

Occupational Therapy

What do Occupational Therapists do?

OTs work with a wide range of people to help improve their ability to perform activities of daily living. This might include things such as dressing, washing, cooking and eating, as well as workplace tasks. Often, the focus is on fine motor or basic gross motor function, developing skills such as dexterity, coordination and visual acuity as well as cognitive skills.

How do I become an Occupational Therapist?

Accredited programs at both the master's and doctorate level are available. A bachelor's degree is required for admission. Master's programs usually require two-three years and DOT's ~ three. At least six months of supervised fieldwork is required as part of the degree. Once the degree is awarded, students sit for a national board exam.

What are the pre-requisites for entering a master's or doctorate OT degree program?

Schools will have a large number of pre-reqs in common, but each school may vary slightly in the number of terms they require, or have some program specific courses. Pacific University is the only institution offering an OT degree, and it is at the DOT level. In general, students should plan on competing anatomy and physiology, a term of physics, general, developmental and abnormal psychology, statistics, medical terminology and some humanities courses. Many OTs have bachelor's degrees in Liberal Arts, Psychology or Human Movement

Do I need experience in the field?

It is imperative that for any professional field you want to enter, you understand the work and the day-to-day flow of the profession. OT programs will expect candidates to have been exposed to OT in a variety of settings across a range of ages. Hour minimums will vary.

How competitive is it to get into OT programs?

Nationally, there are 185 OT master's programs and 27 doctoral programs. In 2014, at the master's level, there were a total of 7,070 slots available and 40,839 applications. At the doctoral level, there were 255 slots and 1,481 applications. For Pacific University's entering class of 2015, there were 435 applications for 40 slots, with an average GPA of 3.65.

Do I need the GRE (Graduate Records Examination)?

Some schools will require it, others will not. Pacific University does not require the GRE.

What is an average salary of a licensed OT?

Salary varies between settings of employment, but in 2014 the average annual income was \$81,690.

What is the projected job outlook for OTs?

The Bureau of labor Statistics indicates that the rate of growth for OTs is expected to grow ~ 42% through 2022 - much faster than the average occupation.

Where can I get more information?

American Occupational Therapy Association website (aota.org) and The Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov/ooh) are great resources for learning more about the field.