complete a “common application” called the [OTCAS](https://www.otcas.org).
What should I major in at the undergraduate level if I apply to an entry-level master’s or an entry-level doctoral program? Examples of majors include biology, kinesiology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, liberal arts, and anatomy. It is important that you contact the educational programs to which you are interested in applying and make sure you have taken the necessary prerequisites for admission into their programs.

Some programs require that I have observation or volunteer experience. Who do I contact to set this up? It is suggested that you contact local facilities that employ occupational therapists and/or occupational therapy assistants (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, or school systems). Be prepared to discuss your reason for the request and your availability. You are advised to call facilities rather than email them.

Who can I contact if I have further questions? For further information about studying to become an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant, send inquiries to educate@aota.org. To ask questions of an OT or OTA student, send inquiries to AskAStudent@aota.org. Allow up to 1 week for a response.

Prospective Student Communities

Online Community for Prospective Students: sign up for AOTA’s free social network OT Connections and participate in the Prospective Students forum.

for additional FAQs: AOTA.org/Education-Careers/Considering-OT-Career/FAQs/Planning.aspx
# Sample Application Timeline

*for direct entry after graduation*

| Freshman-Junior Year | Research programs, complete prerequisites  
Volunteer, gain exposure to OT field  
Take Anatomy & Physiology over a summer  
Attend info sessions (virtual or on campus) for programs of interest |
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<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>Gather letters of recommendation</td>
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| Junior Summer – Senior Fall | Take GRE  
Complete OTCAS application (or individual school applications)  
Complete supplementary applications from individual schools |
| Senior Spring        | Interview at schools, if required  
Receive admissions decisions                                                                    |
| Summer/Fall          | Matriculate to OT program                                                                         |
Sample OT Programs

Entry-Level Doctoral Programs
- Boston University
- Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
- Pacific University (Oregon)

Entry-Level Masters Programs
- Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
- University of Illinois
- Jefferson College of Health Professions
- Tufts University
- New York University
## Sample OTD Curriculum

*Courtesy of Wash U School of Medicine*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Issues in OT Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory &amp; Foundations</td>
<td>Neuroscience Principles of Practice</td>
<td>Neuroscience Principles of Practice</td>
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<td>Fundamentals of Health Care</td>
<td>Body Structures</td>
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<td>Fundamentals of Professional Communication</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Assessment</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Assessment</td>
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<td>Fundamentals of Evidence-Based Practice</td>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
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<td>Applied Research</td>
<td>Applied Research/Clinical Practice</td>
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<td>Fieldwork</td>
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<td>Interventions for Individuals with Sensorimotor Challenges</td>
<td>Supporting Participation with Tech and Environmental Interventions for Individuals with Psychosocial Challenges</td>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interventions for Individuals with Cognitive &amp; Learning Challenges</td>
<td>Interventions for Individuals with Psychosocial Challenges</td>
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<td>Health Promotion</td>
<td>Promotion of Population Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Based Learning</td>
<td>Management Practices</td>
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<td>Professional Development Seminar</td>
<td>Case Based Learning</td>
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<td>Fieldwork</td>
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<td>OT Practice Seminar</td>
<td>OT Practice Seminar</td>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
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<td>Seminar in Education Strategies</td>
<td>Seminar in Education Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directed Practice Research</td>
<td>Directed Practice Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development Seminar</td>
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<td>Fieldwork</td>
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Just for fun...

Quiz: What Kind of OT Would You Be?
This quiz if for entertainment purposes, courtesy of the University Of Southern California, Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
For Additional Information

- The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.: AOTA.org
  Facebook.com/AmericanOccupationalTherapyAssociationAOTA
- The American Journal of Occupational Therapy: AJOT.AOTA.org
- OT Practice Magazine: AOTA.org/Publications-News/OTP.aspx

- Articles of Interest:
  Career Profile: Occupational Therapist
  Benefits of Occupational Therapy for People With MS
  How an Occupational Therapist Can Help You
  Recognizing Those Who Help People Live Fuller Lives During Occupational Therapy Month
  Sharp Rise in Occupational Therapy Cases at New York’s Schools