



# Prehealth Programs: Occupational Therapy

CU-Boulder Academic Advising Center, Preprofessional Office  
<http://advising.colorado.edu> (click on prehealth, at left)

## IS THIS CAREER FOR YOU?

Occupational therapy (OT) is a health and rehabilitation profession that helps people regain, develop, and build skills that are important for independent functioning, health, well-being, security, and happiness. OT practitioners work with people of all ages who, because of illness, injury, or developmental or psychological impairment, need specialized assistance in learning skills to enable them to lead independent, productive, and satisfying lives.

Career opportunities may include: OT Practitioner, OT Consultant, OT Manager/Administrator, Educator, Researcher. OT therapists work in many different settings and with persons of all ages. Some traditional settings include: hospitals, home health agencies, private practice, schools, residential care facilities, day care centers, mental health centers, corrections facilities, and assistive technology programs.

While the 80s and 90s were marked by a shortage of OT practitioners, the current situation sees a balance of supply and demand, with the exception of a need for practitioners in rural and urban areas, and in school systems. Future demographic trends would indicate a need for OT practitioners in coming years.

For more information, keep in touch with the prehealth advisor in Old Main 1B-90. Find contact information at: <http://advising.colorado.edu> (click on pre-professional).

## PREPARATION FOR THE OT PROFESSION

The American Occupational Therapy Association has mandated that education in the OT profession must be exclusively at the graduate level by January, 2007. At that time, OTs in the US will receive either a Master of Arts or a Master of Science degree to enter the profession.

There are about 38 schools offering a master's level OT program. Each program takes from two and one-half to three years to complete all academic, fieldwork and research requirements.

Colorado State University offers a Master of Science (MS) degree in OT, and a PhD in Educational and Human Resource Studies, with an emphasis in OT. You must have completed a baccalaureate degree to be accepted to the programs.

You are encouraged to choose an undergraduate major that reflects your interests, but bear in mind that you must complete the following prerequisite course work in addition to your regular courses. Some majors may provide more course overlap than others.

## UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO EQUIVALENTS FOR PREREQUISITE COURSES FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAMS OF STUDY AT CSU

Below are CU equivalents for prerequisite courses for the MS degree at CSU.

### Human Gross Anatomy

EPOB 3420, (prereq. general biology)

### Anatomy and Physiology

EPOB 3430 (prereq. general biology and general chemistry)

### Abnormal Psychology

PSYC 4303 (prereq. PSYC 1001)

### Lifespan Development

PSYC 4684 (prereq. PSYC 1001)

### Neuroanatomy/neuroscience/ neuropsychology

PSYC 2012 *or* PSYC 4052  
(prereq. general biology)

### Human Disease\*

\***Note:** There is not a CU equivalent for this prerequisite. Independent study may take its place, but be sure to closely fol-

low the content guidelines for the OT department. Find this on the Web at: [www.caahs.colostate.edu/OT/content\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.caahs.colostate.edu/OT/content_guidelines.htm).

### Human Understanding

A course on how culture affects our thinking and behavior—may include but is not limited to anthropology, ethics, sociology, and cultural diversity

### Statistics

PSYC 3101

### Introduction to OT

available on-campus or on-line. Contact the department for more information: <http://www.caahs.colostate.edu/ot/>

### Medical Terminology

available on-campus or on-line. Contact the department for more information: <http://www.caahs.colostate.edu/ot/>

### Computer skills

Students must be able to use the internet, word processing and e-mail.

Once accepted to the OT program at CSU, students will engage in four semesters of academic work, research, and fieldwork for a minimum of 160 hours. Upon successful completion of the academic professional program, students will complete a full-time six month internship.

## EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

Volunteering or working in a health-related position is important. First, it will help you evaluate your suitability for the profession and reaffirm your commitment; or it may lead you to reflect on your original career goal. Second, as you learn more about the profession, you will also learn about the empathy, commitment, and endurance required of a health-care professional. Third, such efforts demonstrate to admissions committees your sincerity in wanting to help people, as well as your ability to follow through on your responsibilities.

## PREHEALTH PROGRAMS:

Work with individuals with disabilities in *any* setting is valuable. You should also try to observe OTs working in a variety of settings.

### ALPHA EPSILON DELTA (AED) AND STUDENT ASSOCIATION FOR PREHEALTH PROFESSIONALS (SAPP)

Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) is an honorary prehealth society for those interested in health careers. Contact with other students with similar interests as yours can be very gratifying. You can e-mail AED at [aed@ucsu.colorado.edu](mailto:aed@ucsu.colorado.edu), or stop by their office in UMC 447 for more information.

The Student Association for Prehealth Professionals (SAPP) represents a community of students at CU-Boulder who are interested in pursuing health-related careers. Its goal is to provide an organization where students interested in all areas of medicine can come together and learn more about the many professions, receive academic or personal guidance, and get detailed advice on applying to graduate schools. Membership is open to all CU students. You can e-mail SAPP at [prhlth@colorado.edu](mailto:prhlth@colorado.edu) or visit their web site at: <http://www.colorado.edu/studentgroups/prehealth>.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You must have three professional references.

### TELEPHONE CONFERENCE

Upon receipt of the application, you will be contacted to schedule an informational telephone conference with the Graduate Coordinator, Dr. David Greene.

### HELPFUL CONTACTS

You should take the time during your undergraduate career to nurture meaningful relationships with people who you respect, whether they be professors or professionals you meet during extracurricular work. If you are drawn to an individual, follow up on maintaining contact. CSU requires letters of recommendation, and heart-felt letters of enthusiasm are evident compared to the “boiler-plate” variety that emerge when professionals are asked to submit dozens of letters for students they barely know.

### Application Year

Application packets are available by contacting the Occupational Therapy Department at CSU at: 970-491-6253, or on the Web at: [www.cahs.colostate.edu/ot](http://www.cahs.colostate.edu/ot).

You should have an undergraduate GPA of 3.00 or higher. In some cases students are admitted with a lower GPA, if they can supply sufficient evidence to predict successful graduate performance.

You will also need to submit a personal statement.

A rolling admissions procedure allows students to be conditionally accepted before completing prerequisites or earning an undergraduate degree. You may apply up to 18 months prior to the fall semester of entrance to the program.

Applications are reviewed in September and February of each year. Final admission is contingent upon criteria related to the completion of prerequisites and an undergraduate degree.

**All information in this publication is subject to change. Please check with the prehealth advisor, or with the appropriate school for up-to-date information.**

The University of Colorado at Boulder is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

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