

Occupational Therapy Doctoral (OTD) Program Checklist

What do I need to get started in the OTD Program at UTRGV?

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Required Prerequisite Courses

Applicants must show evidence of satisfactory completion (minimum 3.0 GPA) of the following courses within 5 years of the application deadline. For more info on courses click [here](#). More info about [common prerequisites questions](#).

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anatomy & Physiology I (lecture & lab) | 4 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anatomy & Physiology II (lecture & lab) | 4 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Statistics | 3 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biomechanics | 3 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intro to Psychology | 3 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Development Across Lifespan | 3 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abnormal Psychology | 3 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology or Sociology | 3 credit hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver / Substitution for classes above if applicable | |

Experience

- A Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university by May 31 (or before) of the year you are applying. A degree in any area of study will be accepted.
- A minimum overall undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (Applicants whose overall undergraduate GPA is below 3.0 will be considered if they earn a minimum 3.0 GPA in their last two years of study and across all the prerequisite coursework)
- A 3.0 or higher GPA on all prerequisite coursework.
- Complete all prerequisites within 5 years of November 1st application deadline or the end of that fall semester.
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) within 5 years of the application deadline with a minimum score of 150 verbal, 145 quantitative, and 3.5 on analytical writing. (Applicants whose scores are below the minimum will be considered).
- Completed and Acceptance into [Graduate College at UTRGV](#)

Documents to Submit

- Application to Centralized Application Service for Therapy schools (OTCAS) online (<https://www.otcas.org>). All required materials must be completed and submitted online by November 1st application deadline.
- Three references (recommendations) submitted through OTCAS.
- Volunteer, work, or service experiences/hours through OTCAS.
- Personal Statement through OTCAS.
- Complete FERPA consent Form and submit it to the Department of Occupational Therapy.

Prerequisite Course Descriptions

If you need a waiver or substitution form, please click [here](#).

Anatomy & Physiology I (lecture & lab)

4 credit hours

This course is the first of a two-sequence examining the structure and function of the human body including the cells, tissues, and organs of the following systems: integumentary, skeletal, muscular, nervous system, and special senses.

Anatomy & Physiology II (lecture & lab)

4 credit hours

This is the second course of a two-course sequence examining the structure and function of the human body including cells, tissues, and organs of the following systems: endocrine, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, urinary, and reproductive systems. Other topics include metabolism, acid-base balance, development, and heredity.

Basic Statistics

3 credit hours

This course covers the basic concepts of probability and statistics and focuses on applications of statistical knowledge. The subject of statistics involves the study of methods for collecting, summarizing, and interpreting data. Students should be comfortable evaluating an author's use of data and be able to extract information from articles and display that information effectively. Students should also be able to understand the fundamentals of how to draw statistical conclusions. This course might cover a range of topics, some of which include descriptive statistics and the foundation of statistics, random variables, probability distributions, regression, and inferential statistics, independent events, dependent probability, combinatorics, and hypothesis testing.

Biomechanics

3 credit hours

This course should introduce students to concepts of mechanics as they apply to human movement, particularly those pertaining to exercise and physical activity. The course should provide an overview of musculoskeletal anatomy and principles of biomechanics to bodywork. The student will gain an understanding of the mechanical and anatomical principles that govern human motion and develop the ability to link the structure of the human body with its function from a mechanical perspective. At the completion of the course, it is desired that each student be able to: 1) describe motion with precise, well-defined mechanical and anatomical terminology; 2) understand and quantify linear and angular characteristics of motion; 3) understand the quantitative relationships between angular and linear motion characteristics of a rotating body, and 4) understand and quantify the cause-and-effect relationship between force and linear and angular motion.

Prerequisite Course Descriptions

Intro to Psychology

3 credit hours

This course introduces the discipline of psychology as natural science and as an applied social science. The course includes topics such as the biological bases of behavior, sensation, and perception, learning and memory, emotions, personality, abnormal psychology, therapy, and developmental and social psychology.

Psychology of Lifespan

3 credit hours

This course provides an overview of the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and personality domains of the changes that occur over time. The course focuses on normal development from conception through death. The course should explore life span development through the lenses of social, cultural, cognitive, biological, and learning theories and research. The emphasis is on gaining a conceptual understanding of healthy development. (Courses that focus on only one age group, i.e. infancy & adolescents, or adults, will not be accepted).

Abnormal Psychology

3 credit hours

The course is an introduction to theories and research concerning abnormal behavior (psychopathology). This course should provide a comprehensive analysis of various emotional disorders, neuroses, psychoses, their symptoms, etiologies, and treatment and approaches as well as theoretical, clinical, and experimental perspectives on the study of psychopathology. Emphasis should include terminology, classification, etiology, assessment, and treatment of major disorders. The student should be able to distinguish between normal and abnormal behavior patterns as well as demonstrate knowledge of etiology, symptoms, and therapeutic techniques.

Anthropology or Sociology

3 credit hours

This can be any anthropology or sociology course.

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Department of Occupational Therapy

Questions About Completing Prerequisites for the OT Doctoral Program...

Question 1:

I am applying for it in the Fall, when do I need to be done with my prerequisites?

All prerequisites need to be completed before the November 1st deadline for applications.

Question 2:

What if I completed my prerequisites before the Fall deadline or have not completed my prerequisites within the five years?

Consider completing a waiver / substitution form or applying for another year after completing the prerequisites.

FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions UTRGV Occupational Therapy Program

Where do I apply to the program?

