



Pre-Occupational Therapy prep at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC)

What is Pre-Occupational Therapy?

The entry-level degree to become an Occupational Therapist is a Master Degree. Most pre-occupational therapy students are preparing to transfer into a Health Science Bachelor Degree combined with an Occupational Therapy Master Degree. For combined program admission a HACC student would apply in the Fall of their first year at HACC. Some students are not participating in a combined program and are science majors (biology or chemistry). A student planning a Bachelor Degree other than a combined program may need to meet additional pre-Master Degree course requirements, making it an advantage to apply to a combined program. Some Master Degree programs are only offered in a combined format. A student planning a Bachelor Degree and not part of a combined degree can major in almost any discipline provided the required science courses are completed when applying to professional schools. These professional schools expect non-science majors to perform very well in science courses.

What is the Pre-Occupational Therapy curriculum?

Course requirements vary somewhat among the numerous professional programs. Typically OT course requirements begin early in a Bachelor Degree. Requirements for these programs typically include; 16 credits of biology (BIOL 101, 102, 121 and 122 at HACC), Mathematics including Trigonometry and Statistics (MATH 104 and 202, at HACC), 3 credits of Physics, (PHYS 201, at HACC), 9 credits in Psychology, (PSYC 101, 209, and 213 at HACC), and 3 credits of Sociology, (SOCI 201, at HACC). Students should refer to HACC transfer check sheets, if available, and work with their HACC advisor in preparation for transfer to the Bachelor Degree granting institution to complete all requirements.

What are the characteristics of a successful Pre-Occupational Therapy student?

There are approximately 205 accredited Occupational Therapy programs in the United States and approximately 12 accredited schools in Pennsylvania. All are highly competitive, have strict course prerequisites, and require students to plan a strategy early in their college career. If applying to combined Occupational Therapy programs a student would need to have competitive high school history and at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in any college courses. To be competitive, when applying to Master Degree programs a student should accumulate a grade point average of at **least 3.0** (on a 4.0 scale) for their Bachelor Degree and perform above average on GRE's. It is also competitive that pre occupational therapy students participate in an internship experience in order to become acquainted with the field prior to making formal application to selected professional programs. Leadership, community/human service and a willingness to volunteer contribute to the "personal qualities" of successful pre-speech-language pathology students. All interested students should visit the American Occupational Therapy Association website, www.aota.org, for further information. Students who are planning a Bachelor other than a combined program will be advantaged by transferring from HACC to a Bachelor Degree granting school with a pre occupational therapy advising option where students are advised in prerequisite courses, application procedures, and current trends in admission. It would be a further advantage to transfer to a Bachelor Degree granting school that has an affiliation with a school(s) that offers a Master Degree in Occupational Therapy.