DOCTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Overview

Occupational therapy began in the early 1900s in mental health hospitals with the therapeutic use of purposeful activities to improve the lives of those with mental illness. Therefore, the profession is grounded in the social sciences and the biological sciences. Today, occupational therapy is a vital, evidence-based health profession that meets the needs of individuals, communities, and populations. The opportunity to participate in **occupations** is necessary for health and well-being. Occupations include a wide array of living activities such as self-care, going to school or work, and participating in leisure activities. Therefore, occupations encompass all aspects of living and are the things we need, want, or are expected to do across the lifespan. Because all occupations occur in context, occupational therapists also consider how aspects of the physical and social environment, culture, and ways of living interact with participation in occupations.

Occupational therapy is a vibrant health profession that involves providing assessment and intervention for individuals or groups whose ability to perform their daily occupations is threatened or impaired by developmental disability, physical injury or disability, psychosocial challenges, sensory impairment, or the aging process. The occupational therapy process involves collaborating with the client or patient to assess and develop solutions to support their ability to engage in their life activities or their occupations. The goal of occupational therapy is to assist the client or patient in the performance of life activities that are meaningful and purposeful and may include self-care, work, leisure, play, or social activities. Occupational therapists serve patients of all ages in a variety of settings including hospitals and clinics, rehabilitation facilities, long-term care facilities, public schools, behavioral health programs and hospitals, day care facilities, homes, community agencies, and industrial sites.

The entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is www.acoteonline.org (http://www.acoteonline.org/).

Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapist administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (http://www.nbcot.org/)(NBCOT). Therapists, Registered (OTRs). Each state also requires a separate license to practice, which is usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure. Please be aware that to obtain a license in Texas, past disciplinary actions, either felonies or misdemeanors, should be addressed with the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners beforehand. Waiting to report past disciplinary actions on the application for licensure will cause a delay in issuing a license. It is recommended that applicants use this review before applying to or attending an OT program.

For further information about the accreditation process contact:

ACOTE
7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E
Bethesda, MD 20814
Telephone: (301) 652-6611
accred@aota.org
http://www.acoteonline.org (http://www.acoteonline.org/)

Admissions Requirements

The OTD program consists of 114 semester credit hours of graduate-level coursework, including 6 months of full-time clinical fieldwork and completion of a doctoral capstone. A baccalaureate degree is required for admission. All program prerequisites must be completed by the end of the fall semester prior to summer admission. Applicants are encouraged to seek advisement from their college counselors or the Health Professions Office of Admissions and Special Programs at (866) 802-6288 (toll-free) or (210) 567-6220.

Applications for the OTD program are accepted between mid-August and mid-October for the incoming class. The OTCAS Application, supplemental application, official transcripts, and all supporting documents must be submitted by the application deadline in mid-October (See School of Health Professions web site for each year's specific dates). The first semester of OTD coursework typically begins the last week of May.

In addition to non-academic factors that are considered, admission requirements for the OTD program include:

- Official transcripts from each college and university attended (Note: All transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be submitted in the original language and must be accompanied by a course-by-course evaluation through a NACES Members agency)
- Grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on OTD Program prerequisites
- Cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 for bachelor's degree
- Knowledge and understanding of occupational therapy gained through a minimum of 30 observation hours under the general supervision of a licensed occupational therapist as documented on Documentation of Experience form
- Two letters of reference, preferably from licensed occupational therapists
- Interviews with occupational therapy faculty
- Completion of all OTD program prerequisites (26 hours) by the end of the fall semester prior to admission the following summer:
  - Human Anatomy with lab OR Anatomy & Physiology I, 4 semester credit hours
  - Human Physiology with lab OR Anatomy & Physiology II, 4 semester credit hours
  - Physics I Lecture OR Kinesiology, 3 semester credit hours
  - Abnormal Psychology, 3 semester credit hours
  - Development Psychology, 3 semester credit hours
  - Sociology and/or Anthropology, 3 semester credit hours
  - Statistics, 3 semester credit hours
  - Medical Terminology, 1 semester credit hour or certificate of completion is acceptable
- **International Applicants only:** Submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores; minimum scores 560 (paper) or 68 (Internet).
- Tuition Deposit

Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program consists of 114 semester credit hours of graduate-level coursework, including 6 months of full-time clinical fieldwork and a doctoral capstone. In order meet graduation requirements, students must successfully fulfill all program-specific requirements including completion of all coursework in the Plan of Study while maintaining the performance standards outlined by the program and a cumulative GPA of a 3.0, as well as program requirements related to professional behavior, interprofessional education, and community service.

The OTD curriculum consists of three segments that must be successfully completed to fulfill the requirements of the degree: didactic coursework, level II fieldwork, doctoral capstone experience and doctoral capstone project. Students must successfully complete all didactic coursework before they register for Level II Fieldwork coursework and proceed to the Level II Fieldwork experiences. Students must successfully complete two Level II Fieldwork courses before they register and proceed to the Doctoral Capstone segment of the curriculum. Students must successfully complete the Doctoral Capstone Experience and the Doctoral Capstone Project as the final segment of the degree requirements.

Sample Plan of Study

First Year		
Summer		**Credit Hours**
OCCT 7000	Theoretical and Professional Foundations of Occupational Therapy	3
INTD 7050	Gross Anatomy	6
Fall		
OCCT 7002	Applied Biomechanics of Movement	4
OCCT 7003	Environmental Technologies 1	3
OCCT 7004	Human Occupation Across the Lifespan	3
OCCT 7005	Occupational Therapy Process: Mental Health	4
OCCT 7007	Level 1 Fieldwork: Mental Health	1
OCCT 7006	Foundations of Research Design	3
Spring		
OCCT 7008	Occupational Therapy Process: Pediatric Part 1	5
OCCT 7009	Clinical Conditions: Pediatrics	2
OCCT 7010	Application of Neural Systems to Occupation	3
OCCT 7011	Research Design and Proposal	3
OCCT 7012	Level I Fieldwork: Pediatrics	1
OCCT 7013	Assessment Measures	2
Second Year		
Summer		
OCCT 7015	Pediatric Service Delivery	3
OCCT 7030	Doctoral Capstone Proposal Development 1	3
Fall		
OCCT 7014	Occupational Therapy Process: Pediatric Part 2	5
OCCT 7016	Occupational Therapy Process: Adult Neuromuscular	5
OCCT 7017	Clinical Conditions: Adult Neuromuscular	2
OCCT 7018	Environmental Technology 2	3
OCCT 7020	Teaching and Leadership	2
OCCT 7021	Level 1 Fieldwork: Adult	1
Spring		
OCCT 7027	Occupational Therapy Process: Adult Biomechanical	5
OCCT 7024	Adult Service Delivery	3
OCCT 7028	Clinical Conditions: Adult Biomechanical and Medical	2
OCCT 7025	Management and Leadership in OT	3
OCCT 7031	Doctoral Capstone Proposal Development 2	2
OCCT 7026	Doctoral Seminar	1
OCCT 7034	Documentation for Occupational Therapy Practice	1
Third Year		
Summer		
OCCT 7022	Level II Fieldwork A	9
Fall		
OCCT 7023	Level II Fieldwork B	9
Spring		
OCCT 7032	Doctoral Capstone Experience	10
OCCT 7033	Doctoral Capstone Project	2
	Total Credit Hours:	**114.0**

Student Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes embody our integrated curriculum themes, creating meaningful connections within and across courses while ensuring a cohesive focus of learning.

