

Occupational Therapy School Preparation Guidelines

This guide is intended for students planning to start an occupational therapy program at Creighton after two years of undergraduate studies. Many occupational therapy doctoral programs still require completion of a Bachelor's degree before OT school. Pre-Health Advisors are available to assist students with exploring a timeline to apply.

Every Semester you should plan to:

1. Successfully complete pre-professional coursework
2. Maintain excellent grades (3.0 and above to be competitive); science and behavioral science coursework is especially critical
3. Keep your legal and student behavior records clean! These records can impact both admissions and professional licensure
4. Explore and participate in meaningful activities and experiences
5. Get to know your faculty and instructors and meet with a Pre-Health Advisor

Freshman Year – Fall Semester

- Participate in POPT 100 Pre-Occupational Therapy Seminar (enroll during summer registration)
- Focus on your academics and transition to college – seek assistance early if needed!
- Start a resume - track activities and experiences; journal observations
- Be active: go to fairs and events and join the Pre-Occupational Therapy Club student organization
- Explore a service opportunity and begin participation
- Shadow Occupational Therapists in a variety of settings to fully explore the profession
- If considering OT programs other than Creighton, research those schools for pre-requisite courses, admissions selection factors, etc.
- Begin considering who you will ask for Letters of Recommendation for your application - it is recommended to have at least one academic reference
- Begin brainstorming your personal statement and write a rough draft by Spring

TIP: Occupational Therapy experience and service involvement are important in your Freshman year!

Freshman Year – Spring Semester

- Complete participation in POPT 100
- Assess your academic and co-curricular readiness to apply by meeting with a Pre-Health Advisor and/or School or Pharmacy and Health Professions (SPAHP) admissions staff
- Continue meaningful service and experiential activities
- If a GRE is required for schools you are considering, make a study plan and decide when you will take the exam (GRE is not required by Creighton)
- Participate in shadowing and mentoring opportunities with current Creighton occupational therapy students
- Shadow Occupational Therapists in a variety of settings
- If considering OT programs other than Creighton, research those schools for pre-requisite courses, admissions selection factors, etc.
- Continue working on personal statement
- Before end of semester, contact letter writers and get confirmation they will write a strongly supportive letter for your application

TIP: Occupational therapy experience and service are important in your Freshman year!

Summer after Freshman year

- Continue or begin employment or volunteer work in occupational therapy or healthcare setting; continue shadowing OT professionals
- Take the GRE exam if required by a school you are considering (Creighton does not require the GRE)
- Begin work to prepare for Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) application in July: order a student copy of official transcript, begin writing about activities and experiences; finalize personal statement, prepare to order official transcripts, confirm letters of recommendation, etc.
- For early consideration, apply by September 1st
- If eligible, apply for OTCAS Fee Assistance Program before submitting application
- After OTCAS submitted, check to see if transcripts received, letters submitted, etc., and complete any supplemental application materials required by individual schools in a timely manner (late Summer / early Fall)
- Confirm with schools your file is complete (early Fall)
- Once you have been invited to interview, schedule a practice interview with the Career Center
- Make a plan in advance for the possibility of not being offered an acceptance: explore ways to strengthen application, determine if you will apply in the following year or complete 4-year degree and work with your primary academic advisor and pre-health advisors

Sophomore Year

- Continue to follow up on your application status to ensure your file is complete; submit any supplemental applications required at individual schools in a timely fashion
- Participate in POPT 200 Pre-Occupational Therapy seminar
- Continue meaningful service and experiential activities
- Continue to focus on getting good grades
- Once you are scheduled for an interview at any school, set up a practice interview with the Career Center
- Interview at occupational therapy schools November – April
- Follow guidelines for admissions acceptances and pay appropriate deposits
- After fall grades are posted, submit OTCAS Academic Update and send new transcripts (December – February)
- Explore your options for financing your occupational therapy school tuition and expenses – use resources in POPT 200
- Continue to explore your options and prepare for an alternative plan if you do not receive an acceptance

Sophomore Summer

- Prepare for OT school enrollment – purchase books, make living arrangements, and attend orientation programs
- Follow-up on all financial aid forms and deadlines
- Take time to Relax. Congratulations!

Junior Year – If not accepted to an Occupational Therapy program

- Identify any weaknesses in your application and make a plan to strengthen those areas before applying again
- Identify appropriate courses to take to enhance your readiness for occupational therapy school and/or strengthen your GPA for an application, if needed – some courses might be to explore or complete major requirements if completing a degree
 - Some courses you might consider are Physiology, Physics, EMS 101, Health Admin & Policy courses, Health Communications, additional behavioral science, additional Biology, Exercise Science courses
- Participate as a Guest in POPT 200 to stay connected to resources, information, and support
- Consider whether or not you will apply after Junior year or opt to complete an undergraduate degree
- If you decide to complete a degree, select a major and plan courses to meet all Magis Core and major requirements – work with your primary academic advisor and/or faculty in the department of the major you are considering
- Continue to get good grades
- Continue participation in meaningful service, occupational therapy/healthcare experience, leadership, occupational therapy student mentoring, and shadowing of occupational therapists– well-rounded applicants are competitive applicants!