Pre Occupational Therapy Curriculum

The “preoccupational therapy curriculum” is just a list of courses that are required for admission to an occupational therapy program. It is NOT an academic major, a minor, or an emphasis area.

What Should I Major In?

OT schools do not require a particular major. Although many pre-OT students at Southern Miss choose to major in Kinesiotherapy or Therapeutic Recreation in the School of Health Professions in College of Nursing and Health Professions or Kinesiology in the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition in the College of Education and Human Sciences, many other majors are acceptable including those in the sciences such as Biological Sciences, humanities, social sciences such as psychology, or business. Students should select the major in which they feel the most comfortable and in which they would like to work if they are not accepted into OT school. Whatever major you choose you must take the prerequisite courses for the Occupational Therapy school you wish to attend as well as the courses in your major at USM if you plan to graduate with a B.S. degree and go on to Occupational Therapy School.

Students wishing to pursue an Occupational Therapy (OT) program in Mississippi apply to the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program at University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) in Jackson. This is typically after taking the OTD prerequisites at a college or university such as at Southern Miss. The UMMC Doctor of Occupational Therapy program in Jackson has received “Candidacy Status” from their accrediting organization allowing them to enroll students. They have enrolled their first doctoral class in the summer of 2018 and are accepting applications for their next class. The prerequisites for their doctoral program are given further below.

Students who obtain a Master (MOT) or Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) from accredited programs are eligible to sit for the licensure exam as part of the requirements of becoming a licensed Occupational Therapist.

Visit the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) web pages for more information about OT schools:

Link to main page: http://www.aota.org/
Link to student resources: https://www.aota.org/Education-Careers/Students.aspx
To find accredited Occupational Therapy programs around the country go to the AOTA “Find a School” site at: http://www.aota.org/Education-Careers/Find-School.aspx

There are Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Programs at some community colleges. Students in those programs receive an Associate’s Degree and can sit for the OT Assistant licensure exam. If you do not want an advanced degree, such as a Master’s degree or Doctorate in OT, please consult the AOTA “Find a School” resource for those Assistant’s programs. An OTA is more limited in practice than the licensed Occupational Therapist with a Master’s or Doctoral degree.
**Requirements for Applicants**

Each Occupational Therapy program has their own set of requirements. These vary considerably from one school to another. Please consult the requirements and deadlines of the specific school(s) to which you plan to apply.

The following list of requirements meets only the minimal requirements for admission to the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program within the *School of Health Related Professions (SHRP)* at the *University of Mississippi Medical Center* in Jackson.

Link to UMMC SHRP: [http://www.umc.edu/shrp/](http://www.umc.edu/shrp/)

Link to Doctor of Occupational Therapy at UMMC: [https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Occupational%20Therapy/Doctor%20of%20Occupational%20Therapy.html](https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Occupational%20Therapy/Doctor%20of%20Occupational%20Therapy.html)

Preference is given to Mississippi residents; out-of-state applicants will be considered only if there are positions available after all qualified Mississippi applicants are accepted.

**Course prerequisites for application to UMMC’s Doctor in Occupational Therapy Program.**

These set of 7 prerequisite courses are offered at USM. For prerequisite courses below no grade lower than a C will be accepted by UMMC’s program and the average GPA for the prerequisite courses must be at least 3.0. At least 4 of the 7 prerequisite courses below must be completed before making application to their program. They prefer though that all of the 7 prerequisite courses be completed before applying to UMMC Doctor of Occupation Therapy Program (OTD)

- statistics (elementary, behavioral, or introductory) (1 course; 3 hours)
- general psychology (1 course; 3 hours)
- human growth and development or developmental psychology (1 course; 3 hours)
- anatomy and physiology with laboratories (2 courses; 8 hours)
- advanced biological or physical science at 300 or above level (1 course; 3-5 hours)
- physics with lab (1 course; 4 hours)
- note: the anatomy and physiology courses can be replaced by upper level courses of one pure human anatomy and one pure physiology course with laboratories. At Southern Miss the one pure human anatomy course is not offered at the undergraduate level. The physics course typically taken to meet the physics with lab requirement, PHY 111 and 111L, has a MAT 103 prerequisite. The advanced biological or physical science course will have a lower level prerequisite(s). For example, all advanced biological science courses require BSC 110/L and BSC 111/L be taken as prerequisites. Courses beyond the 7 prerequisites listed above may be helpful and UMMC suggests the following additional courses: medical terminology, advanced science courses, psychology courses and/or research courses.

