

Occupational Therapy

What is Occupational Therapy (OT)?

Occupational Therapy (OT) is “a profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational Therapists achieve this outcome by teaching people new skills that enhance their ability to participate or by modifying the environment to better support participation.”

“Occupational Therapy is practiced in a wide range of settings, including hospitals, health centres, and homes. Clients are actively involved in the therapeutic process and outcomes of occupational therapy are diverse, client-driven and measured in terms of participation or satisfaction derived from participation.”

(World Federation of Occupational Therapists Council Meeting, 2004, www.collegept.org)

What are the common academic requirements for OT programs?

- 4-year Bachelor degree or equivalent
- Minimum mid-B average in the final year, generally comprised of five full- or ten half-course equivalents (i.e., 5 credits)
- Generally, a minimum B+ average in these last 10 full course equivalents is competitive, but not a guarantee of admission
- Admissions average of a new OT class is generally A-
- No formal prerequisites, however some programs recommend a background in Human Growth and Development, Introductory Physiology or Introductory Human Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Statistics and/or Research Design to enhance learning in the program

What supporting documents may be required?

- Official transcripts from all previous post-secondary education
- Two letters of reference
- Statement of intent/personal statement
- Resume or CV

Start Early!

Occupational Therapy programs require a minimum mid-B average. Many look for demonstrated interest and relevant experience.

Improve your GPA:

Visit the AA&CC and the Centre for Teaching & Learning to improve your academic skills.

Cultivate References:

Get to know your professors. Their research is interesting! Professors who know you fairly well are able to write strong reference letters for you.

Get Involved:

Join volunteer and co-curricular activities that demonstrate your skills and ongoing interest in a career in Occupational Therapy.

What should my personal statement include?

- Your interest in Occupational Therapy
- Your future goals and career path
- Reasons why their school fits your goals
- What you will contribute to the program
- Related knowledge, experience and skills
- Research interests (where applicable)

What other considerations are there?

- MSc.OT. programs generally take 2 years to complete on a full-time basis.
- The program consists of courses and field placements.
- To call oneself an Occupational Therapist, which is a protected title, registration with the Ontario College of Occupational Therapists is required.

Where can I study Occupational Therapy in Ontario?

- University of Toronto - www.ot.utoronto.ca
- McMaster University - www.srs-mcmaster.ca/Programs/MScOT/tabid/521/Default.aspx
- Queen's University - www.rehab.queensu.ca
- The University of Western Ontario - www.uwo.ca/fhs/ot

Paying for an Occupational Therapy Program

Annual tuition for Ontario students ranges \$11,000-13,000. Remember to ask about scholarships and bursaries! Additional financial support information is available at www.esdc.gc.ca/en/student_financial_aid/scholarships.page

Looking for Related Experience?

Review the *Volunteering and Internships tip sheets*, attend a *Work Search Strategies* workshop or book an appointment with a Career Counsellor or Career Strategist.

Where can I find more information and resources?

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT)
www.caot.ca

Canadian Occupational Therapy Foundation (COTF)
www.cotfcanada.org

Canadian Society of Occupational Scientists (CSOS)
www.csoscanada.com

College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (COTO)
www.coto.org

Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists (OSOT)
www.osot.on.ca



The AA&CC can help! Attend the Graduate & Professional Schools Fair (October), go to a *Preparing for Professional & Graduate School* workshop, meet professionals in the field through Extern, or speak with a Career team member to learn how to get relevant experience!

Application & Personal Statement Resources

- Effective Admission Letters (U of T Writing Centre):
www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/admission-letters
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab:
owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/
- CTL's Graduate School Application and Personal Statement Assignment Calculator:
ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/assignmentcal

Please note: While this tip sheet aims to ensure accuracy, requirements do change. Consider it a starting point for your further research. Visit individual Faculties of Rehabilitation Science for detailed, up-to-date information about admission requirements and application procedures.