PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY INFORMATION SUMMARY

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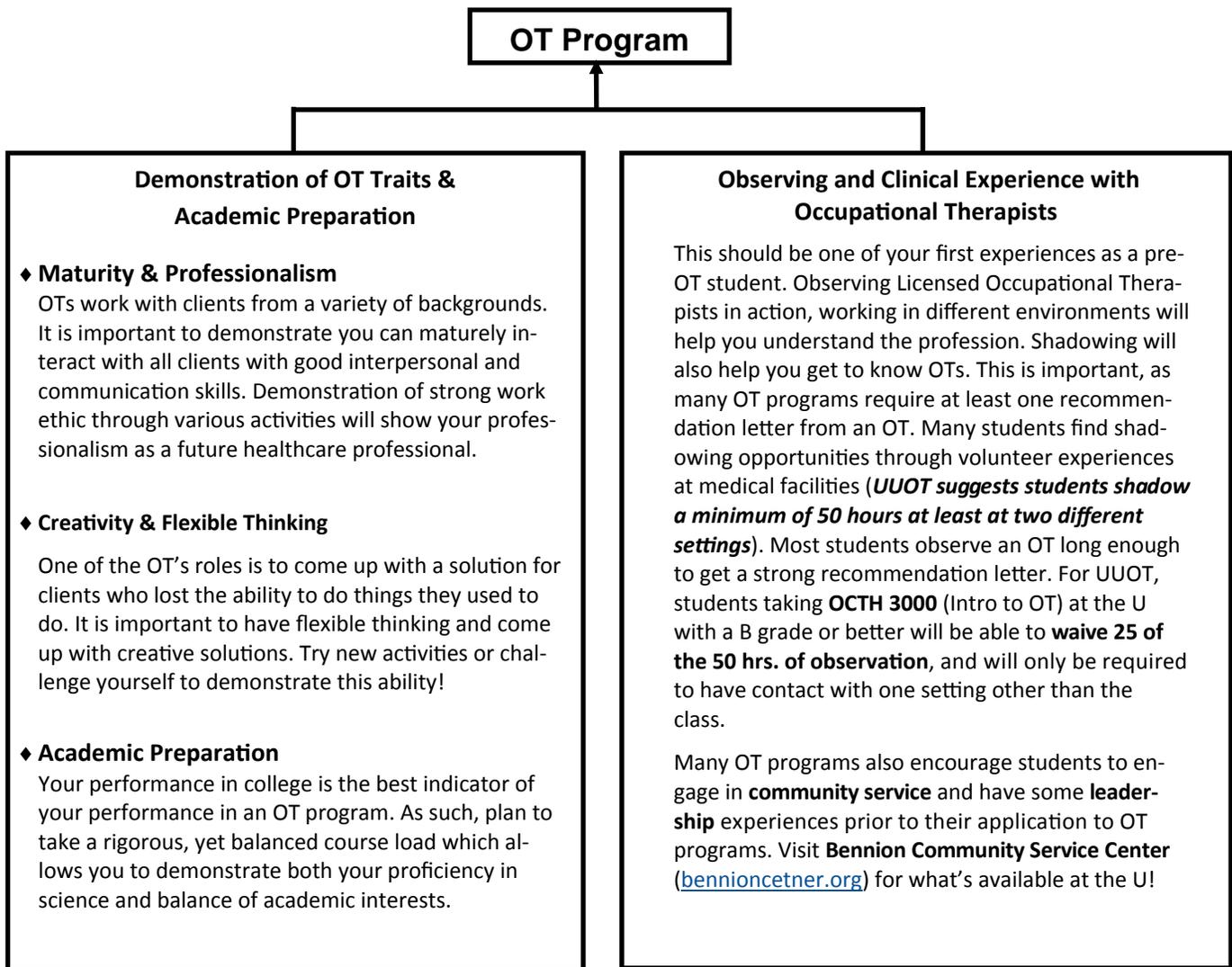Tam Mai, tmai@advising.utah.edu, Marriott Library, 2nd Floor, SW Corner
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Preparation for Occupational Therapy programs involves curricular and extracurricular experiences which demonstrate communication, leadership, community service, research, and familiarity with the profession. Any major is appropriate. Study something you love!

- EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

OT Program

Demonstration of OT Traits & Academic Preparation

♦ Maturity & Professionalism
OTs work with clients from a variety of backgrounds. It is important to demonstrate you can maturely interact with all clients with good interpersonal and communication skills. Demonstration of strong work ethic through various activities will show your professionalism as a future healthcare professional.

♦ Creativity & Flexible Thinking

One of the OT's roles is to come up with a solution for clients who lost the ability to do things they used to do. It is important to have flexible thinking and come up with creative solutions. Try new activities or challenge yourself to demonstrate this ability!

♦ Academic Preparation
Your performance in college is the best indicator of your performance in an OT program. As such, plan to take a rigorous, yet balanced course load which allows you to demonstrate both your proficiency in science and balance of academic interests.

Observing and Clinical Experience with Occupational Therapists

This should be one of your first experiences as a pre-OT student. Observing Licensed Occupational Therapists in action, working in different environments will help you understand the profession. Shadowing will also help you get to know OTs. This is important, as many OT programs require at least one recommendation letter from an OT. Many students find shadowing opportunities through volunteer experiences at medical facilities (***UUOT suggests students shadow a minimum of 50 hours at least at two different settings***). Most students observe an OT long enough to get a strong recommendation letter. For UUOT, students taking **OCTH 3000** (Intro to OT) at the U with a B grade or better will be able to **waive 25 of the 50 hrs. of observation**, and will only be required to have contact with one setting other than the class.

Many OT programs also encourage students to engage in **community service** and have some **leadership** experiences prior to their application to OT programs. Visit **Bennion Community Service Center** (bennioncetner.org) for what's available at the U!

Things to Remember

- Make sure you have contact information for supervisors and health professionals you shadow or work with, in case you need to have them write recommendation letters. Even if you discontinue an activity, try to keep an open relationship with them.

- Keep a record of all hours of service and experiences. Writing your reflections in a journal will be helpful when you write a personal statement.

- You can download the **PreHealth Planner Spread Sheet** from our website; you will find it under Available Downloads.

- **USEFUL WEBSITES**

  * American Occupational Therapy Association (http://www.aota.org/) --- Find OT programs in the nation.
  * University of Utah Occupational Therapy Program (http://www.health.utah.edu/occupational-therapy/) --- Information session is offered monthly.
  * University of Utah Occupational Therapy Program Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/uofuot)
  * Tutoring Center (http://tutoringcenter.utah.edu/) ---328 SSB, 581-5153

- **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Your application process begins in spring or summer at the end of your junior year, if you have completed the necessary require-ments. Most OT programs admit students once a year, for <u>fall</u> matriculation. You'll take the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) and submit an application about a year in advance of the year for which you are applying.

- **GRE**

Many OT programs require the ***GRE, including UUOT. The GRE is administered throughout the year.*** Taking the exam by spring will enable you to apply earlier. OT programs require the GRE scores must be less than 3 (sometimes 5) years old. UUOT requires the score must be less than **5** years old. The GRE is divided into three sections which are: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reason-ing (multiple choice scored on a scale of 130-170), and Analytical Writing (essay format score out of 6 points). The exam may be repeated, but the best strategy is to prepare thoroughly and take the GRE once. For more information about content and struc-ture, visit http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/content/. At UUOT, primary consideration will be given to applicants with an analytical writing score of 3.5 or higher. Average analytical writing score of those offered admissions for 2015 was a 4.2. We see an average of 150 on each verbal and quantitative sections.

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
GRE	Take exam. Deadline for the last GRE score accepted depend on program. It is usually the same as the application deadline. ***UUOT recommends to take it by Oct. 1 even though the deadline is late November.***																
Recom. Letters	Request letters & get contact info. from letter writers at least 3 months before your application submission. UUOT's deadline is in late November.																
Application	**Prep** Write draft of Personal State-ment & research Programs.			**OTCAS is available Online in mid-July** till spring of following year. However, many programs' deadline is fall to early spring. **UUOT's deadline is late November.** Appli-cants can update their course work information in mid-December.													
				Supplemental Requirements & Interviews are depend on OT programs. Check their websites for more information. **UUOT's interview is in mid February, one day for all candidates.**													
												UUOT starts in Aug.					

