

PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

MINOR



An Occupational Therapist helps patients of all ages improve their ability to perform everyday tasks in their lives and in their workplace or school. Their goal is to assist and educate patients so that they can have independent, productive and satisfying lives.

OT's must have patience, empathy and strong interpersonal skills. They must also be creative problem-solvers in order to adapt activities to meet each client's needs.

OT's work in many different environments including hospitals, nursing homes/rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, schools and in patients' homes.

To practice as an OT, a student must graduate from an accredited occupational therapy program, with either a master's degree or doctoral degree, and then pass a licensure exam.



No specific major is required. The profession is stronger and more enriched by being made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds. As long as you successfully complete the prerequisite courses, you can compete for admission, regardless of your major. Allow yourself to explore a range of different interests early in your college career. When you find something you enjoy, chances are you will do well in it. Let your own curiosity be your guide.



Perks of the Profession

EXCELLENT INCOME

As of 2021, The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a median annual income of \$85,570.

GREAT JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of OT's is projected to grow 14% from 2021-2031 which is much faster than the average for all occupations.

FLEXIBILITY AND MOBILITY

IN THE JOB

Given that OT's are employed in so many different settings and are generally in high demand, it is relatively easy to find new employment after a move or other life-changing event. In many cases the ability to move between full-time and part-time work is possible.

SPECIALIZATION

For those who wish to develop a specialty within OT, the AOTA offers specialty certification in nine different areas including pediatrics, mental health and low vision.

OT Programs in Virginia

- Emory & Henry College
- James Madison University
- Mary Baldwin University
- Radford University
- Shenandoah University
- Virginia Commonwealth University



Students in the Pre-OT minor must take courses in:

- Anatomy (1)
- Physiology (1)
- Chemistry (1)
- Physics (1)
- Statistics (1)
- General Psychology (1)
- Life Span Human Development (1)
- Abnormal Psychology (1)
- Sociology (1)
- Cultural Anthropology (1)
- Medical Terminology (1)
- Writing (1)
- Literature (1)

Contact Information

Website: www.jmu.edu/pph

Email: pph@jmu.edu

Office: Student Success Center 4041

Phone: 540-568-6652

OTHER LINKS

American Occupational Therapy Association:
www.aota.org

Explore Health Careers:
www.explorehealthcareers.org

JMU Pre-OT Minor



JMU students who are interested in becoming an Occupational Therapist can choose to enroll in the Pre-OT minor. The minor includes courses required for admission to graduate OT programs.

As long as the student successfully completes the prerequisite courses they can compete for admission, regardless of their major. At JMU, the greatest number of pre-OT students are in the Health Sciences major but there are also students who major in Psychology, Kinesiology or Biology who go on to OT graduate programs.

Admission to OT programs is very competitive. In addition to the prerequisite course work, students will most likely need to

- Shadow (observe) an occupational therapist and show exposure to a variety of OT experiences.
- Complete the GRE exam – a standardized test assessing communication and quantitative skills.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 grading scale) To be a competitive applicant, students generally need a much higher GPA.
- Demonstrate experience with diverse individuals – from children to elderly, including able-bodied as well as physically or cognitively challenged and those who are economically disadvantaged.
- Participate in community service activities.
- Obtain letters of recommendation. At least one must be from an OT.

At JMU, pre-professional health advisers are available to guide students in course selection and in the other activities required for an OT applicant to be competitive.