

Occupational Therapy (OT) FAQs

Academics

Q: What is Occupational Therapy (OT)?

A: OT is the only profession that helps people across the lifespan to do the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of daily activities. OT practitioners enable people of all ages to live life to its fullest by promoting health and prevention—or live better with injury, illness, or disability.

Q: What should I major in to make me the most competitive applicant?

A: OT schools do not prefer one major over another, they would rather students to choose a major they enjoy. The thought behind this is students will do better in a [major](#) they enjoy, have a higher GPA, and have something to fall back on if they ultimately decide not to pursue the health professions. Most students choose a major that cover a lot of the prerequisite courses or gives elective flexibility, which allows students to choose prerequisite courses to fill them. The most common majors for Pre-OT are psychology and kinesiology since many of the prerequisites courses (found [here](#)) are included in the degree plan.

Q: What is on a typical application for OT school?

A: Generally, a complete OT application consists of opening an OTCAS account to complete each OT school's application, request up to 5 letters of recommendation, request transcripts, send GRE scores, a 1-2 page double-spaced personal statement, upload documented OT observation hours and input all your academic coursework including the prerequisites for each school.

Q: What are the requirements for OT school?

A: Most of the OT schools have similar requirements such as documented OT observation hours, letters of recommendation from OTs and professors, personal statement, an interview, common application through OTCAS, and the following prerequisite courses: anatomy & physiology, abnormal psychology, lifespan development, and statistics. Several programs also want additional courses which could be physics, medical terminology, behavioral/social sciences, health, kinesiology, etc. and require the GRE.

Q: Can I take a course at a community/junior college?

A: Yes, taking classes at a community college is acceptable. While the grade earned at a community college does not count towards your TAMU GPA, it will be calculated into your [GPAs](#) when you apply to OT school. Use this to your advantage and get A's in any courses you take at community college to help raise your overall, prerequisite, final 60 hour GPAs.

*Note before enrolling in a community college course, check [here](#) to make sure the course has a transfer course equivalency at Texas A&M AND check with your academic advisor, if you plan to use the credit at Texas A&M. For the course to count as an OT school prerequisite, you must also check whether the number is on the OT school's website BEFORE you take the course.

Q: Do OT schools accept AP/IB/dual credit?

A: This is a two-part question because AP/IB and dual credit are two different things. Dual credit is college credit and is treated like community/junior college credit, so you do not have the option to accept it or not. You must submit transcripts for dual credit coursework, when applying to OT school. Most OT programs will NOT accept AP/IB credit that is a prerequisite. We do HIGHLY recommend that you fully discuss accepting any AP/IB credits with BOTH your academic and Pre-OT advisor BEFORE accepting any AP/IB credit to ensure that won't affect your degree plan and your plans for OT school.

*Note that once you accept AP/IB credit, you cannot un-accept it.

Q: Will Q-dropping a course hurt my chances of getting into OT school?

A: We cannot say how one course will affect you getting into OT school or how competitive it will be, when you apply. Application committees will look at your grades as well as other factors found on tx.ag/wdintbwo.

If there is any chance you could make a D or lower in the course, then you want to drop the course.

Reflect on what happened this semester, give yourself grace and sign-up to retake the course.

If you are trying to decide, visit [here](#) to see more information and to find the GPA calculator OTCAS will use. You can review the instruction tab within the GPA calculator for more detailed information. Type in all of the courses you have taken at the college level, so you can see where you stand. If you continue with the course, make a C and retake it, the C will get calculated

into the overall GPA, some schools will take the higher grade in the science GPA, but it depends on the school OTCAS calculates several GPAs by taking the quality points divided by your attempted credits to determine your GPA. If you think you may retake it anyway, then dropping it now may be the best choice. The Pre-OT advisor is here to discuss your options, if you are on the fence. Don't wait until the week of Q-drop deadline to reach out. Also, speak with your academic advisor about how this will affect your academic progress toward graduation.

GRE

Q: When should I take the GRE?