1. **Person**: Demonstrate competence with person-centered approaches in meeting the occupational performance needs of clients (persons, groups, or populations) and supporting their participation in meaningful and desired occupations.
2. **Occupation**: Design and implement evidence and occupation-based interventions that integrate theoretical knowledge with physiological, behavioral, cognitive and social foundations to support client engagement and participation in meaningful activities.
3. **Contexts**: Evaluate and adapt occupational therapy practice within complex, interprofessional healthcare, education, and community settings to effectively address clients' needs and goals in physical and virtual environments
4. **Professional Roles**: Ethically fulfill professional responsibilities through leadership, advocacy, teaching, and program development while effectively collaborating to deliver occupational therapy services within various practice settings.
5. **Research and Evidence-Based Practice**: Critically evaluate, generate, and integrate scientific knowledge through scholarly endeavors to advance the occupational therapy discipline and inform clinical decision-making.

Program Policies

Laptop Computer Requirement

All OTD students are required to have a laptop computer for various class and testing activities that are conducted using web-based programs or our university online course management system. The Office of Veteran Services and Financial Aid can provide additional information about program cost including the expense of a laptop in financial aid awards.

Ethics

Ethical principles reflect the values of a profession and thereby serve as action-oriented guidelines that are designed to be preventative rather than disciplinary. Occupational therapists are expected to abide by the ethics adopted by the profession (AOTA Code of Ethics (http://www.aota.org/), 2015). The Occupational Therapy Department subscribes to this ethical code and expects the behaviors of students to be consistent with these principles.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an important part of the educational process for becoming an occupational therapist. It represents the part of the program for the student to develop clinical skills through observation and experiential learning and to apply understanding of theory and techniques through extended, supervised experience.

Fieldwork occurs away from the health science center at affiliated clinical institutions/sites. The majority of the fieldwork sites are located within the State of Texas. Students may complete fieldwork only at assigned facilities. The department maintains agreements with approved fieldwork sites, and these have been carefully selected to assure compatibility with the department philosophy, objectives, and curriculum design. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator maintains contact with the fieldwork facilities to support links between the didactic and fieldwork aspects of the curriculum. Grades are based on the student's performance, judgment, and attitude as measured by the on-site supervisor using the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student.

Whereas students are given an opportunity to express their preferences for location of placements, the program cannot grant assurances that student will be placed in their setting or location of choice. Students may be assigned a placement based on availability or other factors to ensure degree completion. Student placements are reserved many months (and in some cases, up to two years) in advance of a scheduled fieldwork experience. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator maintains contact with the fieldwork facilities to support links between the didactic and fieldwork aspects of the curriculum. All assigned work including observational/participatory times, written and oral assignments, and class discussion participation must be satisfactorily completed in order for the student to receive a passing grade. Grades are based on the student's performance, judgment, and attitude as measured by the on-site supervisor using the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student.

The student is responsible for making any required living arrangements and should be prepared to incur expenses for transportation, food, and lodging during required fieldwork assignments. Fieldwork students are expected to obey policies and procedures of the facility providing the fieldwork experience (this may include, but is not limited to, a background check and drug screen), and should submit all required assignments and evaluations, and other documentation as requested.

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) requires completion of all fieldwork within 24 months following completion of academic preparation. This requirement assures continuity of academic concepts.

Program Costs

In addition to required tuition and fees, there are costs for textbooks, professional occupational therapy association dues, and supplies. The full-time clinical fieldwork experiences included in the curriculum may require that students locate outside of San Antonio for the duration of the rotations. Fieldwork expenses are the responsiblity of the student and will vary according to individual arrangements depending on the cost of travel, temporary housing, maintenance of local accommodations, etc. Students are encouraged to budget for major expenditures that could be associated with these assignments. Detailed information about program costs can be found on the Department of Occupational Therapy website.

Other program requirements

In order to be eligible for graduation, students must meet all academic degree requirements and successfully complete program requirements including participation in community service activities, the professional behavior evaluation, interprofessional education activities, and membership in professional occupational therapy associations.

Standards of Practice

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2010) (http://www.aota.org/) publishes minimum standards of practice. These standards are viewed as minimum expectations for therapists as they conduct their professional activities on a daily basis. Please note that standards by other agencies, whether voluntary, regulatory, or institutional, may be more specific or rigorous than those published by AOTA.