- **OTCAS** (Occupational Therapy Central Application Service)

  ♦ Most OT programs are part of ***OTCAS***, which is available at https://otcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login.
  ♦ Application requirements include transcripts, personal background information, extracurricular experiences, personal state-ments, and fees.
  ♦ Because many programs use a "rolling" admission process (they begin reviewing applications and admitting before dead-lines), it will enhance your chances if you ***submit your application early,*** regardless of when you take the GRE. OTCAS and **UUOT** recommend students to submit their application a month before the deadline at the latest.
  ♦ Completing the application will take at least a week; most students take several weeks. Make sure you will have plenty of time to fill out the application, and to have somebody ***review*** your entire application before you submit.
  ♦ To help us advise other students, we would appreciate it if you would release your information to the Health Professions Advisor. This information will always be kept confidential.

- **Letters of Recommendation**

Students are required to submit ***Letters of Recommendation*** through the OTCAS. OTCAS limits applicants to 5 letters, but most programs just require 2-3 letters. Almost all OT programs require a letter from an OT. In addition, some schools require a letter from a professor or any supervisor of your choice, or both.

<u>**UUOT**</u>'s requirements are as follows:
  ♦ **Occupational Therapists you shadowed or worked**
  ♦ **Professor** (usually a science professor) <u>**OR**</u> **Any Supervisor** of your choice (employment, volunteer, etc.)

- **Pre-OT CURRICULUM**
  Policies

CLEP Credit & Correspondence Study	You are required to report all of the courses and credit hours that you earned through CLEP exams or Correspondence/Independent Study courses. However, **those credits may not be accepted as completed prerequisite coursework.** Check each program's requirements online.
AP Credits & IB courses	You are required to report all of the courses and credit hours that you earned through AP credits and IB courses. However, **those awarded hours may NOT be accepted as completed prerequisite coursework.** Check each program's requirements online. UUOT will NOT accept any AP or IB credits.
Online Courses	Depends on program. Ask programs you are considering applying to directly.
Repeats	OTCAS will include all of the grades, but, how each OT program view repeated courses varies; for example, UUOT will take the best grade. However, many programs will consider your performance in each class and the frequency of repeats. It is better to take it once and do well.
Withdrawals	W's should be used only for non-academic emergencies, though W's will not affect GPA.
Minimum Grade Requirement	Most programs set a minimum grade requirement for prerequisite courses of C or better.
Grade Expiration	Many programs require certain prerequisite courses to be completed within 5 to 7 years of entering a OT program. Check each program's requirements for more information. **UUOT** requires an anatomy course must be taken within 5 years.
Community College Courses	Many programs will accept prerequisite courses taken at a 2 year community college, but some may have a preference for courses from 4 year university over from a community college.
International Students	Depends on program. UUOT accepts international students. Most schools which accept international students usually require taking TOEFL in addition to GRE.

- **GPA**

Most OT programs require minimum overall AND prerequisite GPA of 3.0. Competitive applicants for most programs have higher GPA in both the overall and prerequisite GPA. For example, **UUOT's minimum GPA is 3.0** for both cumulative and prerequisite (science and non-science) GPA. The **average prerequisite GPA** for students accepted to the UUOT program is **3.5**.

- **Bachelor's Degree**

Most OT programs require a bachelor's degree before students matriculate to an OT program. There is no specific major you need to pursue in order to increase your chances of admission to an OT program.

- **University of Utah Occupational Therapy Program (UUOT)**

Established in 1997, this three year program has produced many excellent occupational therapists. Ranked as one of the top 30% of Occupational Therapy Programs in the US, UUOT receives over 200 applications annually, interviews about 85 students, and accepts 34 students every year. They do not have a preference for Utah residents at this time. The program starts in fall, and students will start clinical experience from the second semester and gradually increase the number of hours as they advance in the program. Out of state opportunities are available for Field Work (Clinical Internship) during the final year in the program. PreOT students are encouraged to attend the monthly information session as soon as they consider this profession. Registration is not required and schedule is available at http://www.health.utah.edu/occupational-therapy/index.php.

