



Occupational Therapy Admission Timeline

HELPFUL LINKS

- [OTCAS](#)
- [OTCAS Program Directory](#)
- [Types of Occupational Therapy Specialties](#)
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook- Occupational Therapist](#)
- [American Occupational Therapy Association](#)

LOCAL PROGRAMS

- [UARK/UAMS OTD Program](#)
- [UCA OTD Program](#)
- [ASU OTD Program](#)
- [Rockhurst OTD Program](#)

FRESHMAN YEAR

Fall & Spring:

- This is a time we encourage students to focus on academics, adjust to college curriculum, and explore multiple occupations.
- Investigate career information to identify what it means to be an occupational therapist and the admission requirements for occupational therapy.

Summer:

- Shadow at least one occupational therapist. This is important timing because it can give you the reassurance you need to pursue the occupation but still gives you time to re-evaluate alternate career paths.
- Work, volunteer, research, or intern in the health field.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Fall:

- Continue taking the core courses that are required by the OT programs. Focus on coursework and achieving a high GPA.
- Join Pre-OT Club on HogSync and attend monthly meetings.
- Begin finding opportunities for shadowing- aim to complete 15-30 observation hours of occupational therapy in specific setting (inpatient, outpatient, home health, etc.) during this semester.
- Begin to research programs and program requirements using OTCAS's program directory. Identify 5-6 initial schools in which you will want to attend.
- Create a comprehensive list of pre-requisite courses indicated by all programs of interest. Work with your academic advisor to create a plan of how/when to complete all courses.

Spring:

- Aim to complete 15-30 observation hours in DIFFERENT setting during this semester.
- Begin to familiarize yourself with OTCAS (Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service).

Summer:

- Aim to complete 20-30 observation hours in TWO DIFFERENT settings or OT specialties.
- Learn more about the GRE and research GRE prep courses opportunities or identify study materials.
- Work, volunteer, research, or intern in the health field.

JUNIOR YEAR

Fall:

- Make sure you have established well maintained relationships with your staff advisors, professors, and healthcare professionals. Start to consider from whom you can receive letters of recommendations. Will need 3-5 recommendation letters for application.
- Make sure ALL OBSERVATION HOURS have been completed. Double check number of required observation hours per OT program.
- Begin writing personal statement draft, if required by OT programs.
- Continue to work, volunteer, research, or intern in the health field.

Spring:

- Register for and take GRE (Graduate Record Examination).
- Prepare a "Plan B" if not admitted.
- Make sure to have all but 1 or 2 direct pre-requisite courses COMPLETED by end of spring, before application process begins.
- Make sure personal statement and resume has been reviewed by University Career Development Center and either faculty member or occupational therapist.
- Continue to work, volunteer, research, or intern in the health field.

SUMMER:

- If you are intending to start your chosen program immediately following graduation, you should begin the application process, including requesting letters of recommendation from your professors. **The OTCAS application will open up early July.**
- Double check dates and deadlines and review, edit, and **SUBMIT OTCAS APPLICATION EARLY.**
 - Determine how programs admit (rolling admissions, early decision, firm/soft deadlines)
- Submit transcripts, complete supplemental applications, and contact those who will be submitting LORs for you to check on progress.

SENIOR YEAR

Fall:

- Submit OTCAS applications 4-6 weeks prior to listed program deadline.
- Prepare for interviews by participating in a mock interview.
- Continue to maintain a strong GPA.

Spring: ***this may need to be done earlier in the fall semester if admission decisions are made sooner.**

- If admitted, make final decisions about your choice of school and notify schools you will not be attending.
- If admitted, pay seat deposit for the institution of your choice.
- If admitted to OT schools, apply for financial aid (FAFSA) by March 1st.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL FALL SEMESTER OF SENIOR YEAR TO BEGIN APPLICATIONS!!! Best practice is to have application completely submitted prior to fall semester beginning senior year.

RESEARCH the Occupational Therapy Schools you are interested in. The first step for preparing for OT school is finding out what programs you are interested in. A good place to start is the Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS). The OTCAS provides you with information on due dates, application requirements, prerequisites for each school, and other useful information.

GPA: The higher the GPA, the more competitive you will be. Here is a guideline for applying to OT school.

- 3.8 or higher: apply to 4-5 programs
- 3.5 or higher: apply to 6-7 programs
- 3.3 or higher: apply to 8-9 programs
- 3.0 or higher: apply to 10 programs or more

OTCAS FEES: The fees are \$150 to apply to the first program and \$65 for each additional program. There may also be supplemental fees for programs. Make sure to be aware of this and to have a financial plan.

GRE: Register for the GRE 2-3 months prior to taking it and take the GRE 6-8 weeks prior to the application start date. Start studying 3 months prior to taking the GRE. A score in the 50th percentile is Verbal 151, and Quantitative: 150, and Analytical: 40. Competitive score range is 300-310.

PREREQUISITES: Each school requires different prerequisites. Research each school carefully to make sure you have met all the requirements for the application.

REQUIRED/HIGHLY RECOMMENDED COURSES*

Human Anatomy/Lab (4 hours)	General Psychology (3 hours)	Medical Terminology (3 hours)
Human Physiology/Lab (4 hours)	Developmental Psychology (3 hours)	Motor Development (3 hours)
General Biology/Lab (4 hours)	Abnormal Psychology (3 hours)	Human Behavior/Neuroscience (3 hours)
General Physics/Lab (4-8 hours)	Sociology/Anthropology (3 hours)	Statistics (3 hours)

*This is a typical example of what an OT school may require – make sure you check each school for their specific requirements.

Special Notes about Prerequisites:

Double check each program's AP/IB credit policy. Some programs may NOT accept AP or other test credit for direct pre-requisite courses. Or, some programs may only accept a certain percentage of AP credit.

RECOMMENDATIONS: You will need 3-5 recommendations. Some programs require recommendations from specific individuals (1 OT, 1 faculty, 1 academic support, etc). Make sure you are aware of this. Give your recommenders 3-4 weeks' notice as a courtesy. Recommendations will be electronic and submitted through OTCAS.

OBSERVATION/SHADOWING: It is important that programs see that you have a wide variety of observation hours. Make sure you are observing OT's in a variety of settings and a variety of patient age populations. The more diverse your experience is, the better. In order to count as official observation hours, you must be observing a licensed occupational therapist. OTCAS does NOT have a universal verification form. You will need to obtain a verification form from EACH OT PROGRAM.

Settings:

- In-Patient Rehab
- Out-Patient Rehabilitation Facility
- Private Practice Clinic
- Extended-Care Facility/Nursing Home
- School/Preschool
- Wellness/Fitness
- Industrial/Occupational