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## 2023-24 M.S. in Occupational Therapy Application Guide

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### **Introduction**

Thank you for considering Utica University for your occupational therapy education. We have been educating OT's since the 1960's and have a nationwide reputation with a network of thousands of OT alumni. The Utica University Occupational Therapy program has been approved by the New York State Education Department and is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy

Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

The Occupational Therapy faculty embraces a humanistic, transformative educational approach to your education. Our program is distinctive in its collaborative community alliances that enable faculty and students to meet the needs of society while at the same time developing the professional behaviors and autonomous, critical thinking needed for current practice. We promote a student culture and classroom environment that encourages critical, reflective questioning of preconceptions and the earnest pursuit of accurate, evidence-based and integrated understandings of human wellbeing, occupation, and occupational therapy practice.

***While our MS in Occupational Therapy program is one of the shortest in the Northeast at five straight semesters, it does not mean that it is less rigorous. Rather, it is more concentrated and requires successful students to have effective time management skills, the need to work under time pressure, strong communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively with your fellow students and the faculty.***

We use the OTCAS national application system. The graduate admissions office receives a large number of inquiries and applications each year. Before you apply, please read the information in this guide carefully.

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 200 and 300 applications for these seats each year.

### **The OTCAS Application**

The Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) simplifies the process of applying to occupational therapy programs. You start by selecting the programs you wish to apply to, then you submit one application that includes all necessary materials. Once received by OTCAS, your application and materials go through a verification process before being transmitted to all of your selected programs.

**The OTCAS application opened on July 18, 2023 for the Fall 2024 cohorts.**

**Utica University's OTCAS deadline is May 1, 2024.**

To apply: <https://otcas.liaisoncas.com/>

***To Learn more about OTCAS and see how to get started please go to:***

[https://help.liaisonedu.com/OTCAS\\_Applicant\\_Help\\_Center/Starting\\_Your\\_OTCAS\\_Application/Getting\\_Started\\_with\\_Your\\_OTCAS\\_Application](https://help.liaisonedu.com/OTCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_OTCAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_OTCAS_Application)

### **Application Requirements**

**GPA**

Applicants to the MS in Occupational Therapy must have an overall bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.2 or higher on a 4.0 scale from a regionally accredited institution. We may consider applicants with an overall GPA of 3.0-3.19 if a candidate has demonstrated strengths in other areas.

Once your OTCAS application is complete and verified, it will automatically calculate your overall GPA.

**NOTE: You can apply while finishing your undergraduate degree.** Once you graduate, the university will ask you to request an official transcript showing your graduation date and major.

### **Prerequisite coursework**

Utica University requires the successful completion of eleven prerequisite courses with a minimum grade of C:

- A four-hour credit course in Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab or equivalent (i.e. Human Anatomy, Human Physiology)
- A four-hour credit course in Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab or equivalent (i.e. Human Anatomy, Human Physiology)
- An applied anatomy (gross anatomy, neuroanatomy, or equivalent)\*
- Kinesiology or Biomechanics
- An Introductory course in Sociology or Anthropology
- General or Introductory Psychology
- Abnormal Psychology
- Lifespan Psychology/Human Development/Developmental Psychology (must cover birth through adult)
- Medical Conditions and Implications/Pathophysiology/a three credit course in Medical Terminology
- Statistics
- Research Methods (psychology or sociology-based)

Prerequisite coursework must be successfully completed by June 1 of the year 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.

The following prerequisite courses need to have been taken within seven years of the date of application:

- an applied anatomy\*
- Abnormal Psychology
- Research Methods
- Medical Conditions and Implications or Pathophysiology or a three credit hour course in Medical Terminology

You will need to retake these courses if they are older than seven years.

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

The Graduate Admissions office will do a prerequisite course review for you. Please email copies of your transcripts (unofficial ones are fine for this purpose) to [lcope@utica.edu](mailto:lcope@utica.edu) or [jrowe@utica.edu](mailto:jrowe@utica.edu). You will then be emailed a transcript review showing missing coursework. If you are selected for an interview, it will be up to you to keep the Graduate Admissions office informed of your prerequisite progress each semester.

You may apply through OTCAS while you complete prerequisite coursework. 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.

Utica University offers Medical Conditions and Implications, A&P 1 and 2 and Research Methods online. Please note that taking prerequisite coursework at UC will 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. Utica University reserves the right to reject a course that does not meet our prerequisite requirements.

