

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Occupational therapy practitioners ask, "What matters to you?" not, "What's the matter with you?"

In its simplest terms, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants help people across the lifespan participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations). Common occupational therapy interventions include helping children with disabilities to participate fully in school and social situations, helping people recovering from injury to regain skills, and providing supports for older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes. Occupational therapy services typically include:

- an individualized evaluation, during which the client/family and occupational therapist determine the person's goals,
- customized intervention to improve the person's ability to perform daily activities and reach the goals, and
- an outcomes evaluation to ensure that the goals are being met and/or make changes to the intervention plan.

Occupational therapy services may include comprehensive evaluations of the client's home and other environments (e.g., workplace, school), recommendations for adaptive equipment and training in its use, and guidance and education for family members and caregivers. Occupational therapy practitioners have a holistic perspective, in which the focus is on adapting the environment to fit the person, and the person is an integral part of the therapy team.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Occupational therapists treat injured, ill, or disabled patients through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help these patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working.

Occupational therapists typically do the following:

- Review patients' medical history, ask the patients questions, and observe them doing tasks
- Evaluate a patient's condition and needs
- Develop a treatment plan for patients, identifying specific goals and the types of activities that will be used to help the patient work toward those goals
- Help people with various disabilities with different tasks, such as teaching a stroke victim how to get dressed
- Demonstrate exercises—for example, stretching the joints for arthritis relief—that can help relieve pain in people with chronic conditions
- Evaluate a patient's home or workplace and, on the basis of the patient's health needs, identify potential improvements, such as labeling kitchen cabinets for an older person with poor memory
- Educate a patient's family and employer about how to accommodate and care for the patient
- Recommend special equipment, such as wheelchairs and eating aids, and instruct patients on how to use that equipment
- Assess and record patients' activities and progress for patient evaluations, for billing, and for reporting to physicians and other healthcare providers

Patients with permanent disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, often need help performing daily tasks. Therapists show patients how to use appropriate adaptive equipment, such as leg braces, wheelchairs, and eating aids. These devices help patients perform a number of daily tasks, allowing them to function more independently.

Some occupational therapists work with children in educational settings. They evaluate disabled children's abilities, modify classroom equipment to accommodate children with certain disabilities, and help children participate in school activities. Therapists also may provide early intervention therapy to infants and toddlers who have, or are at risk of having, developmental delays.

Therapists who work with the elderly help their patients lead more independent and active lives. They assess patients' abilities and environment and make recommendations to improve the patients' everyday lives. For example, therapists may identify potential fall hazards in a patient's home and recommend their removal.

In some cases, occupational therapists help patients create functional work environments. They evaluate the workspace, recommend modifications, and meet with the patient's employer to collaborate on changes to the patient's work environment or schedule.

Occupational therapists also may work in mental health settings, where they help patients who suffer from developmental disabilities, mental illness, or emotional problems. Therapists teach these patients skills such as managing time, budgeting, using public transportation, and doing household chores in order to help them cope with, and engage in, daily life activities. In addition, therapists may work with individuals who have problems with drug abuse, alcoholism, depression, or other disorders. They may also work with people who have been through a traumatic event, such as a car accident.

Some occupational therapists, such as those employed in hospitals, work as part of a healthcare team along with doctors, registered nurses, and other types of therapists. They may work with patients who have chronic conditions, such as diabetes, or help rehabilitate a patient recovering from hip replacement surgery.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Employment of occupational therapy is projected to grow by 27% from 2014 to 2024, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Earning potential for occupational therapy personnel is excellent. Salaries vary somewhat with setting and geographic location. Tennessee's salary average is \$82,660. The median annual salary for occupational therapists nationwide is \$81,910. The lowest 10% earned less than \$54,200, and the highest 10% earned more than \$119,720. The most recent salaries for UTHSC grads were between \$60K and \$70K.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The University of Tennessee's Occupational Therapy program of the College of Health Professions is located in Memphis, Tennessee, and results in an entry-level Master's in Occupational Therapy (MOT) degree. Students matriculate into the program following successful completion of 90 credit hours of pre-professional coursework from the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For the graduating MOT Class of 2018, the full-time 27-month program includes 18 months of academic coursework followed by 9 months of supervised clinical practice (fieldwork) at selected sites. Beginning January 2017, for the entering Class of 2019, the program will include 21 months of academic coursework followed by 6 months of fieldwork. Students should anticipate the financial impact of traveling and living out of town for their clinical affiliations.

Students graduate in May of their third year. Graduates of the program are eligible to take the national certification exam, administered and scored by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (www.nbcot.org).

