General Description:
Occupational Therapy is a health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

What are some common daily activities/experiences?
Your life is made up of occupations—meaningful everyday activities. These occupations can include many roles, such as being a parent, a friend, a spouse, a tennis player, an artist, a cook, or a musician. We generally don’t think about our daily occupations until we have trouble doing them. Everyone has an occupation—from the toddler whose occupations are playing and learning to develop important skills, to the older adult whose occupations are engaging with family and friends and managing his or her home. If you are recovering from an accident, injury, or disease, your valued occupations may be disrupted. Occupational therapy incorporates your valued occupations into the rehabilitation process, which improves your participation in these occupations, and assists you in returning to them.

What are 3-5 personal characteristics important for happiness and success in your profession?
A person interested in occupational therapy must be able to effectively communicate with others, actively adapt and think critically, as well as be an efficient and productive member of an interdisciplinary team serving patients at all levels of care. Successful practitioners are able to integrate philosophical and theoretical knowledge, values, beliefs and ethics in order to improve participation and quality of life for those individuals and populations with and without impairments and limitations. They typically demonstrate a strong knowledge of a person's psychological, physical, emotional, and social makeup, and can evaluate how a condition (or risk for a condition) is affecting the body and mind using a holistic perspective.

What are 3-5 key questions students should be asking themselves as they prepare for your profession?
When selecting an occupational therapy graduate program, students should carefully consider the program(s) that best match their personal and professional goals and choose programs that will help them achieve these goals, whether as a practitioner, manager, scientist, or teacher. For example, students who have a strong academic record in science and are interested in pursuing careers that include research, scholarship and leadership, are best matched to the OTD programs in research universities. Students who have demonstrated a strong interest in community service and have professional goals focused on direct service delivery may be best suited to a master’s program. Each has an important role to play as the profession strives to address the growing need for occupational therapy.

Preparing for Admission:
- Individual OT programs will determine whether an applicant is eligible for admission and will notify applicants directly regarding all admission decisions. OT programs may not take all OTCAS application fields into consideration in the admission decision process. Admission policies and
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Occupational Therapy

prerequisites vary significantly by program and program delivery model; e.g., a 2.5 year master's graduate program will differ from the requirements for admission to a 3+2 master's format.

- Resources for researching schools: AOTA: OT Program Formats & Admissions

The Admissions Cycle:

- CAS(s):
  - OTCAS: https://otcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login
  - OTACAS: https://otacas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login
    - Application opens: July 2016
    - Application can be submitted: July 2016 – June 2017
    - Number of schools participating:
    - Fees, fee waivers:
      - OTCAS: $140 for the first program, $60 for each additional program
      - OTACAS: $50.00 for each additional program
    - Letters of recommendation logistics: References should come directly from the evaluator to OTCAS/OTACAS, unless otherwise instructed by your designated program. Evaluators can only submit references electronically.
    - Standardized test logistics: If required by program, GRE and TOEFL test scores must be entered on the application. Any other scores should be sent directly to the program.
    - Transcripts: Send official transcripts directly to OTCAS/OTACAS.
    - Instruction manual and FAQ:
      - OTCAS FAQ
      - OTACAS FAQ
    - Contact information: 617-612-2860 / otcasinfo@otcas.org

- OTCAS on Facebook
- OTCAS on Twitter

The Admissions Process:

- Approx dates of interviews, offers: 2-6 months prior to the first semester
- Advisor portal
- Total number of applicants in most recent cycle (through CAS): approx. 9,900
- Total number of first year students (through CAS and non-participating programs) 7,193 OT (2015), 6,562 OTA (2015). Data from OT Annual Data Report, 2015-16.
- Test score and GPA averages and ranges, other data on applicants and accepted students (major, age, race/ethnicity, gender, whatever makes sense for the profession):
- Total number of students: 10,048 undergraduate and 18,550 graduate students
- Total number of graduates in 2015:
  - 136 doctoral graduates (43% 5 year growth)
  - 5,875 master's graduates (34% 5 year growth)
  - 4,914 OTA graduates (70% 5 year growth)

Training & Career Opportunities:

- Number of years: OT: Masters (5-6 years); OTD (6-7 years); OTA: Associates (2-3 years)
- Degree attained: OT: MOT/ MS; OTD; OTA: AAS
- Data on employment of recent graduates, if available: 75-100% employed within 6 mths

For more information on many health professions, we recommend the NAAHP publication, Health Professions Admission Guide: Strategies for Success, available on the NAAHP website.
Key Resources for Students:
- [OT Careers](#)

Key Resources for Advisors:
- [OT Education Programs](#)
- [OT Annual Data Report, 2014-15](#)

Social Media:
- [AOTA on Facebook](#)
- [AOTA on Twitter](#)

Advisory Council Professional Association Partner Information
The **American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)** advances the quality, availability, use, and support of occupational therapy through standard-setting, advocacy, education, and research on behalf of its members and the public.

Size of organization, number of member institutions
AOTA is the nationally recognized professional association promoting and protecting the professional interests of more than 213,000 occupational therapy practitioners and students nationwide.

- As of September 2016, there were 511 entry-level educational programs:
  - 14 accredited doctoral entry-level occupational therapy (OT) programs
  - 155 accredited master's entry-level occupational therapy (OT) programs
  - 220 accredited associate occupational therapy assistant (OTA) programs
  - 122 candidate, developing, or applicant programs (26 doctorate, 42 master's, and 54 associate)

New institutional members
There has been an increase in the number of developing and applicant programs due to the increased demand for occupational therapy services. Since 2007 the number of graduate OT programs has increased by 60% (89 new programs) and the undergraduate OTA programs have grown by 98% (136 new programs).

Advisory Council Contact Information

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