*\*An applied anatomy course can be gross anatomy, neuroanatomy or a specialized biology-based course that focuses on human anatomy above A&P 1 and 2. Utica University offers gross anatomy over seven Saturdays during fall semesters. Neuroanatomy and kinesiology are offered over seven weekends during spring semesters. Because these courses have limited seating, contact graduate admissions if you are interested taking them or if you are looking for alternatives.*

## **Recommendations**

Two personal recommendations are required (one from a currently practicing occupational therapist and one from an academic professor). These will be done through the OTCAS application.

## **Advanced Placement, Transfer of Credit and Credit for Experiential Learning**

Advanced placement and transfer of credit is evaluated and determined at the pre-professional phase only. The OT graduate program does not give credit for experiential learning.

## **Observation Hours**

The department will go over observation hours with accepted students each spring.

## **Technology Requirements:**

As a graduate learner, you'll need regular access to an internet-connected computer—your own or a public access one, such as at your local library. If possible, we recommend purchasing a laptop to increase your flexibility to learn on the go. For the highest quality and most reliable learning experience, we recommend broadband internet access (LAN/Cable/DSL). [Find an internet provider in your area.](#)

You must all own MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, which are available in the Microsoft Office package. You should DISABLE your popup blocker, and install the most up-to-date version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. Completing a distance learning course requires the student to be familiar with email, a World Wide Web browser, and word processing. While students need not be computer experts, basic computer skills are important and required.

## **CPR Course**

You are required to take the [American Heart Association First Aid/CPR course](#). **Note: No other CPR/First Aid course is acceptable.**

If for some reason, you cannot find the AHA course where you live, a member of the Utica PT Department usually offers it during the fall semester. [Please check with your advisor during the summer before you are scheduled to attend to make sure it is being offered at the university.](#)

## **Fieldwork Experiences:**

Students in the program must complete Level I fieldwork placements to prepare for their Level II fieldwork placements to comply with ACOTE standards and complete their preparation for entry level practice as an occupational therapist. Level II fieldwork placements total 24 weeks.

The majority of students complete these on a full-time basis. However, the option exists for students (who receive permission from the occupational therapy faculty) to complete them part-time for a more extended time. A part-time fieldwork placement must be at least 50 percent of a full-time equivalent (FTE) schedule at the site. These experiences and timelines meet the requirements stated in the ACOTE Standards (ACOTE, 2018).

Our program has a variety of established fieldwork sites, and our program has a student-centered approach to fieldwork planning. The availability of fieldwork sites and state education laws limits fieldwork placement options. Utica University has established contracts with fieldwork sites both within as well as outside of New York State. Each state has different rules and regulations for authorization. Therefore, the College must secure approval/clearance from the relevant state agency (e.g., Licensing

Board or Department of Education etc.) before placing a student in a host facility within certain states. Utica University may cancel a clinical placement if regulatory approval cannot be secured. We attempt to place students in a fieldwork site of their preference; however, we cannot guarantee this is possible.

### **International Applicants**

Utica University welcomes OTCAS applications from qualified international students. If you are an international applicant, contact graduate admissions before starting an OTCAS application.

**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.

### **Fieldwork For Canadian Students Who Attend Utica University's MS in Occupational Therapy Program**

International fieldwork experiences are encouraged for Utica University students; however, only one fieldwork experience can be international. Students must consider travel and living expenses.

If you are an occupational therapy student studying outside of Canada and interested in a fieldwork placement in Canada, please note that you must:

- choose only one city/catchment area of Canada to inquire about a potential placement.
- arrange to have your home university fieldwork coordinator contact the Canadian university fieldwork coordinator for the catchment area in which you would like to have the placement\*. – make this contact at least six months prior to the beginning of the placement.
- gather more information about the method of application, associated costs, student requirements, and placement availability from that particular Canadian university fieldwork coordinator.\*\*
- get the contact information you need: [Canadian university catchment areas and fieldwork coordinators](#) | [Members](#) | [Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University](#) | [www.acotup-acpue.ca](http://www.acotup-acpue.ca)

\*Please note that students interested in fieldwork opportunities are not allowed to directly contact any Canadian fieldwork facilities or universities asking about placements. This is a strict rule throughout Canada for both Canadian and international students.

**\*\*The University of British Columbia is not involved with arranging placements for international students in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. International students seeking placements in British Columbia or the Yukon must have their fieldwork coordinators contact the placement sites directly.**

#### **Helpful tips:**

1. Placements for international students within Toronto and surrounding Greater Toronto area are unlikely as these placements are in high demand by Canadian OT students and Canadian students are given priority over international students.

2. Placement availability during the Canadian summer (Jul-Aug) is unlikely due to high demand and low capacity.

### **Canadian Regulations for US Trained OT Candidates**

Please go to this link for information regarding requirements for internationally trained OT candidates: <https://www.caot.ca/site/ieot/intleeducatedot?nav=sidebar>

### **Candidate Selection**

OTCAS applicants will be reviewed by graduate admissions once they are verified. Unverified applications cannot be reviewed. Please track your application through OTCAS to ensure that there are no processing issues that are holding up verification. Note: Graduate admissions does not have access to your completed application until it is verified.