PreOT Course Guide[1]

Shading indicates most commonly required by OT schools in the west including UUOT.

^= must be completed & graded before application deadline for UUOT.

BIOLOGY	MATH[2]	PHYSICS/ KINESIOLOGY / BIOMECHANICS (Required by UUOT)	NON-SCIENCE COURSES *What is required varies by program. Check each website for specific requirements.
	980 (0) Pre-Algebra	One of the following courses (with lab if available) is required by most OT programs including **UUOT**.	**^Human Development (3)** **Required by UUOT** • FCS 1500 or NURS 2100 or KINES 3551 or PSY 3215 & 3220 & 3230 @ U of U • FCS 1500 or PSY 1100 @ SLCC
	1010 (4) Intermediate Algebra		
	* You may need to complete **Math 1050** (College Algebra) and/or **1060** (Trigonometry) in order to complete some prerequisite courses listed in this list.	**^PHYS 2010 (4)+2015 (1)** Gen. Physics1 + Lab (Prereq: Math 1060) **OR** **^KINES 3092 (3)** Kinesiology (Prereq: Biol 2325) = HLTH 2200 @ SLCC **OR** **^KINES 3093 (3)** Biomechanics (QI) (Prereq: Biol 2325 & Math 1050)	**Medical Terminology (3)** **Required by UUOT** • H EDU 3030 or PRT 3330 @ U of U • MA 1100 @ SLCC
1210 (4) **Principles of Biology** Prereq for most bio classes = Biol 1610 @ SLCC	**1070 (3)** **Stats** (Prereq: B or higher in MATH 980, C or higher in MATH 1010 or 1030) **Required by UUOT** • PSYC 3000 or FCS 3210 or SBS 3000 or SOC 3112 or PRT 3780 or MATH 1070@ U of U • MATH 1040 or 2040 @ SLCC		**Abnormal Behavior (3)** **Required by UUOT** • PSY 3400 (Prereq: PSY 1010) @ U of U • PSY 2300 @ SLCC
^2325 (4) **Human Anatomy** (Prereq: Biol 1210) Lab included **Required by UUOT**			**Cultural Anthropology (3)** **Required by UUOT** • ANTH 1010 or other cultural ANTH that may fill DV/IR or FCS 3370 (IR) or NUTR 3620 (IR) @ U of U • ANTH 1010 or 2011 @ SLCC
^2420 (4) **Human Physiology** (Prereq: Biol &Chem 1210) **Required by UUOT**			**Studio Art (3)** *Art history, music, theater, dance, photography or survey classes will NOT count. **Required by UUOT**
			1 Sociology, Health Education, Special Ed. or Gerontology (3) **Required by UUOT** • Any SOC or HEDU 3XXX or SPED 3010 or GERON or ETHNC (DVHF) or GNDR 1100 or FCS 3450 or PSY 3460 @ U of U • Any SOC or HLTH 1110 or EDU 1400 @SLCC

Notes

1) This guide is designed for students preparing to apply to a _range_ of OT programs. Some courses may not be required by all programs; some programs may require additional courses not on this list. See a PPA advisor for specifics.
2) In order to take the proper math class, you must have ACT, SAT or math placement test scores, or successfully pass a prerequisite math course.
3) For UUOT, Human Development and Physics/Biomechanics/Kinesiology and EITHER Anatomy or Physiology must be complete and graded by Dec. 31 of the application year.

Optional preparatory courses are available for Occupational Therapy, Math, and Physics:

♦ **OCTH 3000 (3) Intro to Occupational Therapy** *(Waives 25-50 observation hrs. for UUOT)*
♦ **MATH 10 Math Boot Camp for Intermediate Algebra** *(1 week workshop offered the week before fall and spring semesters begin.)*
♦ **PHYS 1500 (3) Prep for College Physics** *(Offered once a year. Check class schedule for more information)*