Once a graduate obtains a passing score on the certification exam, the individual contacts the state regulatory board to obtain licensure in the state where the graduate intends to practice. Located in Nashville, the Board of Occupational and Physical Therapy is a division of the Health Related Boards that govern licensure and the practice of occupational therapy in the state of Tennessee. The Board can be contacted at health.state.tn.us/boards/ot/.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students may complete an undergraduate degree at The University of Tennessee prior to matriculating into the Master of Occupational Therapy Program; however, a bachelor's degree is not a requirement for admission. To be eligible for admissions, applicants must complete the following 90 credit hours of prerequisite coursework with a grade of "C" or better in each course. The anatomy and physiology, chemistry, and kinesiology courses must be taken within the last five years, and the anatomy and physiology and chemistry courses must include a laboratory component. Higher level science courses may be substituted if current and approved. Prerequisite courses may include on-site or online content. No credit is awarded for prior experiential learning to meet the prerequisite requirements. All prerequisite courses must be completed by August 31 preceding the January start date.

CREDIT HOURS

English 101-102.....	6
Communication Studies 210 or 240.....	3
Biology 101-102 or Biology 150, 159, and 160.....	8
Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology 230 (see Note 1) ...	5
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology 240.....	4
Chemistry 100 or 120 (see Note 1)	4
Kinesiology (see Note 2)	3
Statistics 201 (see Note 3)	3
Psychology 110, 330.....	6
Child and Family Studies 210.....	3
Sociology 110 or 120 (see Note 4)	3
Anthropology 130 (see Note 4).....	3
Classics 273	3
Humanities (see Note 5)	9
Electives (see Note 6).....	30

Total: 93 hours minimum

Note 1: Although the OT program in Memphis only requires Chemistry 100 or 120 as a pre-requisite, Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology 230 at UTK has a pre-requisite of Chemistry 110 or 130.

Note 2: While the OT program does not require a specific kinesiology course, KNS 422 is preferred. KNS 422 has pre-requisites and is restricted to kinesiology or animal science majors. Instructor permission would be required to enroll in this course. KNS 480 is an alternative.

Note 3: Math 125 or 141 is a prerequisite to Statistics 201.

Note 4: Any sociology or anthropology course is acceptable, but Anthropology 130 and Sociology 110 or 120 are recommended.

Note 5: Recommended humanities include Spanish, English literature, Philosophy 101, 252, 340, 345. Students pursuing a UT degree should select courses that satisfy the Arts and Sciences University General Education Requirement.

Note 6: Recommended electives include kinesiology, computer/technology skills, education, technical or critical writing, fine and performing arts, history, humanities, language (particularly Spanish) and communication systems, philosophy, western civilization. No more than four credits in activity-based courses are acceptable.

In addition to the prerequisite course work stated above, a competitive score on the GRE (taken within the last five years) is required. The highest score in each category will be considered if the test has been taken more than once. A minimum of a 3.5 on the analytical writing is required.

Students do not receive credit for work experience, and coursework from another program may not be transferred to meet the requirements for admission to or graduation from the MOT program.

Applicants must demonstrate good physical and mental health consistent with the demands of the educational program and of the professional field. Immunization against Hepatitis B virus is required. Some fieldwork sites have additional requirements for health screening and/or further immunization.

For accepted students, proof of the following is required by October 1 prior to the January start date:

- Ability to meet published technical standards of the College of Health Professions and the Master of Occupational Therapy degree program,
- Background check
- Health insurance
- Transcripts showing completion of all prerequisites with a "C" or better grade
- Official copy of GRE scores
- A signed copy of the UTHSC Honor Code
- A complete Eligibility of Entitlement Act form

PROGRAM PLANNING

Students with an interest in occupational therapy should gain first-hand knowledge about occupational therapy by contacting practicing occupational therapists in their area, visiting their facilities, and talking to them directly. If possible, students should arrange to observe,

volunteer, or actually work in an occupational therapy setting.

Program planning for the pre-occupational therapy student is important. Because admission to all occupational therapy programs is competitive, students should consider alternate programs. It is recommended that students select courses that also satisfy University of Tennessee degree requirements in order to have an alternative in the event that admission to an occupational therapy program is not achieved.

Pre-health advisors are available in Arts and Sciences Advising Services, 313 Ayres Hall, to help students plan programs with maximum flexibility; however, in the final analysis, it is the student's responsibility to determine the program which will best satisfy his or her particular needs.

PRE-PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION

Recommendations from university professors who have taught you as a UT student are important considerations in the selection process for the occupational therapy program at the UT Health Science Center. Be sure that you have become well acquainted with your professors prior to requesting the evaluations. Three letters of recommendation are required and may be submitted electronically via OTCAS (see below). One letter must be from a licensed occupational therapist and the other two from faculty, advisors, employers, and/or occupational therapists.