All applicants must apply through the Centralized Application Service for Occupational Therapy schools (OTCAS). All required materials must be completed and submitted online to OTCAS prior to the application November 1st deadline. You must also apply to the UTRGV graduate college. Failure to apply to the Graduate College will deem your application incomplete.

Do I need to submit (upload) information to both OTCAS and the Graduate College?

Yes. All required materials must be submitted to OTCAS. To UTRGV, only the Graduate College application must be submitted. Failure to submit all required documents will deem your application incomplete. Examples of documents that must be uploaded include but are not limited to official transcripts, GRE scores, personal statement, and references.

Must I have a specific undergraduate major to be accepted to the program?

No. You must have earned a B.A. or B.S. degree in any field of study. Your application will be evaluated and reviewed based on its merits and in the context of the applicant pool for that year. Examples of what other students have majored in at the undergraduate level include but are not limited to biology, kinesiology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, liberal arts, and anatomy. Regardless of the major, make sure you have taken the necessary prerequisites for admission into the program within 5 years of application to the program.

Do I need to take the GRE?

Yes. The Revised GRE must be taken within 5 years of the application deadline. The minimum required score is: 150 verbal, 145 quantitative, and 3.5 writing. Official GRE Scores are submitted to OTCAS. The UTRGV code is: 6570. The applicant's score is factored into the overall evaluation of the application. If a score component is missing, the application will not be reviewed and will be considered incomplete. Those applicants with a graduate degree (master's level or higher) may submit a formal request for a waiver of the GRE requirement.

If I do not have the required GPA or GRE scores, will my application still be reviewed?

Yes, if all application components are submitted, the application will be reviewed by the Admission Committee. The committee has the final decision regarding the status of the application. If any required component is missing, the application will not be reviewed and will be considered incomplete.

Can I apply before I have completed all the prerequisites?

No. All prerequisites must be completed by the November 1st admission deadline. If prerequisites are not completed, then the application is considered incomplete and therefore unable to be reviewed. Prerequisites may be taken at any accredited university, college, or community college. Internet online courses are acceptable. AP credit must appear on official college transcripts and be equivalent to the appropriate college-level coursework.

Can I request a prerequisite course waiver or substitution?

Yes. Applicants may request a prerequisite course waiver and/or substitution via submission of a written petition to the Admission Committee. The request must clearly state what you are seeking along with supporting documents and submitted to the Admission Committee of the Department of Occupational Therapy via Fax: 956/6652476 or email: occtherapy@utrgv.edu. A waiver or substitution will be good for the current admission cycle only. Course substitutions and waivers are considered on an individual basis and must be approved before the application deadline. Refer to the program's website to view the waiver form and instructions.

Does the program have specific prerequisite course numbers and titles to meet the requirement?

No. The UTRGV OT Program does not provide specific course numbers for the prerequisites, as course numbers and course descriptions may vary between colleges/universities. It is your responsibility as a student to use the Occupational Therapy Program prerequisite course description guide to identify a suitable course, which is what is typically done when applying to graduate programs.

How many volunteer hours or work experience do I need? Do I need observation hours? Can I substitute observation hours for volunteer or work experience?

There is no set number of volunteer hours or work experience that you need to complete to be considered for admission into the program. However, more volunteer hours/sites and work experience are always better. No, you are not required to complete observation hours in occupational therapy. However, it is vital that you have some knowledge of the profession. Observations are not considered the same as volunteer or work experiences. You cannot substitute observation hours for volunteer or work experience. Your volunteer and/or work experiences are submitted through the OTCAS application.

How much competition is there to be accepted into the Occupational Therapy Doctorate program?

Acceptance to the graduate Occupational Therapy Program is very competitive. Currently, the admitted class size ranges from 20-30 students each year. The Admission Committee seeks diversity among students representing a variety of racial/ethnic, geographic, and economic backgrounds. We admit a class that is the most academically promising and able, and whose varying perspectives will serve to enrich the occupational therapy community. Acceptance to the Occupational Therapy Doctorate Program is very competitive.

Is this an "easy" program? Will I have to study?

No, this is not an easy program. Yes, you will have to study. The program is rigorous and quite demanding of your time. You will need to be a serious and committed student. Graduate students in Occupational Therapy are expected to maintain an overall 3.25 GPA in all OT coursework. If this is not acquired or maintained, the OT student becomes ineligible to continue and will be suspended from the program.

Can I take some of the classes in the evening or on the weekend?

No. The Occupational Therapy Doctorate curriculum has been designed to be a full-time activity for the students. Courses are generally structured for the traditional daytimes. Most courses are blocked to make the best use of time on campus. However, courses may be scheduled for evening times to accommodate clinical exposure and professional experiences.

Do I need to obtain a background check for admission into the program?

Yes. However, background checks are requested of applicant upon acceptance into the program. You are not required to obtain a background check during or prior to the application process.

Can I work and attend classes?

The Occupational Therapy Doctorate program consists of a very demanding course load with a great deal of time spent in class and clinical experiences. There are also special seminars, guest lectures, events, and activities that may be scheduled at relatively short notice. Because managing work and academic responsibilities can be very challenging, it is usually not recommended.

What are my chances of getting a job after graduation?

Very good. At the end of program, graduates are typically offered 1-3 jobs. You will likely have offers from which to choose - locally, statewide, or nationally.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

Program Web Page: www.utrgv.edu/ot

Graduate College Phone: (956) 665 – 3661 / Brownsville: (956) 882 – 6552 E-MAIL: gradcentral@utrgv.edu

Admission Chair, Dr. Roel Garcia

Department of Occupational Therapy Phone: (956) 665 - 2475

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E-MAIL: occtherapy@utrgv.edu