Selected candidates who meet Utica University admissions requirement or are in the process of doing so will be contacted by OT faculty members to set up a virtual interview meeting.

Interviews take place from late October through mid-March. Decisions on candidates will be made during that period after you have had your faculty interview. You will be contacted by graduate admissions when a decision is made on your application which will be during the same time period.

Graduate admissions will develop a wait list of accepted students who do not receive spots in the cohort. The wait list will be ranked by March 30, 2024 and you will be notified regarding your position. It will be in force until August 1, 2024. If you do not receive a spot by then, you may ask to be reconsidered for Fall 2025. You will not be required to complete another OTCAS for consideration.

There will be two accepted student days, one in February and one in March. Once you are accepted, you will receive an invitation.

### **Day and Weekend Options**

The Utica University 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 your major fieldwork experience.

Utica University 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.

Classes for OT Weekend usually start in mid-August. The day program starts at the end of August.

### **OT Weekend at UC**

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

### **Typical OT Weekend Schedule by Day**

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

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. Your first fieldwork is done in December.**
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 5<sup>th</sup> semester-Graduation**

### **Housing for OT Weekend**

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

### **Program Curriculum (same for OT Day and OT Weekend)**

### **Academic Requirements (69 Credit Hours)**

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## **First Year**



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### **Fall Semester (19 credit hours)**

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- OCT 505 - Theoretical Basis of Occupational Therapy (3)
- OCT 506 - Human Occupations (3)
- OCT 525 - Fundamentals of Transformative Learning (2)
- OCT 526 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adolescents and Young Adults (2)
- OCT 543 – Fieldwork Level IA Preparation (0)
- OCT 551 - Fieldwork Level IA: Impact of Context on Practice (1)
- OCT 553 - Fieldwork Level IA (1)
- OCT 571 - Occupational Performance: Adolescents and Young Adults (0,4)
- OCT 573 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice (2)
- IPE 504 - Interprofessional Practice and Leadership or OCT 673 – Interprofessional Practice (1)

### **Spring Semester (17 credit hours)**

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- OCT 521 - Documentation in Practice (1)
- OCT 527 - Case-Informed Discussion: Adults (2)
- OCT 549 - Research Seminar I (1)
- OCT 552 - Fieldwork Level 1C: Psychosocial Factors Influencing Occupation (2)
- OCT 561 - Professional Roles: Development (3)
- OCT 567 - Fieldwork Level IIA Preparation (0)
- OCT 568 - Occupational Therapy Research Analysis and integration (2)
- OCT 572 - Occupational Performance: Adults (0,4)
- OCT 574 – Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice II (2)

### **Third Semester - Summer (6 credit hours)**

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- OCT 654 - Fieldwork Level IIA (6) (May- August -12 week full-time internship in practice setting with adults)

### **Second Year**

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#### **Fall Semester (17-18 credit hours)**

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- OCT 601 - Occupational Performance: Children (0,4)
- OCT 604 - Case-Informed Discussion: Children (2)
- OCT 605 - Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy Practice III (2)

- OCT 622 - Writing for the Profession (2)
- OCT 633 - Fieldwork Level 1B – with children (completed at the end of the second year fall semester. Attendance is mandatory and required for degree completion). (1)
- OCT 637 - Occupational Therapy Manager (3)
- OCT 649 - Research Seminar II (2)
- OCT 668 - Occupational Therapy Research Dissemination (2)
- IPE 505 – Interprofessional experience or OCT 673 Interprofessional Practice (0-1)

## **Second Semester (10 credit hours)**

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- OCT 602 - Synthesis: Occupation-Based Practice with Children (2)
- OCT 615 - Synthesis: Theory to Practice (2)
- OCT 651 – Fieldwork Level IIB Preparation (0)
- OCT 656 - Fieldwork Level IIB (6) (March- May -12 full time internship in practice setting with children)

Students will graduate with a Master's degree in May following successful completion of second year courses.

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**For more information contact Graduate Admission at 315-792-3010.**

The Utica University Occupational Therapy program has been approved by the New York State Education Department. It is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200. North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. ACOTE's telephone number, c/o AOTA, is 301-652-6611 x2042. AOTA can be reached at 800- SAY-AOTA (800-729-2682) or local calls: 301-652-2682; Fax: 240-762-5150. The ACOTE website is [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org) ; AOTA's website is <https://www.aota.org>