

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Master of Science (MS) Degree
(IU School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences)

2009 - 2010

HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER

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IMPORTANT:

This document was prepared for Indiana University Bloomington students by the Health Professions and Prelaw Center. Please note that specific requirements and policies can change at any time without notice. Students are responsible for obtaining the most current information directly from the application services, and the schools and programs in which they have an interest. Refer to these OT resources: www.shrs.iupui.edu/ & <http://bulletin.iupui.edu/2006/pdf/healthandrehabilitation06.pdf>

I. GENERAL OT INFORMATION ¹

A. Description of the Profession

- **Occupational Therapy (OT)** helps people maximize their ability to participate in life independently. With OT, children and adults facing physical, cognitive, or psychosocial challenges can improve skills that help them perform daily tasks at home, school, work, and play. OT doesn't simply treat medical conditions. It helps people stay engaged in activities that give them pleasure or a sense of purpose, despite challenges. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills, patience, empathy, strong communication and social skills, and the ability to work with a team of care givers are skills important to this profession. Occupational therapists are service-oriented "people persons." *Note that a graduate level degree is now required to practice as a licensed occupational therapist.*

We strongly encourage you to review further information about this program, including links to web resources, on the HPPLC web page (www.hpplc.indiana.edu) and at the end of this document.

We also suggest you sign up for the HPPLC email list associated with your program of interest, also found on our home page. Feel free to sign up for more than one list.

B. Description of the OT Program

- **IUB does not offer an occupational therapy program, but pre-OT students may complete the prerequisites at IUB and, upon admission, enter the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences in Indianapolis (IUPUI) to complete Master of Science in OT.** (IU does not offer an undergraduate OT degree.) Admission to the OT program requires completion of a baccalaureate degree, the prerequisite courses (which can be worked into most undergraduate degrees), and the other admission requirements noted in this document. *Students may choose any undergraduate major as long as they also take the OT prerequisite courses.* The OT program itself takes two years to complete, including summers (beginning summer session II after applying), and incorporates fieldwork assignments at affiliated centers located in Indiana and other states. The IU Occupational Therapy Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE).

II. COURSES REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION

The requirements below are for the IUPUI OT program. Pre-OT students should research and apply to several programs, including ones outside of Indiana. Admission requirements / level of competitiveness vary across programs. It is important to check requirements periodically, and to keep in touch with programs to garner current information.

Required Preprofessional Courses ² (Course designations are for IUB)	Credit Hours
Behavioral Science	
Abnormal Psychology (PSY-P 324) ³	3
Lifespan Development (HPER-F 150 or EDUC-P 314 ⁶)	3
Statistics and Science	
Statistics (One of the following: MATH-K 300, MATH-K 310, PSY-K 300, PSY-K 310, STATS-S 300, SPEA-K 300, HPER-R 390, or equivalent stats course. ^{4, 5}	3
Human Anatomy with Lab (ANAT-A 215) ⁵	5
Human Physiology with Lab (PHSL-P 215) ^{5, 7}	5
Other Program Prerequisites	
Medical Terminology (CLAS-C 209)	2
Total preprofessional credit hours	21

IMPORTANT NOTES

- 1) The information in this handout refers only to the IUPUI School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences OT program. See www.aota.org/nonmembers/area13/links/LINK28.asp for a list of accredited OT programs.
- 2) Prereqs must be completed with "C" or higher ("C-" not acceptable). *5 of the 6 prereqs must be completed at time of application. If admitted, you must complete all prereqs by June 1 in order to enter the program.*
- 3) PSY-P 324 prerequisites: PSY-P 155 by itself; or PSY-P 101 and 102, or P151 and P152.
- 4) Statistics courses generally assume proficiency at the MATH-M 014 (algebra) level. Finite math (MATH-M 118, A118, or D116/117) is a strongly suggested prerequisite for PSY-K 300. MATH-M 119 is a required prerequisite for MATH / PSY-K 310.
- 5) Stats, anatomy, and physiology may not be more than 7 years old at time of application and program entry.
- 6) Prerequisite or co-requisite for EDUC-P 314 is PSY-P 101 or P155.
- 7) IUPUI OT will accept Biol-P 451 (Jr standing required) in place of Phsl-P 215.