**Other requirement for consideration for entrance into the UMMC program.**

Students must provide evidence of *24 hours observation in at least three occupational therapy clinical departments* at the time of application to UMMC. Observation must be done with either an occupational therapist or a certified occupational therapy assistant in a clinical department or practice within the two calendar years preceding the application deadline. It is up to the individual student to set up his or her own observation hours. The “Verification of Observation Form” is located on the UMMC Doctor of Occupational Therapy website that applicants will have to use in order to certify the number of observation hours. It can be found at: [https://www.umc.edu/shrp/files/otd-observation-form.pdf](https://www.umc.edu/shrp/files/otd-observation-form.pdf)
Students applying to the UMMC program must have their Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores submitted to the program when applying. They must be received by the program by their deadline.

If requested, students must have an interview with the admissions committee of the UMMC program.

Other Occupational Therapy Programs

USM students can also apply to Master or Doctor of Occupational Therapy programs at other universities. Please consult their resident status requirements though. Two close-by Master of Occupational Therapy programs are in Louisiana at the LSU Health Science Center in New Orleans and in Alabama at the University of South Alabama. Both LSU and the University of South Alabama require a Bachelor’s degree for entrance into their program. Details about these programs can be found at:

1. LSU at [http://alliedhealth.lsuhsc.edu/ot/](http://alliedhealth.lsuhsc.edu/ot/)

**SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCE & STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

The *suggested course sequence* below is merely a guideline to complete the courses required for the UMMC Occupational Therapy Doctoral program in a timely manner. Courses to fulfill the major at Southern Miss must be worked into the student’s schedule. Students must consult the USM Undergraduate Bulletin, the USM Class Schedule Guide for each semester, and their academic advisor. Some courses may be offered in specific semesters (Fall or Spring only) or on a rotating cycle.

**YEAR 1**

**Fall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 110&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 101</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two required courses</td>
<td>6 h</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Spring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 111&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 103</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 110</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 102</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One required course</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The order in which students take the introductory Biological Sciences (BSC) courses does not matter; BSC 110/L covers molecular and cellular topics whereas BSC 111/L covers ecology and organisms. If the student does not plan to take an advanced biological science course later but instead advanced chemistry then the student should take CHE 106/L and CHE 107/L instead of BSC 110 and 111 and labs. Similarly if the student does not plan on taking advanced biological science or advanced chemistry but advanced physics they should take the calculus based PHY 201 and 202 and labs after taking calculus.**

*b, Placement in mathematics (MAT) courses depends on the student’s ACT Math subtest score. Consult the prerequisites of the MAT course in which you plan to enroll.

c, MAT 103 is a pre-requisite for PHY 111/L

d, Placement in English Composition courses depends on the student’s ACT English subtest score.

- *ACT English subtest score 16 or below:* ENG 99E (Expanded Composition Studio) and ENG 100E (Composition I expanded)
- *ACT English subtest score 17-19:* ENG 100E (Composition I expanded)
- *ACT English subtest score 20 or above:* ENG 101 (Composition 1)

e, Required courses that meet either the USM General Education Core requirements or OT school prerequisite requirements:
• one Aesthetic Values course (select from ART 130, DAN 130, MUS 165, THE 100) to meet USM General Education Core requirements.
• ENG 203 plus two additional Humanities courses (select from HIS 101, HIS 102, PHI 151, REL 131); if a student is pursuing a baccalaureate degree from Southern Miss, one Humanities must be a HIS course. This is to meet USM General Education Core requirements
• two social and behavioral sciences courses to meet USM General Education Core requirements
• one speech course, CMS 111 or equivalent to meet USM General Education Core speaking intensive requirements
• one statistics course, recommend PSY 360 or CSS 211, it can not be a survey course to meet the OTD school prerequisite requirements

f, PSY 110 is a required prerequisite and is recommended before taking the upper level PSY course taken in the second year.