Applicants will list the names of their evaluators in OTCAS after which an automated email from OTCAS will be sent to each evaluator with the subject "OTCAS Reference Request." The evaluators will submit their reference letters on-line.

RESIDENCY POLICY FOR UTHSC

UT Health Science Center is a state-supported institution and by legislative intent is required to consider all qualified Tennesseans prior to considering out-of-state applicants. The non-resident applicant who is the son or daughter of an alumnus of UT Health Science Center and is otherwise qualified competitively is considered in state for admission purposes only.

OTCAS AND APPLICATION TO THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

The Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) is a program of the American Occupational Therapy Association. It allows prospective students to use one application to apply to multiple participating OT programs through a single application process.

Through OTCAS, applicants submit a completed web-based application comprised of biographical data, colleges attended, academic course history, occupational therapy observation hours, list of reference providers, work experiences, extracurricular activities, honors, professional licenses, and a personal essay. OTCAS opens for submissions in July of each year (www.otcas.org). The following application materials must be received by the UTHSC Office of Enrollment Services by March 5.

- Completed application and application fee through OTCAS
- Official transcript from each college or university attended
- Projected plan for completion of remaining required courses (including dates and names of institutions student plans to attend and those in which the student is currently enrolled)
- Three OTCAS electronic recommendation forms
- Observation/volunteer verification forms (a minimum of 40 hours in two settings)
- Official report of the results of the GRE
- Essay (personal statement)

A personal interview (based on GPA and GRE scores) is required for admission.

For students applying for early admissions, the above information must be received by January 5. To qualify for early admissions, applicants must have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of a 3.2 or higher, and all prerequisite coursework must be completed prior to the application submission.

ALL application materials must be **verified** by OTCAS within four (4) weeks of the application close date for the Admissions Committee to consider the application.

Applicants with questions about the OTCAS application process may send an email to otcasinfo@otcas.org.

ACCREDITATION

The Occupational Therapy Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Graduates of the OT Program are eligible to take the national certification examination of the occupational therapist administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). Most states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Exam.

ADMISSIONS STATISTICS – ENTERING CLASS JANUARY 2019

Total Applicants.....	432
Total Enrolled	37
Average GPA.....	3.97
Average GRE score	300
Average GRE Quantitative	150.7
Average GRE Verbal.....	149.5
Analytical Writing Score.....	3.97

SEMINAR FOR PRE-HEALTH STUDENTS

During each fall semester, Arts and Sciences Advising Services offers a one credit hour course entitled "Introduction to Health Care Delivery." This one credit hour seminar course is taught in the Wood Auditorium of UT Hospital. The course provides weekly seminars on topics such as managed care, family practice, ethical issues in medicine, malpractice, allied health programs, and many others. The course is listed in the timetable under Interdisciplinary Programs (INPG) 100. The course is open to any interested student.

ALPHA EPSILON DELTA (AED)

Alpha Epsilon Delta is a pre-health honor society that seeks to provide information and opportunities for students with an interest in the health professions. The Tennessee Beta Chapter of AED is active at The University of Tennessee. AED activities include information sessions on preparing to apply to professional schools, local speakers from the medical community, trips to Tennessee medical schools and health centers, and service activities. The schedule of meetings is available at aedutk.wixsite.com/aed-utk.

Requirements for membership include three terms of college (at least one at UTK), a cumulative GPA of 3.2, a science GPA of 3.2, and participation in AED sponsored events and meetings. Students interested in joining AED should apply for membership at the beginning of fall term. Applications are available in Arts and Sciences Advising Services, 313 Ayres Hall and on the organizational website.

Any pre-health student, regardless of membership, may participate in the programs sponsored by AED. Pre-health students wishing to receive notification of pre-health activities and AED events should send an e-mail to asadvising@utk.edu to request to be added to the pre-health distribution list.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM:

Anne H. Zachry, PhD, OTR/L - Program Chair
Department of Occupational Therapy
College of Health Professions
The University of Tennessee Health Science Center
930 Madison Ave. 6th Floor
Memphis, TN 38163
(901) 448-8393
azachry@uthsc.edu
www.uthsc.edu/health-professions/ot/

Arts and Sciences Advising Services
313 Ayres Hall
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-1325
(865) 974-4481
www.artsci.utk.edu/advising

The American Occupational Therapy Association
4720 Montgomery Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 652-2682
www.aota.org

Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association
PO Box 198126
Nashville, TN 37219
(615) 425-5310
www.tnota.org

The information in this bulletin is subject to revision. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with a health professions advisor on a regular basis.

ADMISSIONS TO THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE; ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE, AND COMPLETION OF THE PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DOES NOT ASSURE ADMISSION TO UT HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
EEO/TITLE IX/SECTION 504 STATEMENT

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.

Revised June 2017