



**Application advice from the
St. Bonaventure University
Occupational Therapy faculty**

- 1. Speak from the heart!** Your personal essay should be “personal.” This is your chance to showcase what makes you a great addition to the field of OT beyond your grades and academic performance. What about OT draws you into our profession? What aspects of your life can you apply to the journey of becoming an occupational therapist?
- 2. Spend your money wisely.** If you are applying to only one or two programs, check their websites to see if they have free internal applications rather than spending money on OTCAS (Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service) first. SBU has a FREE application, so there is no risk involved during the decision-making process.
- 3. Make the most of your undergraduate credits.** Check prerequisite requirements for each program before applying. Depending on your undergraduate track, you may have many or all of the requirements needed for consideration. Although a bachelor’s degree in public health, health science, or psychology is one of the most directly correlated undergraduate pathways, at SBU we accept undergraduate degrees from a wide variety of majors, including sociology, fine arts, and exercise science.
- 4. Spend time shadowing.** Observe occupational therapy practice in different settings like hospitals, schools, or clinics to gain an understanding of what we do before entering an MSOT program. This early exposure will get your wheels turning and may spark interest in specific practice areas.



**ST BONAVENTURE
UNIVERSITY**

10 TIPS

WHEN APPLYING TO
AN OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY GRADUATE
PROGRAM

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
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STEPS

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5. **Reach out to the program you are interested in for a visit or a phone call.** The team that reviews applications will want to know that you have shown interest in their program and have gone the extra mile to explore their unique curriculum.
6. **You are more than your grades.** While some schools look for applicants with the highest GPA, others value life experience, initiative, and perspective representing the student's passion and drive. Don't hesitate to fill out that application and sell yourself to the program.
7. **Talk to a family member or friend who has received occupational therapy services.** Ask them about their firsthand experience working with their OT and how the therapist helped them address their concerns and improve their quality of life. There is no better way to learn about occupational therapy than from the people OTs have been privileged to serve.
8. **Pay attention to deadlines.** SBU is on rolling admissions, but the earlier you apply, the better. We only have a certain number of seats in the program each cohort. You will want to make sure to apply early in order to save your seat in the class. Every MSOT cohort at St. Bonaventure University starts in the fall.
9. **Thoroughly research the program.** You should make sure the program is a good fit for you and your career goals. You also want to make sure the timeline and structure of the program are a good fit. At SBU, you are able to finish the program in 23 months. Classes are also held Tuesday-Thursday, allowing our students to work part time or see family and friends on the weekends to maintain a strong work-life balance.
10. **Make your letter of recommendation stand out.** While submitting a letter from one of your professors in a class that you aced is always a good idea, getting one from a professor in a class you may have had some ups and downs can stand out. The professor can speak to your eagerness to seek extra help, attend review sessions, and put in the necessary work to obtain your grade. While this may not be a requirement, it can make your application stand out and speak to your work ethic.

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