

Occupational Therapy (OT)

WHAT ARE THE ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES?

In making decisions about admissions, OT schools consider a range of factors *that may vary from one school to another*.

It is recommended, and often required, that you complete the following courses:*

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Biology | 1 year w. lab (generally BIO 150 and BIO 227) Human Anatomy and Physiology: Cells and Tissues & Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems (BIO 143 & BIO 243) Medical Terminology (BIO 291) |
| Chemistry | 1 year General Chemistry w. lab (CHEM 125 & 126 OR CH/BI 125 & 227 OR CHEM 121, 123, and 126) |
| Math & Stats | Statistics (STAT 110 or 212) |
| Psychology | PSYCH 125, 241, 247 |

Prerequisites from different schools (to demonstrate variations in prerequisites)

- List of accredited programs: [Doctoral](#) and [Masters](#)
- [University of Minnesota](#) (MOT)
- [Creighton University](#) (OTD)
- [University of Wisconsin - Madison](#) (MSOT)
- [St. Catherine University](#) (MAOT)
- [Washington University St. Louis](#) (OTD)
- [College of St. Scholastica](#) (MSOT)

WHO IS THE DESIGNATED ADVISING SPECIALIST?

Professor Cindy Book (Associate Professor of Exercise Science, Chair of the Exercise Science Department)

Office: SAC 114E

Phone: 507-786-3255

Email: book@stolaf.edu

WHAT STANDARDIZED TEST WILL I NEED TO TAKE?

- [Graduate Record Examinations \(GRE\)](#)

WHAT CENTRALIZED APPLICATION WILL I USE?

- [Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service \(OTCAS\)](#)

WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENTIAL PREREQUISITES?*

- **Shadowing:** It is usually required to shadow for 50-75 hours. Shadowing should occur with a number of different providers, in a variety of settings (school, in-patient, out-patient, etc.), and with diverse clientele (geriatric, pediatrics, etc.).
- **Volunteering:** It is highly recommended that you volunteer in a position, starting as early as your first year at St. Olaf. Although your volunteer role can be in healthcare or outside of healthcare, we recommend that you aim to volunteer in both capacities. Occupational therapy schools are looking for applicants with **sustained** and **meaningful** volunteer experiences. They don't want students who are simply checking the "volunteer box."

- **Internship(s):** It is recommended that you gain experience in the field through interning at a OT clinic, a department of health, a community clinic, etc. Internships outside of occupational therapy are highly beneficial as well.
- **Research:** It is highly recommended that you complete at least one 10-week research experience. You do not have to find a research opportunity that is related to occupational therapy.
- **Leadership:** It is strongly recommended that you serve in a leadership capacity (president of an organization, academic tutor, service on an advisory board, etc.). Leaders can enhance their communication and organizational skills, as well as learn how to interact with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- **Hobbies:** whatever you enjoy doing in your spare time that demonstrates manual dexterity (e.g. crafting, piano, painting)

WHAT DO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS ACTUALLY DO?

Occupational therapists help people of all ages to fully engage in their daily lives, from their work and recreation to activities of daily living like getting dressed, cooking, eating and driving. If you choose this field, there are many kinds of practice available for you to specialize in. You may decide to work with premature babies at a pediatric hospital or children with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome. Many practitioners choose to help children thrive in the “occupations” of childhood, which include learning, playing and growing.

Therapists also work in schools with students who have learning disabilities or behavioral problems. Or you may be interested in working with older people in their homes or nursing homes, helping them to recover from strokes or deal with Alzheimer’s disease. Some practitioners choose to help accident victims to regain needed skills or offer assistance to people with mental illness. There are new specialties too, like training workers to use the correct ergonomics, helping people with low vision maintain their independence, making buildings and homes more accessible, evaluating and training older drivers and promoting health and wellness.

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
- An outcomes evaluation to ensure that the goals are being met and/or make changes to the intervention plan

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE AT ST. OLAF?

Study Abroad: Yes - you CAN study abroad as a pre-health student! Speak with your advisor early in order to plan for when a semester or year abroad will fit into your academic plan.

Student organizations:

[Full list](#)

[Pre-PT/OT Club](#)

[Pre-health Professionals Club](#)

[Pre-health Moodle site](#)

[Pre-health Google calendar](#)

[Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry](#)

[Paper on OT written by St. Olaf alumna](#)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\)](#)

***Ultimately, it is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that they complete all prerequisite coursework and experiential opportunities required for successful admission to occupational therapy graduate school.**