

What does an Occupational Therapist do? How's the job outlook?

Occupational therapists treat injured, ill, or disabled patients through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help these patients develop, recover, improve, as well as maintain the skills needed for daily living and working.

Employment of occupational therapists is projected to grow 17 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Occupational therapy will continue to be an important part of treatment for people with various illnesses and disabilities, such as Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy, autism, or the loss of a limb. The need for occupational therapists is expected to increase as the large baby-boom generation ages and people remain active later in life. Occupational therapists can help senior citizens maintain their independence by recommending home modifications and strategies that make daily activities easier. The annual mean wage for dentists in the Denver Metro area is approximately \$93,010. *



*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Occupational Therapists, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapists.htm>

How do I become an occupational therapist?

Occupational therapists need at least a master's degree in occupational therapy; some therapists have a doctoral degree. Occupational therapists must also be licensed. Admission to graduate programs in occupational therapy generally requires a bachelor's degree and specific coursework, including biology and physiology.

Master's programs usually take 2 to 3 years to complete; doctoral programs take about 3 and a half years. Both master's and doctoral programs require at least 24 weeks of supervised fieldwork, in which prospective occupational therapists gain clinical work experience. In addition, doctoral programs require a 16-week capstone experience.

All states require occupational therapists to be licensed. Licensing requirements vary by state, but all require candidates to pass the national examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Therapists must pass the NBCOT exam to use the title "Occupational Therapist, Registered" (OTR). They must also take continuing education classes to maintain certification.

Biology Faculty Advisor who can guide you on this path:

Dr. Clare Hays - haysc@msudenver.edu

MSU Denver - Department of Biology

Admission Information for the CSU Occupational Therapy Doctorate (O.T.D.) Program:

1. A Bachelor's Degree (B.S. or B.A.) in any discipline.
2. A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
3. Prerequisite coursework must be completed by matriculation; the minimum grade for each course is C.
4. Full consideration for departmental scholarships and fellowships will be given to applicants who have submitted their applications early.
5. Volunteer and/or work experience with people with disabilities (strongly recommended).

Application packets are available online. See the [CSU Department of Occupational Therapy](#) website for more information on application deadlines.

Course prerequisites required for those interested in pursuing the CSU O.T.D. program include:

Medical Terminology (ITP 1700) – Also available on-line at www.online.colostate.edu; 1 semester

Human Anatomy & Physiology I and II (BIO 2310/2320) – (pre-req is BIO 1080/1090); 2 semesters

Psychology of Human Development (PSY 2210) – (prereq is PSY 1001); 1 semester

Abnormal Psychology (PSY 3620) – (prereq is PSY 1001); 1 semester

Brain and Behavior (See CSU website for info) – BIO 4300 - Neurobiology is an acceptable substitute (pre-req is BIO 2310 and senior standing); 1 semester

Statistics (MTH 1210); 1 semester

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REQUIREMENTS FOR B.S. IN BIOLOGY

(2024-2025 or future catalogs ONLY)

Major Requirements:

- Total of 46 total credit hours approved by the Biology Faculty must be completed in the BIO prefix
- C- or better must be earned for any BIO course to apply to your major requirements.
- 27 upper division credit hours in BIO courses must be completed
- Non-biology courses in math, chemistry and other STEM disciplines are required

Start Smart! Have you met with a Biology Academic Advisor at least once a semester to ensure timely progression toward your degree and to avoid taking unnecessary courses.

Required Introductory Courses:

- BIO 1080 & 1090: General Biology I w/ Lab
- BIO 1081 & 1091: General Biology II w/ Lab

Choose one of the following chemistry sequences:

- CHE 1800 & 1801: General Chemistry I w/ Lab
- CHE 1810 & 1811: General Chemistry II w/ Lab

*** **OR** ***

Two semesters of math:

- MTH 1109/ 1110: College Algebra, or higher
- Another semester of Math > MTH 1110
- CHE 1110 & 1150: Principles of Chemistry w/ Lab
- CHE 2100 & 2150: Into to Organic & Biol Chem w/ Lab

Pro Tip! Biology students do not need additional General Studies coursework for Natural & Physical Sciences or Quantitative Literacy. Your required Biology, Chemistry, and Math courses will fulfill these.

Additional Required Biology courses:

Choose one of the following:

- BIO 2100: General Botany (5cr.)
- BIO 2310: Human Anatomy & Physiology I (4cr.)
- BIO 2400: General Microbiology (5cr.)
- BIO 3200: Invertebrate Zoology (4cr.)
- BIO 3260: Vertebrate Zoology (4cr.)

Take General Ecology and a Genetics course:

- BIO 3520: General Ecology (3cr.)

Choose one of the following:

- BIO 3600: General Genetics (4cr.)
- BIO 3610: Genetics: Principles & Analysis (4cr.)

Professionalize! Have you met with a Faculty Advisor to personalize your path and ensure you select courses and extracurricular experiences that will best serve you?

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Biology Elective Course Requirement:

- At least 46 total credit hours must be completed in BIO courses.
- At least 27 total credit hours must be upper division BIO courses (3000/4000 level).
 - Includes any upper division Zoology, General Ecology, Genetics, and BIO Senior Experience

Lower Division BIO Courses (1000/2000 level)	Credit Hours	Upper Division BIO Courses (3000/4000 level)	Credit Hours
<input type="checkbox"/> BIO 1080/1090 – General Biology I w/Lab	4	<input type="checkbox"/> BIO 3520: General Ecology	3
<input type="checkbox"/> BIO 1081/1091 – General Biology II w/Lab	4	<input type="checkbox"/> BIO 36XX: Genetics	4
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> BIO Senior Experience (recommended)	
Total lower division BIO credit hours:		Total upper division BIO credit hours: <i>AT LEAST 27 UPPER DIVISION BIO CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED</i>	
Total BIO prefix credit hours: <i>LOWER DIVISION + UPPER DIVISION (AT LEAST 46 TOTAL BIO CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED)</i>			

Required Non-Biology Science Electives:

- 9 credits total, at least 6 of which must be upper division (3000 /4000 level).
- Any Math course selected would be in addition to the two semesters required above.

Non-Biology Science Elective Courses	Credit Hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(upper division)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(upper division)
Total Non-Biology Science Elective credit hours: <i>At least 6 credit hours must be upper division (3000/4000 level)</i>	

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Senior Experience Requirement:

- A capstone course is required to graduate.
- A Biology Senior Experience is recommended.
- Courses outside Biology marked (SE) fulfill the Senior Experience requirement but would **not** count toward your BIO hours.

BIO 4050: Advanced Cell & Molecular Biology

BIO 4230: Issues in Conservation Biology

BIO 4271: Parasitology

BIO 4300: Neurobiology

BIO 4510: Microbial Ecology

BIO 4540: Animal Ecology

BIO 4820: Developmental Biology

BIO 4850: Evolution

Are you ready for graduation?

→ Please see your Degree Progress Report for General Studies and MSU Denver graduation requirements. ←

- Have you completed a total of 46 credit hours of BIO courses approved by the Biology Department?
- Have you completed at least 27 upper division BIO coursework (3000/ 4000 level)?
- Have you completed at least 39 total upper division credit hours?
- Have you completed a Senior Experience course?
- Have you had a final advising appointment?
- Have you submitted an application for graduation?