III. ADDITIONAL COURSE OPTIONS AND NOTES

- Statistics, anatomy, and physiology may not be more than 7 years old at time of application and entry into the program.
- **IMPORTANT:** Be aware that **some OT programs may not accept Advanced Placement (AP) credit, credit-by-exam, or exemption from degree requirements in place of admission requirements**, or may only accept such credit under specific circumstances. Check with programs to confirm their policies.
- The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences suggests students take additional humanities & social science (e.g., professional writing, ethics, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, minority studies, folklore, foreign language / culture, classical studies, psychology.)
- While not required, HPPLC advisors and the OT program both suggest you consider taking Interpersonal Communication (CMCL-C 122) **and / or** Public Speaking (CMCL-C 121) as part of your undergraduate program. Excellent communication skills are important to any health profession.

IV. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS and STATISTICS

A. Overview

- The Indiana University Occupational Therapy program at IUPUI is very competitive (see stats next page). Admission is based upon completion of prerequisite coursework, prerequisite GPA (60%) and cumulative GPA (40%) in an undergraduate major, and observation and/or volunteer work in an OT setting. The program admits 36 students each year.
- **IMPORTANT:** It is recommended that you apply to at least 6 or 8 OT programs, each of which will have its own admission requirements. In addition to prerequisite courses, many programs require letters of recommendation (often from OTs with whom you have undertaken extensive shadowing), an admissions interview, a personal statement, and the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). You can research programs using the list of accredited OT programs at www.aota.org/Students/Schools.aspx.

B. Shadowing and Observation

- Prior to your application, the IU OT program requires a *minimum* 12 hours of observation and/or volunteer work in at least 3 different OT practice settings (e.g., acute care hospital, outpatient clinic, mental health center, school system) with either an OT or OT Assistant. (*Note that having substantially more shadowing, and perhaps even OT assisting experience, can increase your competitiveness for admission to other OT programs.*)
- Validation required for each observation. Visit http://shrs.iupui.edu/occupational_therapy/admissions/, and click on the Required Observational Hours Form link at the bottom of the page.
- For observation / volunteer opportunities, visit the Bloomington Hospital Student Placement Center site (www.bhstudents.org/) and click on the "Shadowing" link, contact OT settings directly, or contact the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (reakins@iupui.edu) and request a list. Visit a variety of OT environments, ask questions, and keep an informal journal of your observations.

C. Volunteering and Other Professional Development

- **See above section.** (HPPLC advisors suggest that volunteer experience is important to any college education.)
- **Bloomington Pre-OT students should consider joining the IUB OT Club**, which meets a few times each fall and spring semester. Email HPPLC for details, hpplc@indiana.edu. Among other activities, a variety of professional speakers share their expertise with club members.

D. GPA

- **Cumulative GPA (CGPA):** Minimum 3.0 required, 40% of admissions formula.
- **Prerequisite GPA:** Minimum 3.0 required, 60% of admissions formula.
- **Math / Science GPA:** Not calculated separately.
- Developmental coursework (e.g. EDUC-X 150) is **not** considered in the CGPA calculation.

(GPA Cont'd. next page)

(GPA cont'd.)

- At the time of application, and upon entry into the OT professional program, students must have both a minimum CGPA and minimum prerequisite GPA of 3.0. After acceptance, student must earn a minimum grade of "C" in remaining prerequisite courses.

OT Class of 2011 Applicant Data¹ (IUPUI)	GPA
Admitted CGPA range	3.1 – 3.9
Average ("Mean") CGPA admitted	3.4
Admitted prerequisite GPA range	3.5 – 4.0
Average ("Mean") prerequisite GPA	3.6

1) Data as of May 2009. Students admitted with a lower CGPA have a higher prerequisite GPA, and vice versa.

