

PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Important general information

Students interested in the pre-occupational therapy career 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 career 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 career advising track through VCU Career Services - Pre-Professional Health Career Advising (<https://careers.vcu.edu/majors-and-careers/career-pathways/health-care/>) 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 career 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 academic adviser and pre-professional health career adviser. 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 career advising track, see the Pre-Professional Health Hub (<https://learningsystems.vcu.edu/canvas/>) in Canvas.

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 courses before becoming eligible to start the occupational therapy program in the College of Health Professions at VCU. The Graduate Record Exam is not required for application, but if an applicant chooses to take it, they may report your scores. Scores could be used in the holistic review of an application, but will not be considered individually or scored as part of the evaluation of an application.

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 O.T. practitioner, an occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant, prior to the time of application.

Prerequisite 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. A minimum grade of B is a requirement for these prerequisite courses.

An introductory-level biology course is a prerequisite for anatomy and physiology at VCU.

Statistics is a prerequisite course. The course should cover the following topics: descriptive statistics, t-test, chi-square, analysis of variance, linear regression and correlational analysis.

A total of 15 social science credits are needed. Psychology of the abnormal, lifespan developmental psychology and at least one sociology or anthropology course is required. The additional six social science credits must be taken within the psychology, sociology or anthropology departments. Introductory courses are acceptable to fulfill the social science prerequisites.

Anatomy, physiology, statistics, developmental psychology and abnormal psychology should be taken within seven years of enrollment in the program.

A medical terminology course and a kinesiology course are recommended but not required.

Prerequisites for the VCU Occupational Therapy Doctorate 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 314	Applications of Statistics ^{2,3}	4
Social sciences electives (from PSYC, ANTH and/or SOCY)		3-6
Total Hours		24-27

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 and STAT 212 before enrolling in STAT 314.

³

VCU psychology majors can take PSYC 214 in place of STAT 314 (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 career 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	1-3
PHYS 201	General Physics I	4
PHIL 201	Introduction to Ethics	3
SPCH 121 or SPCH 321	Effective Speech Speech for Business and the Professions	3

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