

WHAT IS AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST (OT)?

An Occupational Therapist is a healthcare provider who treats patients with injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help these patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working.

PREREQUISITES:

NOTE: EACH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST SCHOOL ESTABLISHES ITS OWN SET OF PREREQUISITES. CHECK THE WEBSITES OF THE SCHOOLS THAT YOU ARE MOST INTERESTED IN ATTENDING TO OBTAIN A CURRENT LIST OF UNDERGRADUATE REQUIREMENTS.

Listed below are the courses at UCSB that students must complete to meet common prerequisite course requirements for most California occupational therapy programs.	
*Anatomy/Physiology (Full Year)	SBCC: BMS 107: Human Anatomy w/lab and BMS 108: Human Physiology w/lab
Math/Statistics (1 Course)	PSTAT 5LS (5 units): Statistics for Life Sciences/PSTAT 5A (5 units): Statistics
*Medical Terminology (2 credits)	HIT 135 (3 units): Basic Medical Terminology
*Lifespan (1 Course)	SBCC: PSY 145 Human Development (Contact SBCC for more information.)
Recommended Courses	Physics, General Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Sociology/Social Problems, Anthropology
Remember to research course requirements at each program you plan on applying to as these vary quite a bit.	

EXAM AND GPA:

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is a standardized examination that consists of four multiple-choice sections that cover basic mathematics and reading comprehension skills. The GRE is designed to measure general academic ability. Typically, students take the GRE about one calendar year prior to their intended date of matriculation to professional school. The GRE is a nationally standardized test, similar to the ACT and SAT. A GRE score is good for three years at most schools, so taking the test in the spring of junior year does not necessarily mean that you must enter your Occupational Therapy program right after college graduation. Average scores are:

REVISED: A combined score of 290 for most schools

OLD: 500 on Verbal and 500 on Quantitative (minimum 1000)

Grade Point Average (GPA): Minimum GPA requirements vary from program to program, but MOST programs have a minimum 3.0 GPA requirement. In addition, most programs require that all prerequisite courses must be passed with a "C" or better. They generally want to see competitive test scores and GPAs.

TIMELINE:**Freshman Year:**

- Connect with a Pre-Health Staff or Peer Advisor
- Think about possible majors (Study what you love).
- Begin getting involved with volunteer opportunities (campus and community).
- Research clinical experiences (EMT, Scribe, Shadowing, etc)
- Look into getting involved in undergraduate research and talk to professors (Can wait a year or so).
- Go to your professors' office hours.
- Explore some student organizations.

Sophomore Year:

- Stay involved in extracurricular activities (Medical, volunteer, etc).
- Begin to think about becoming an officer in your organizations or explore other leadership opportunities.
- Begin research on professional schools, their requirements, and assess your competitiveness.
- Investigate GRE preparation options.
- **BOTTOM LINE:** Keep working on the things you established your first year!!

Junior Year (If not taking a Gap Year.) **If taking a Gap Year, then taking the GRE and completing the application can wait until senior year):

- Talk to your staff pre-health advisor member to narrow program options and assess competitiveness.
- Identify at least 3 individuals to write letters of recommendation.
- Keep working on the things you have established thus far.
- Schedule a mock interview with Career Services.
- **Register for the GRE.
- **Study for GRE and take it.
- **Complete Application (OTCAS).

Senior Year (If no Gap Year):

- Submit Application(s) if you haven't already.
- Wait to be contacted for interview from OT programs.
- Continue with activities and professional experiences/shadowing.
- Talk with an advisor about Plan B if necessary.
- Finish degree requirements and GRADUATE!

If Taking 1 or more Gap Years:

- Schedule a mock interview with Career Services.
- **Register for the GRE.
- **Study for GRE and take it.
- **Complete Application (OTCAS).

RESOURCES:

The American Occupational Therapy Association (Accredited Program Directory) [Click Here](#)

Occupational Therapy Central Application Service (OTCAS) [Click Here](#)

GRE Information/Dates [Click Here](#)