E. Admissions Test

- None required for the IU program; however, many OT programs require applicants to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). You are strongly urged to apply to multiple OT programs, which likely means taking the GRE. Most pre-OT students take it during junior year, or the summer after junior year.

F. Application Information

• **Deadlines / Requirements**

- 1) All application materials should be submitted between **August 1 and January 10** to allow time for processing and notification of any missing materials. All application materials are due by **January 20**, prior to the summer during which you anticipate beginning the OT program.
- 2) 5 of the 6 prerequisites must be completed *at the time of application*. The 6th and final prerequisite may be taken the spring prior to the start of the summer OT professional coursework. All admission requirements must be completed and all matriculation materials received on or before June 1 in order to matriculate into the program.
- 3) Applicants who are not IU students need only complete the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences application. No need to complete a separate IU application.

• **Where / When to Find the Application**

Click on [onlineapp.htm](http://shrs.iupui.edu/occupational_therapy/admissions/) link at bottom of http://shrs.iupui.edu/occupational_therapy/admissions/. Refer also to the Online Application Instructions link at the bottom of the page noted above.

• **Second Chances (e.g., repeating courses)**

See www.bulletin.iupui.edu/ for *Academic Bankruptcy*, *Fresh Start*, and *course repeat* policy information. Always double-check policies with Student Enrollment Services Coordinator, Renee Akins. Utilizing such policies could increase your chances of being admitted to the OT program.

• **Residency / Non-Residency**

Being an Indiana resident or a graduate of Indiana University, or submitting materials early, does **not** provide an advantage for admission purposes.

G. Admission Interview

- None required for the IU program; however, many OT programs do require an interview.

H. Credit Hours Required Prior to Admission to Professional Program

- Completion of any undergraduate degree, plus the 21 hours of OT prerequisites listed on page 2.

I. Letters of Recommendation

- None required for the IU program; however, many OT programs do require letters of recommendation, and often at least one is required from an OT with whom you have spent considerable time shadowing.

J. Personal Statement / Essay

- None required for IU program; however, many OT programs do require a personal statement. Refer to web sites of individual programs for specifics.

V. ADMISSION NOTES and SUGGESTIONS

A. Have a Backup Plan

- Admission to the IU OT program is very competitive. While strong academic performance can help you become a competitive applicant, it is important that you develop a "Plan B" in case your first plan derails. HPPLC advisors strongly encourage you to research the admission requirements of other OT programs and apply to at least 6 or 8. Feel free to consult with the HPPLC pre-OT advisor.

B. Other Admission Notes and Suggestions

- **Familiarize yourself with and utilize the IU OT web page, www.shrs.iupui.edu/ot/.**
- **HPPLC advisors strongly recommend that you talk with the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Student Enrollment Services Coordinator** (see contact information in Section VIII) regarding unanswered questions you have about the program or admission. It is also simply a good policy to keep in touch with the people who have a say in whether or not you are admitted.
- **Remember that you may earn your undergraduate major in anything you like as you prepare for OT.** It is best to pursue a major you will enjoy, and one you would undertake anyway even if you weren't interested in OT.