A: First, check that at least one of the schools you are applying to requires the GRE, since this requirement has slowly been dropped by programs over the last few years. We encourage applicants to take the GRE when applicants are ready. Start by taking a FREE online practice exam to gauge how you will perform on the exam. The GRE also tests endurance as it is 3 hours and 45-minute online test. If you want to start OT school immediately following graduation, then you want to take your free practice test sooner rather than later. We advise applicants to take the official GRE by the spring semester or the summer of the year you are applying to OT school. Tests can be taken through your personal computer at home or in the General Services Complex multiple times a week. OT schools that require the GRE will usually have minimum GRE requirements and advertise their previous admission scores to help applicants compare competitive scores. You can retake the GRE after 21 days, but when submitting your GRE scores to OT School, you usually share all attempts. For more information or to register for the GRE, visit [their website](#).

Q: Where can I take a practice GRE?

A: Kaplan offers a [free practice exam online](#). Magoosh offers a [free trial](#). The PSA office makes no claims about the efficacy of prep programs, but only provides the names of known providers as a service.

Q: Where can I sign up for the GRE?

A: You must have an account through ETS before you can register and pay for the GRE, which can be done [here](#).

Applying to OT School/OTCAS

Q: Do I have to apply to each school separately?

A: No, currently all Texas schools and many other OT schools use OTCAS. Find the list of [OTCAS Participating Programs](#) and [the application fees and fee waivers information](#).

Q: How can I sign up for an application or personal statement workshop?

A: All workshops that are hosted by Professional School Advising are available for online registration at [tx.ag/psaworkshops](#). Registration for these events is usually available about a month before the workshop date and closes 24 hours before the start of the workshop or once registration is full.

Q: What factors do OT school application committees consider?

A: Besides GPA and GRE scores, the most important aspect of your application is what you learn through your OT experience (Quality>Quantity). OT schools often require a minimum of 80 OT shadowing hours, but for a competitive application you should aim to have approximately 150 hours. A competitive [resume](#) will include work history, leadership skills demonstrated through on and off campus involvement, community service and involvement, and academic achievements and awards. (see [tx.ag/wdintbwo](#) for more information and how to keep track of your experiences), a strong personal statement that shows not tells why you want to be an OT, and letters of recommendations from OTs that include a letter as well as rate you on the following: adaptability, critical thinking, conflict resolution, interpersonal relations, oral communication, reliability, self-awareness, team skills, and written communication.

Q: Does Texas A&M have an OT school?

A: No, we don't have an OT school.

Shadowing/Networking

Q: How do I get shadowing hours/learn more about OT?

A: Join [Occupational Therapy Society](#) to network with other pre-OT students, OT students, OT representatives, and OTs, as well as be introduced to opportunities such as shadowing, mentoring, and jobs. We also recommend you use Google to find local pharmacies/hospitals to call/visit, resources on our [WDINTBWO](#) handout, such as, [Find An Aggie](#) or the [volunteer handout](#) to find a clinic/hospital that suits your needs and interests. We like to remind students to be professional and respectful of clinic/hospital site policies when contacting. This will include inquiring about dress code, vaccine requirements, and if the site has any additional volunteer requirements.

Q: Is there a student organization on campus for OT?

A: Yes, you are highly encouraged to join [Occupational Therapy Society](#) to network with other pre-OT students, OT students, OT representatives, and OTs, as well as be introduced to opportunities such as shadowing, mentoring, and jobs. They have a separate listserv from Professional School Advising that shares helpful information with their members.

Q: How do I become an Occupational Therapist?

A: To be an occupational therapist, you need to earn either an entry-level OT master's (MOT) or entry-level OT doctoral degree (OTD), depending on the program you apply to. Most Texas schools are OTD or in the process of switching to the OTD. Click [here](#) to find a school and [here](#) to review more information about the profession.

Financial Aid

Q: What scholarship opportunities are available for pre-OT students at Texas A&M?

A:

- Search scholarships through [Texas A&M's Scholarships & Financial Aid](#),
- subscribe to the Pre-OT listserv at tx.ag/psalistservs as we share information through the listservs that we are made aware of,
- search for other opportunities and speak with OT schools you are interested in to see how financial aid works at their school. If you are eligible to sign-up for FAFSA, then you want to sign-up, even if you didn't receive financial aid for undergrad.

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