

Pre-Occupational Therapy

Admissions requirements vary widely from program to program. Please check the prerequisites for schools to which you hope to apply.

Occupational Therapy Prerequisites

There are no standard requirements. According to the [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\)](#), “Examples of what other students have majored in at the undergraduate level 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.”

A majority of the graduate occupational therapy programs require that applicants have completed volunteer hours observing occupational therapy practice. The number of hours and practice settings required vary and applicants should consult the program’s webpage and/or the OTCAS website (<https://portal.otcas.org/>) for the observation requirements for each program. Hours required or suggested by Virginia programs range from 30 to 50. The mentor at the observation site will be required to complete written verification that the applicant has completed the experience.

Virginia Occupational Therapy Graduate Programs suggested prerequisites may include the following: Introductory Biology (BIOL 103 and/or BIOL 104), Anatomy and Physiology (BIOL 124 and BIOL 125), Life Span Human Development (PSYC 211 or EDUC 302), Abnormal Psychology (PSYC 325), Research Methods, Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 114) + Possible Upper Level Anthropology, Introductory Sociology (SOCY 101) + Possible Upper Level Sociology, Rehabilitative Biomechanics (KINE 400 – must be preceded by KINE 360/Strength Training Concepts and Applications), Elementary Statistics (STAT 250), Medical Terminology (ATEP 201), Bioethics (PHIL 309). For further details see:

[James Madison University](#)

[Jefferson University](#)

[Radford University](#)

[Shenandoah University](#)

[Virginia Commonwealth University](#)

Occupational Therapists

The website, [Explore Health Careers](#), describes occupational therapy in the following way, “Occupational therapy (OT) is a science-driven, evidenced-based profession that enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent-or live better with-illness, injury or disability. OT services typically include: customized treatment programs to improve one’s ability to perform daily activities; comprehensive home and job site evaluations with adaptation recommendations; performance skills assessments and treatment; adaptive equipment recommendations and usage training; guidance to family members and caregivers.”

Education

According to information available at the [American Occupational Therapy Association](#) website, “An entry-level degree for occupational therapists is the degree required to enter the profession and to be eligible to sit for the Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR) examination administered by the [National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy \(NBCOT\)](#). Occupational therapy requires that the entry-level degree be a post-baccalaureate degree. Occupational therapist entry-level degrees are either master’s or doctoral degrees. Students who have successfully completed an accredited entry-level degree program may be eligible to sit for the national certification examination as an occupational therapist.”

In 2014, [AOTA Board of Director](#)s issued the following position statement on doctoral-level single point of entry for occupational therapists, “in response to the changing demands of higher education, the health care environment, and within occupational therapy, it is the position of the American Occupational Therapy

Association (AOTA) Board of Directors that the profession should take action to transition toward a doctoral-level single point of entry for occupational therapists, with a target date of 2025. Support of high quality entry-level doctoral education for occupational therapists will benefit the profession, consumers, and society. The Board encourages a profession-wide dialogue on this critical issue.”

Applying to Occupational Therapy Schools

Information about accredited, developing and applicant programs and their application processes can be found at [The American Occupational Therapy Association](#).

The [Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service \(OTCAS\)](#) is the centralized application service for Occupational Therapy Programs. The opening date for application is in mid-July. Deadlines vary by program. Letters of reference should come directly from the evaluator to OTCAS directly. If required by program, [GRE](#) and TOEFL test scores must be entered on the OTCAS application. Any other scores should be sent directly to the program. OTCAS provides an [overview](#) of its process online.

Occupational therapy programs in Virginia include:

[James Madison University](#)

[Jefferson College of Health Sciences](#)

[Radford University](#)

[Shenandoah University](#)

[Virginia Commonwealth University](#)

GRE

Most schools require students to take the [Graduate Record Examination \(GRE\)](#) which is a standardized test to gauge a student's ability to do well in a graduate program. The GRE is given year-round at computer-based test centers in the U.S., Canada, and many other countries. Appointments to take the test are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information about the GRE visit their [website](#).

Employment Outlook and Earnings

The current [Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook for Occupational Therapy](#) is available online.

Pre-Occupational Therapy Advising

There is no formal pre-occupational therapy major or academic track at George Mason University. With careful academic planning, you can major in any field of study and still complete an occupational therapy program's prerequisites.

Pre-occupational therapy questions may be discussed with [the Health Professions Advisor](#) at small group advising sessions. The dates and times of these sessions and how to reserve a space in a session, are announced via the [HEALTHPROFESSIONSADVISOR-L listserv](#) for Mason students.

Students need to be advised in their department regarding their major.

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