VI. CAREER INFORMATION

- **Credentialing:** Unless grandfathered in under previous professional certification requirements, to become a registered occupational therapist (OTR) one must have a master's degree (MSOT, MOT) or an OT doctorate (OTD). After successfully completing the academic and clinical experiences, students normally take the certification exam given by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (www.nbcot.org/) and thus become an OTR. OT graduates may also need to meet other requirements in order to earn state license / registration / certification in a given state. Graduation is in May, and the NBCOT exam is offered on demand by computer. HPPLC advisors strongly recommend you talk with the OT Admission Committee Chairperson about credentialing.
- **Salary and employment information from the US Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics** (actual salary ranges tend to be higher):
 - 1) The above sources indicates the *possibility* of a short term slow down in the OT job market, but long growth through 2016: "Employment of occupational therapists is expected to increase 23 percent between 2006 and 2016."
 - 2) "Median annual earnings of occupational therapists were \$60,470 in May 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between \$50,450 and \$73,710. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$40,840, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$89,450."
 - 3) Median annual salary in industries employing the largest numbers of OT's in May 2006: Home health care services, \$67,600; Offices of physical, occupational, and speech therapists, and audiologists, \$62,290; nursing care facilities, \$64,750; general medical and surgical hospitals, \$61,610; Elementary and secondary schools, \$54,260.
 - 4) As of 2008, the typical *entry-level* salary range for Occupational Therapy positions in Indiana is \$45,000-\$55,000.
 - 5) Visit www.bls.gov/oco/ocos078.htm & <http://stats.bls.gov/home.htm> & www.bls.gov/search/ooh.asp?ct=OOH for additional career information.
 - 6) See **Section VII** of this document for links to further information about the OT profession.

VII. OT FAQ

1) Q. What undergraduate major should I choose? Does it matter whether I earn a Bachelor of Science (BS) or a Bachelor of Arts (BA)?

A. While it is easier to work the OT prerequisites into some major programs than others, you may earn your undergraduate major in anything you like as you prepare for OT. It is best to pursue a major you'll enjoy, and one you would undertake even if you weren't interested in OT. None of the types of baccalaureate degrees you might earn (e.g., BA, BS, BFA, BSW) pose any inherent advantages or disadvantages compared to any other.

2) Q. What kind of advanced degree is required to practice occupational therapy?

A. Refer to Section VI, Career Information, Credentialing.

3) Q. How do I know which OT programs are the best or highest ranked?

A. Neither The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) nor The Accreditation Council for

Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) ranks programs. Accreditation itself indicates that the program is in compliance with the minimum standards established by ACOTE. Some programs may exceed the minimum standards, but whether or not this is the case is not acknowledged by ACOTE. Of course, you can research the university itself in addition to its OT program, and thus establish further criteria by which to rank your programs of interest. *Do not over-rely on third-party rankings lists*, which can be very subjective, and which don't always use the most relevant criteria when comparing programs.

4) Q. How do I learn what occupational therapists do?

A. 1) Read the description on page 1 of this document. **2)** Review the resources indicated in Section VIII. **3)** See **section III.B**, Shadowing / and Observation. While not the only resource for observation / volunteering, you may visit the Bloomington Hospital Student Placement Center site, www.bhstudents.org/, and click on the "Shadowing" link. You can also contact OT settings directly and ask about observation / volunteering. Visit a variety of OT environments, ask questions, and keep an informal journal of your observations.

VIII. PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION and OTHER RESOURCES

Occupational Therapy Program (IUPUI)

Ms. Renee Akins
Student Enrollment Services Coordinator
IU School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences
Coleman Hall 120
1140 W. Michigan St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202-5119
Phone: (317) 274-7238
email: reakins@iupui.edu
Web: www.shrs.iupui.edu/

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Bulletin

<http://bulletin.iupui.edu/2006/pdf/healthandrehabilitation06.pdf>

Other Resources

Complete list of accredited U.S. OT programs
www.aota.org/Students/Schools.aspx

The American Occupational Therapy Association
is a good resource for exploring OT as a career.
www.aota.org/

Indiana Occupational Therapy Association (IOTA)
www.inota.com/

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)
www.nbcot.org/

HPPLC web page
www.hpplc.indiana.edu

Professional Development is a critical part of any undergraduate degree. Click the Professional Development link on the HPPLC home page for important suggestions.

The Health Professions and Prelaw Center encourages you to email our advisors with questions. Feel free to email an individual advisor; or, if you're not sure who to contact, send a message to: hpplc@indiana.edu.

Visit the HPPLC web site and sign up for your area's email list, and for further program information, notices about upcoming meetings, campus visits by admission representatives, our Health Programs Fair, and other items of interest.

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