2017-18 M.S. in Occupational Therapy Information Guide

(In effect for the 2017-18 OTCAS application cycle which starts mid-July, 2017 for the Fall 2018 M.S. OT Day and OT Weekend cohorts)

Thank you for contacting us about our MS in Occupational Therapy program. Attached, you will find our OT Info Guide which will help you understand both the qualifications and the application process.

TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF APPLICATION, YOU WILL NEED TO EMAIL A COPY OF YOUR TRANSCRIPTS TO GRADUATE ADMISSIONS FOR REVIEW IF YOU MEET OUR GPA REQUIREMENT OF AN OVERALL GPA OF 3.2

If you meet the GPA requirement of 3.2, please email your transcripts, along with your contact information (mailing address, current school, phone) to either Lynn Cope at lcope@utica.edu or John Rowe at jrowe@utica.edu. We should be able to do a prerequisite review in 3 to 5 working days and email you with the results.

- Because we are different than most MS OT programs in terms of length (five straight semesters as opposed to three years), you most likely DO NOT have the required prerequisite coursework necessary. That is why we require the prerequisite evaluation at the beginning of the process.
- Prerequisite coursework MUST be taken through a regionally accredited community college, college or university (online courses from these schools are acceptable) and successfully completed by June 1, 2018 (you may apply while you are taking them).
- For more information about prerequisites, please carefully review the prerequisite coursework section of the attached guide.
- Please remember that completing all prerequisites successfully and having a GPA of 3.2 or higher is not a guarantee of acceptance.
- If you do not have an overall GPA of at least a 3.2, DO NOT APPLY. We do not consider anyone with a GPA lower than 3.2.

The MS in Occupational Therapy program is a highly desired, medical-based program that leads to professional licensure. The degree is in great demand and requires a high level of scholarly ability.

Utica College has limited seating—approximately 20 to 25 seats each fall. We normally get between 275 and 300 applications each year through OTCAS and interview 30 to 40 applicants annually.

The selection process is HIGHLY competitive.
The answers to many basic questions can be found in the attached OT Info Guide. **We prefer that you email us with any questions rather than call.** Please email us at the addresses listed above.

Note: Our website is currently undergoing changes, so please rely on the information in this guide, on the OTCAS website and correspondence from graduate admissions.

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**From: John Rowe, Executive Director of Graduate Admissions, Utica College**

**Applies to: MS OT program starting in Fall 2018 (OTCAS application opens mid-July 2017)**

Thank you for your interest in Utica College’s MS in Occupational Therapy Information Page. Before applying to the program, please read this document carefully! Contact the Graduate Admissions Office by email if you have further questions.

Application deadline for Fall 2018 will be January 15, 2018. The OTCAS portal will open in early July 2017 for the Fall 2018 cohort. Because of expected high volume of applications, please apply early in the cycle for consideration.

Successful candidates will be notified by March 1, 2018. A wait list will also be announced that day.

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**Required Items for Application**

1. Completed, verified OTCAS application (portal.otcas.org – opens mid-July 2017; closes on January 15, 2018.) Please note that the verification of your OTCAS application needs to be completed before we can interview you which is why it is important to apply early on in the cycle.

2. A BS or BA degree completed by June 1, 2018

3. An overall GPA of 3.2 out of a 4.0 scale or higher
4. Eleven successfully completed prerequisites. You may apply as long as you have had an official transcript review by graduate admissions and have a plan to complete remaining prerequisites no later than June 1, 2018.

5. 25 hours of shadowing with an OT/R in two different settings (hours need to be verified by cooperating OT/R). These hours must be completed, entered in your OTCAS application and verified by the cooperating OT/R in OTCAS no later than November 15, 2017. However, you should have your shadowing experiences done much earlier. (More on observation hours below).

6. You cannot be interviewed without having a significant number of shadowing hours completed and verified. To be considered for our Interview Days in October and November, you should complete shadowing hours (with verification) in summer 2017 or before.

7. Two letters of recommendation with evaluation form (must be done in OTCAS).

8. Personal statement (done as part of the OTCAS application).

In addition, the OT Department will require you to produce other items (such as CPR, First Aid, etc.) if you are accepted.

1. Entry Into Our Program Is Highly Competitive

Utica College has been educating OT’s for fifty years. We have a nationwide reputation and a network of thousands of OT alumni.

