

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**  
**PRE-HEALTH ADVISING**  
**ACADEMIC ADVISING & TRANSFER SERVICES**  
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**USA MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**  
**Mobile, Alabama**

**APPLICATION TO USA MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

The USA Department of Occupational Therapy offers a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (USA OT) degree that prepares graduates for professional practice. They are seeking applicants who have a strong academic record and scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), as well as documented observation hours. Thirty-six (36) students matriculate into the USA OT each August.

Students apply July – December in the year prior to their planned start date. Applicants must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.0, minimum GRE total (verbal + quantitative) of 290, and minimum 3.0 GRE analytical writing score. Students must complete a bachelor's degree by June 1<sup>st</sup> of the admission year. The application process is completed electronically through the Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service (OTCAS). Students must also complete a Supplemental Application to submit to the Department of Occupational Therapy. The Supplemental Application can be downloaded from the Department of Occupational Therapy website. The deadline for all applicants is December 1<sup>st</sup>. The Department of Occupational Therapy must receive the Supplemental Application by 5:00 pm on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**STATISTICS FOR THE FALL 2018 ENTERING CLASS**

Total Applications	312
Number Interviewed	105
Number Matriculated	36
Mean cumulative GPA*	3.74
Mean pre-requisite GPA	3.77
Mean GRE**	298
Verbal	149
Quantitative	148

\*A minimum 3.0 is required.

\*\*A minimum combined score of 290 is required.

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR USA OT**

The USA OT seeks applicants with a wide range of talents and academic backgrounds. Because of this, all majors, both science and non-science, are considered for acceptance. A bachelor's degree is required for admission and must be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup> of the admission year. Applicants must also complete the minimum required course work with grades of "B" or higher in each course<sup>1</sup> (see below). All required coursework must be completed at the time of application. Advanced Placement credit and CLEP scores are not accepted for any required courses. Please refer to the USA Major Guides for information about course requirements for specific majors.

- Developmental (life span) Psychology: One semester
- Abnormal Psychology: One semester
- Anatomy and Physiology: Two semesters<sup>1</sup>
- Statistics: One semester

- Kinesiology (preferred) or Physics with Algebra/Trigonometry: One semester<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>All math and science courses have required prerequisites. Entrance to these courses will be based on Math ACT or SAT score and/or prior coursework.

**RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC PLAN**

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>	<b>CREDIT HOURS</b>
CAS 100	2
EH 101 & EH 102	6
MA 110 or higher <sup>2</sup>	3-4
Biology or Chemistry <sup>2</sup>	4
Lab Science	4
PSY 120 <sup>3</sup>	3
PSY 250	3
CA 110	3
Fine Arts	<u>3</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31-32</b>

**SECOND YEAR**

BMD 251 & BMD 252 <sup>2</sup>	8
ST 210	3
PSY 340 <sup>3</sup>	3
History (US or Western Civilization)	3
Courses for Major/Minor	<u>15</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>

**THIRD YEAR**

PE 380 <sup>4</sup> or PH 114/L <sup>5</sup>	3-5
English Literature	3
Social Science	3
Fine Arts	3
Humanities	3
Courses for Major/Minor	<u>15</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30-32</b>

**FOURTH YEAR**

Completion of Major and Minor	
Courses required for the degree	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>

<sup>2</sup>MA 110 will not serve as a prerequisite for other math courses, BLY 121/L, or CH 131/L and is not appropriate for all majors. One course in Biology (101/L or 121/L) or Chemistry (100 or 131/L) is required for BMD 251.

<sup>3</sup>General Psychology (PSY 120) is the prerequisite for Abnormal Psychology (PSY 340)

<sup>4</sup>BMD 251 is the prerequisite for Kinesiology (PE 380).

<sup>5</sup>The prerequisite is ACT Math 25+, SAT Math 620+ if taken before 5/16, SAT Math 640+ if taken after 5/16, or completion of MA 113 or higher.

## **GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION (GRE)**

In addition to maintaining a strong GPA, completing required coursework, and observing a registered occupational therapist, students will need to take the GRE. Students should plan on taking the GRE during the third year. The GRE is composed of three sections: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing. The Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning sections are each scored on 130-170 scales in one-point increments. The Analytical Writing section is scored on a 0-6 scale in half-point increments.

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE**

All applicants must apply to the Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Services (OTCAS). Applications are available each July. Students must enter all coursework and observation hours into OTCAS for verification. Students must also send all transcripts and GRE scores to OTCAS. Students are encouraged to begin the process early. Applications are not complete unless they are verified by OTCAS by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

Acceptance to the USA OT is based on academic ability and aptitude for a career as an occupational therapist. A limited number of applicants are invited to interview with the occupational therapy faculty and clinicians from the community.

## **PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM**

Pre-Health Advising is dedicated to supporting the success of students working toward a graduate education in occupational therapy. Pre-health advisors are available to help students craft a workable plan by providing structure, guidance, and information about University and Pre-Occupational Therapy resources.

## **CHOOSING A MAJOR**

There is no perfect “pre-occupational therapy” major at the University of South Alabama. A student can major in any subject area and apply to occupational therapy school. If the desired career path changes students need to be in a major that will allow them opportunities for success. Academic and Pre-Health advisors work together to help students with the coordination of courses for both the major and occupational therapy school.

## **IMPORTANCE OF GPA**

Occupational therapy schools will require students to provide their academic GPA which includes all grades earned at any institute of higher learning and dual enrollment. The cumulative and prerequisite GPAs are used in the selection process.

## **OBSERVATION AND VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES**

Occupational therapy schools desire students with diverse backgrounds and experiences, strong sustained volunteer activities, leadership skills and most especially shadowing or experience in the health profession of interest. The USA OT requires a minimum of 25 hours of work or observation experience under the supervision of a registered Occupational Therapist or a certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. Hours must be completed within two years of application to the program. Students are encouraged to gain observation

experience in a variety of occupational therapy settings. Hours must be documented and verified through the OTCAS.

Pre-occupational therapy students are entering fields with very strong and well established service orientations. Students need to get involved in service at the start of the college career. There are volunteer activities that students can participate in during the semester, as well as during the summer break. Occupational therapists will be part of a team as a health professional, and one way to learn how to be part of a team is to get involved and develop leadership skills.

Students also need to be culturally aware and actively pursue experiences that allow them to learn about themselves and others. It is important for pre-occupational therapy students to choose experiences that will allow them to stand out, demonstrate their value, and enable them to work with diverse populations at home and abroad. For instance, if a student studies abroad at some point during the academic career, the student will learn the issues affecting the health and well-being of populations in other countries.

## **PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CLUB**

The Pre-Occupational Therapy (Pre-OT) Club is an undergraduate student-run organization affiliated with the University of South Alabama Department of Occupational Therapy. Students are strongly encouraged to become an active member of the club. Membership in the Pre-OT Club provides students opportunities to meet other students who are interested in occupational therapy and to learn more about the occupational therapy profession.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)  
<https://www.aota.org/>