Strategy for Success
• Students should focus on doing well in their academic studies, particularly the required science and math courses.
• Students could start getting some hands-on exposure to occupational therapy. Different programs have different OT shadowing requirements. Consult the OT program admission’s requirements.
• Students may join AED (Alpha Epsilon Delta), the national Health Preprofessional Honor Society, as associate members at any time even if they do not fulfill the requirements for full membership (must be enrolled at Southern Miss for a minimum of three semesters and meet specific course and GPA requirements). Full members are inducted during the Spring semester. Information and links to AED Full and Associate Member applications are available on the Southern Miss Preprofessional website.

YEAR 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 250/L</td>
<td>BSC 251/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHY 111/L</td>
<td>Course in major</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced psychology course</td>
<td>3 required courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 h</td>
<td>9 h</td>
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<tr>
<td>One required course</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3 h</td>
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• Students may take one pure Human Anatomy course with lab and one Human Physiology course; otherwise, students must take a combined Anatomy and Physiology course with lab for a year (two-semester sequence which is offered at Southern Miss). A pure Human Anatomy course is not offered at Southern Miss at the undergraduate level. The order in which students take BSC 250/L and BSC 251/L does not matter.

h, Human Growth and Development (Developmental Psychology PSY 275) is required.

Strategy for Success
• Students should focus on doing well in their studies.
• Students could start in the second semester of their sophomore year getting the 24 hours observation in at least three occupational therapy clinical departments within two years of the January 15th senior year application deadline, if later applying to UMMC OT School.
• Students may join AED (Alpha Epsilon Delta), the national Health Preprofessional Honor Society, as associate members at any time even if they do not fulfill the requirements for full membership (must be enrolled at Southern Miss for a minimum of three semesters and meet specific course and GPA requirements). Full members are inducted during the Spring semester.

YEAR 3

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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</table>
Classes to fulfill major 15-18 h  Classes to fulfill major 15-18 h
and complete pre-OT prerequisites and complete pre-OT prerequisites

Strategy for Success
- Students should focus on doing well in their studies.
- Continue observing Occupational Therapists or Occupational Therapy Assistants in practice. When applying to UMMC OT School students must provide evidence of **24 hours observation in at least three occupational therapy clinical departments within 2 previous calendar years of the application deadline of Jan 15 of their senior year**

YEAR 4
Fall  Classes to fulfill major 15-18 h  Classes to fulfill major 15-18 h
and complete pre-OT prerequisites and complete pre-OT prerequisites

Strategy for Success
- Students should focus on doing well in their studies.
- Students must provide evidence of **24 hours observation in at least three occupational therapy clinical departments** within the two previous years of the January 15th application deadline of this senior year.
- **The Application Process must begin this year** if they have not applied during summer after year 3. (See below for application process)

THE APPLICATION PROCESS
The **application process usually begins in the Fall semester** of the fourth year. Applications to UMMC program can be accepted starting on July 1 of the year previous to when you plan to attend. The application deadline for the summer entering class is on January 15th of the year you plan to attend. Applications are considered once a year with one OT class being admitted a year for the program that begins each summer. For other OT programs the deadlines and starting dates can differ so please consult the specific program(s) to which you plan to apply.

Students apply online directly to the UMMC School of Health Related Professions:
https://myu.umc.edu/irj/portal/anonymous?NavigationTarget=ROLES%3A//portal_content/Guest/GuestIntroViews/GuestHowToApply

- Applicants must complete Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.
- Applicants must have minimum overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. (Applicants interviewed and accepted typically have a higher GPA.)
- A minimum grade of C is required on each course accepted for entrance requirements.
- If a course is repeated, both grades are used in calculating the GPA.
- Applicants must meet the technical standards of the program
  https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Occupational%20Therapy/Admissions/Technical%20Standards.html
- An interview with the Occupational Therapy Admissions Committee is required.

THE INTERVIEW
Students are advised to practice their interview skills BEFORE attending their first interview.

- You may use the online **Perfect Interview™** resource: http://www.perfectinterview.com/usm/
- Or, sign up for mock interviews through Career Services by calling 601-266-4153:
  http://www.usm.edu/career-services/about-us
Dress professionally and act professionally at your interview.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE, CONTACT THE PREPROFESSIONAL OFFICE

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