As such, the graduate admissions office receives a large number of inquiries and applications each year. In addition, the demand for OT’s is rising and with it, national publicity on the benefits of becoming an OT. This fact alone has tripled the number of applications and inquiries we have received since 2012.

On average, we have between 20 to 25 seats available for external students (those who have or will have a BS or BA degree). We expect to receive 300 and 400 applications for these seats each year. Our office also gets 20 to 30 calls and emails weekly from individuals who are interested in our OT program.

Most likely, you will need to take several prerequisite courses to meet our admissions requirements. The successful completion (with a grade of C or better) of all of these courses does not automatically earn you admission into the program. Therefore, please carefully consider this fact before you make the decision to spend extra time and money taking any needed prerequisite coursework.

2. Our Program Is One of the Shortest In The Nation

Students complete Utica College’s MS in Occupational Therapy program in five straight semesters. A cohort starts each fall (late August).
Prior to admission, we require the successful completion of eleven (11) prerequisite courses. Please review the list carefully (see below).

3. You Will Most Likely Need To Take Prerequisite Coursework Which Must Be Successfully Completed Before You Can Start The Program

Below find the list of prerequisite coursework that must be successfully completed by June 1 of the year cohort you would like to enter the program. All coursework must have a grade of “C” or better (no C-’s). Coursework may be taken from any regionally accredited community college, college or university. Online coursework from these institutions are acceptable as long as they fulfill the prerequisite requirements as described below:

Please Note: Successfully completing all prerequisites is not a guarantee of admission. Our program is highly competitive and has limited seating.

- Anatomy and Physiology 1 with lab (or equivalent)
- Anatomy and Physiology 2 with lab (or equivalent)
- An applied anatomy course (i.e. Gross Anatomy, Neuroanatomy, psychophysiology, brain biology)
- Introduction to sociology or an anthropology course that focuses on aspects of cultures, health and healing
- A course in lifespan development (developmental psychology) which covers birth, adolescence, adult and end-of-life
- A course in medical conditions and implications (medical terminology by itself is usually not acceptable)
- A course in kinesiology or biomechanics (cannot be physics)
- Introduction to Psychology
- Abnormal Psychology
- Statistics (a basic course)
- Research methods (usually found in a psychology or sociology department)

You must have an official review of your transcripts for prerequisites which we are happy to do for you. The Graduate Admissions office will do a review for you and email you with the results. It will then be up to you to keep the Graduate Admissions office informed of your prerequisite progress each semester.

a. Where Do I Take Missing Prerequisite Coursework?

Some of these prerequisites can be difficult to find. Also, taking prerequisite coursework is usually done as a non-matriculated student, so you will most likely not have access to any financial aid and will have to pay for them out of pocket.
If you cannot locate coursework on the campuses of regionally accredited schools, you may take online coursework from them.

Utica College does offer Medical Conditions and Implications and Research Methods online. Please note that taking prerequisite coursework at UC does not influence admission decisions.

If you find a course you would like to take but are unsure if it meets requirements, please email us a copy of the course description for review. We reserve the right to reject a course that does not meet our prerequisite requirements.

4. We Have Two Options of Study-Traditional Day and Concentrated Weekend

The Utica College MS in Occupational Therapy day option is a traditional Monday-Friday day program that runs five straight semesters. The summer between the two academic years is reserved for a major fieldwork experience.

Utica College is only one of fifteen schools in North America that also offers a weekend MS OT option. The weekend option takes five straight semesters (including one summer) and is completed in the same time frame as the traditional day option. Because we are one of the few colleges with a weekend program, we have students drive and fly in from around the US and Canada each year to attend.

For both options, traditional day and weekend, we start each class in late August. Please note that you can apply for the program while you complete prerequisites as long as they will be successfully completed by June 1 of the year in which you intend to start. At the time of admission, you will have to file a Plan of Prerequisite Completion with the Graduate Admissions Office showing that you will take and complete the coursework by that date. Please email the Graduate Admissions Office for the PPC form.

The specifics of the OT Weekend option can be found below.

5. You Must Have An Overall Undergraduate GPA of At Least a 3.2 To Be Considered

We cannot consider anyone who does not have at least an overall 3.2 on a scale of 4.0. While a 3.2 is the minimum GPA you can have, the average GPA for all accepted external students usually starts around a 3.4 or higher.

