

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (MOT/OTD) ACADEMIC AND CAREER INFORMATION

### NATURE OF THE WORK, EARNINGS, AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

**Occupational Therapy (OT)** is a health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. OTs achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement. 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. The types of services that OTs provide include customized treatment programs to improve people's ability to perform daily activities; evaluation and treatment to develop or restore sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial performance skills; comprehensive home and job site evaluation with adaptation recommendations to make them safe, conserve energy, enhance comfort, independence and productivity; adaptive equipment recommendations and usage training; and guidance to family members and caregivers. An array of opportunities and practice settings is available to licensed OTs that includes working in private clinics, hospitals, corporations, homes, schools, community centers, psychiatric hospitals, health centers, and wellness resorts. For more information on occupational therapy as a career, visit the [American Occupational Therapy Association](http://www.aota.org).

**Earnings and Job Outlook:** In 2018, the median annual wage for occupational therapists was \$84,270. The job growth for occupational therapists is expected to grow by 18% between 2018-2028 (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2018).

### TRAINING

Preparation to become an occupational therapist entails earning a master's degree in Occupational Therapy (MOT). More advanced degrees include a Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD) or a Ph.D. The time-to-degree for a MOT is typically 2 years. After obtaining their degree, graduates complete at minimum six months of supervised clinical internships in a variety of health care and community settings. In California, occupational therapists must be licensed by the California Occupational Therapy Board.

### ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Pre-occupational therapy students may major in **any discipline** provided they successfully complete all prerequisite coursework. Most occupational therapy schools require 1 year of general biology, 1 year of general chemistry, 1 year of English, 1 year of the behavior sciences, 1 course in statistics, and 1 course in human anatomy.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### CSULB courses which fulfill admission requirements for some U.S. Occupational Therapy programs:

*Students maintain responsibility for verifying course selection with individual programs.*

Coursework	CSULB Courses
One year of General Chemistry with Lab	Chemistry 111A & 111B
Human Anatomy and Physiology with Lab	Biology 208: Human Anatomy Biology 207: Human Physiology
One year of General Biology with Lab	Biology 211 & 212
One year of General Physics with Lab	Physics 100A & 100B OR 151 & 152
One course in Statistics	Biology 260 OR Kinesiology 483
General Psychology	Psychology 100
One year of English	English 100 AND another course from the English department such as: 102, 180, 300

## IMPORTANT FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

**STANDARDIZED TEST:** Some programs require the [Graduate Record Examination \(GRE\)](#) for admission.

**CLINICAL EXPOSURE:** Many programs require applicants to have volunteer or paid experiences working with patients under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist. The program may specify the settings and types of experiences required. These experiences are an important factor in the admissions process. Students should respectfully contact occupational therapy clinics, hospitals, long-term care facilities (e.g., nursing homes), and other healthcare settings in the area to find opportunities.

**LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:** Many programs require 1-4 letters of recommendation as part of the admissions process. Programs may require references from a particular individual, such as an occupational therapist, science professor, or academic advisor. If references are required, select individuals who meet the program's requirements, know the student well, and can speak to maturity, dependability, dedication, compassion, communication skills, leadership, and any hands-on experience in the field.

**ADMISSIONS:** All prerequisite courses must be completed by time of matriculation. Most OT programs use rolling admissions and deadlines vary between fall and spring. Check individual OT schools and consult with your OT advisor on admission deadlines. The Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) is another option for applying to many programs in one place.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\)](#)
- [Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service \(OTCAS\)](#)
  - [OTCAS: participating educational programs](#)

For more information on Occupational Therapy, visit [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org) and see your HPAO advisor for further information on the application process, application assistance, and a list of upcoming workshops and events.