

PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Important general information

Students interested in the pre-occupational therapy advising track must obtain a bachelor's degree and complete the necessary prerequisites for the occupational therapy doctorate program. Students interested in occupational therapy should consult with a pre-professional health adviser to learn about requirements that are specific to the program and/or school to which they hope to apply.

Declaration of the pre-occupational therapy advising track through the Office of Pre-Professional Health Advising does not constitute admission to the occupational therapy doctorate program in VCU's College of Health Professions. Students must apply separately to the occupational therapy program/school of their choice at the appropriate time.

Students with an interest in preparing for the occupational therapy doctorate program must declare an academic major and should declare and maintain their pre-occupational therapy advising track. Students do not earn a pre-occupational therapy degree. Students unsure of their academic majors initially should clarify their academic interests through regular conversations with their advisers. Those in the pre-occupational therapy advising track are encouraged to major in fields of greatest interest to them. To declare a pre-occupational therapy advising track, please see the pre-professional health advising blog (<https://rampages.us/preprofadv/>).

Prerequisites for the VCU occupational therapy doctorate program

Students intending to enroll in the VCU occupational therapy doctorate program must complete a bachelor's degree before entering, as well as declaring and maintaining their pre-occupational therapy advising track. It is recommended that applicants select a challenging course load of science and math courses each semester to ensure adequate preparation for the academic rigor of the occupational therapy program.

Students need to complete the prerequisite science courses and the Graduate Record Exam before becoming eligible to start the occupational therapy program in the College of Health Professions at VCU.

In addition to completing the required courses, applicants must also demonstrate evidence of a minimum of 30 observation hours under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist prior to the time of application.

Science and non-science courses required for the VCU occupational therapy doctorate program

Students must complete human anatomy (including the lab) as well as human physiology and the human physiology laboratory. An introductory level biology course is a prerequisite for anatomy and physiology at VCU.

The non-science prerequisites for the occupational therapy program are statistics, introduction to psychology and social science courses (must include abnormal psychology and developmental psychology, introduction to sociology or introduction to anthropology, as well as additional courses in the psychology, sociology or anthropology disciplines).

Students are required to have a basic level of computer competence, the ability to use a personal computer for word processing, email, online bibliographic searches and internet list-serve discussions. It is also helpful for students to be familiar with presentation and spreadsheet software. A medical terminology course and a kinesiology course are recommended but not required.

Additional information for the VCU occupational therapy doctorate program

Students enter the program in occupational therapy in early summer. The following prerequisite courses must be completed prior to admission for students entering in the summer semester. If VCU awarded college credits for Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams and they are listed on the student's transcript, those credits will be accepted.

For the following courses, no more than seven years must have elapsed from the course completion to the date of enrollment in the program in occupational therapy: anatomy, physiology, statistics, developmental psychology and abnormal psychology.

Prerequisites for the VCU occupational therapy program

Course	Title	Hours
VCU courses ¹		
ANTH 103 or SOCY 101	Introduction to Anthropology Introduction to Sociology	3
BIOL 205	Basic Human Anatomy (includes lab)	4
PHIS 206 & PHIZ 206	Human Physiology and Human Physiology Laboratory	4
PSYC 304	Life Span Developmental Psychology	3
PSYC 407	Psychology of the Abnormal	3
STAT 212 or STAT 314	Concepts of Statistics ^{2,3} Applications of Statistics	3-4
Social sciences electives (from PSYC, ANTH and/or SOCY)		3-6
Total Hours		23-27

¹

Note that some courses require prerequisites to the listed required courses and have been added to the "additional recommended prerequisite courses" list below.

²

Depending on the math placement test results, students may need to complete MATH 151, MATH 200 or MATH 201 before enrolling in STAT 212.

³

VCU psychology majors can take PSYC 214 in place of STAT 212 (STAT 210 is a prerequisite for PSYC 214).

Additional recommended prerequisites for occupational therapy schools nationwide

Occupational therapy programs across the U.S. have different prerequisites for admission. The list below shows courses required by various schools beyond the courses listed above for the VCU occupational therapy program requirements. Students should discuss

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career plans with their pre-professional health adviser for additional guidance.

Course	Title	Hours
BIOL 101 & BIOZ 101	Biological Concepts and Biological Concepts Laboratory	4
BIOL 151 & BIOZ 151	Introduction to Biological Sciences I and Introduction to Biological Science Laboratory I	4
HPEX 250	Medical Terminology	1
HPEX 332	Motor Learning and Performance	3
PHYS 201	General Physics I	4
PHIL 201	Critical Thinking About Moral Problems	3
SPCH 121 or SPCH 321	Effective Speech Speech for Business and the Professions	3

Students should also consult with their pre-professional health advisers to discuss an individual plan of study in parallel with their academic majors.