If you have a GPA lower than 3.2, you may want to consider an OTA program. A list of OTA programs can be found here: www.aota.org/Students/Schools/EntryLevelOT
6. **We DO NOT** require any graduate exam for entrance (GRE, etc).

7. **You Are Required To Have Two “Shadowing” Experiences With A Licensed OT/R**

   The OT Department and the Graduate Admissions Office want to ensure that all interested applicants have a basic knowledge of the OT profession and understand what they will be doing as an OT someday. That is why we require an applicant to shadow OT’s in two different settings for a total of 25 hours and have their experiences documented by a practicing OT/R.

   Shadowing usually occurs in a hospital, an outpatient practice, a long-term care facility or a school setting. You must do one of your shadowing experiences in an acute care setting (hospital, extended or long-term care facility).

   You may apply before you have your shadowing experiences but they **must be completed no later than November 15, 2017.** You cannot be considered for an interview (they will occur in late October, November and January) unless you have completed at least one observation. A critical part of the interview process is being able to explain what you gained from observing and shadowing an OT/R.

   The observation verifications are completed in the OTCAS application by the cooperating OT/R.

8. **If You Meet Qualifications and Have An Active Plan of Prerequisite Completion In Place, You May Be Asked To Come To UC For An Interview**

   If it is determined that you will be a viable candidate, the Graduate Admissions Office will schedule an interview day for you at Utica College. At that time, you will be interviewed by OT faculty members and also get a chance to tour our facilities, meet current OT students and ask questions about the program.

   We receive hundreds of applications each year from the US, Canada and other parts of the world. As such, the program is highly competitive and seating is extremely limited. Therefore, please consider applying to several OT schools using the OTCAS application.

9. **IF YOU ARE READY TO APPLY:**

   1. Utica College uses the OTCAS Centralized Application Service through AOTA. The application portal opens in mid-July 2017 for the Fall 2018 cohort. [https://portal.otcas.org](https://portal.otcas.org)
2. You may apply to several colleges using this single application. However, please keep in mind that you must pay a fee for each school you send your application to. That is why it is important to meet or be working toward meeting all Utica College criteria before applying here.

3. Utica College and the Graduate Admissions Office will only review those OTCAS applications that meet our prescribed application criteria.

**OT Weekend at UC**

OT Weekend at UC is entering its third decade. It offers career changers the opportunity to become OT’s while they continue to work at their current jobs. It is limited to 24 seats per cohort.

OT Weekend students spend 26 weekends at UC in class over four out of the five semesters (no weekends during the summer semester).

*Typical OT Weekend Schedule by Day*

- Fridays-5pm to 9:30pm
- Saturdays-7:30am to 5pm
- Sundays-8am to 4pm

As you can see, classes are very concentrated and require a great deal of personal academic discipline in order to be successful. *Please carefully consider your learning style and time management skills when considering this option.*

In addition, online instruction is used to supplement the face-to-face coursework.

*Weekend Schedule by Semester*

1. **Fall Semester 500-level**-meets 8 weekends (the first one is an orientation) usually every other weekend.

2. **Spring Semester 500-level**-meets 7 weekends usually every other weekend.

3. **Summer**-full-time 12 week fieldwork at a site based on your location (usually near where you live if one is available-however, we cannot guarantee this).

4. **Fall Semester 600-level**-meets 7 weekends usually every other weekend. The last weekend is early in December after which you do your first fieldwork experience for 2 to 3 weeks.
5. Spring Semester 600-level-meets 4 weekends scheduled through early March; the rest of the semester is dedicated to the last full-time fieldwork.

May of your 5th semester-Graduation

*Please Note: This schedule is subject to change.*

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**Housing for OT Weekend**

At this time, the college does not offer on-campus housing for OT Weekend. Local hotels (Holiday Inn, Raddison, etc) offer special discounted rates to weekend OT students. Many OTW students share rooms to reduce costs.

**Note to International Students**---Tests of English language proficiency such as TOEFL or IELTS are required if English is not your first language -- UC requires a TOEFL score of 525 written, 195 computer-based or 69-70 internet-based. For IELTS, the minimum score is 5.5.

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**QUESTIONS:**

Please EMAIL Graduate Admissions.

[jrowe@utica.edu](mailto:jrowe@utica.edu)

[lcope@utica.edu](mailto:lcope@utica.edu)

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Note: This information is accurate as of 3/1/17. However, it is subject to change.