**INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS:** **EVALUATING PREREQUISITES**

**Master of Science Program in Occupational Therapy**

**Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at UNC-Chapel Hill**

**Revised December 2013**

**Please read this entire document for information related to prerequisites for the**

**Master of Science program in Occupational Therapy at UNC-Chapel Hill.**

We ask that you compare the courses you are submitting for prerequisites to the descriptions we have provided below and base the selection of courses you submit on these criteria. You do not need to submit a transcript for review prior to making application to the program.

There are **eight** total prerequisite courses. **Four** of these are fixed (core body of knowledge) and are outlined on this page. **Three** are in categories that allow flexibility in the specific coursework that satisfies the prerequisite (outlined on page 2). These 7 courses may be taken at accredited universities, colleges or community colleges. Online courses will be accepted from nationally accredited institutions if the course credit is equivalent to that of a typical on-site course. The **final** prerequisite is an occupation course, which does not have to be taken for credit, but must meet specific criteria (outlined beginning on page 2).

**CORE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE: FIXED PREREQUISITES**

The curriculum in occupational therapy builds directly on basic understanding in certain academic content areas. As a result, prospective applicants will be expected to complete the following four fixed prerequisite courses:

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| **FIXED PREREQUISITE COURSES** | **COMMENTS** |
| 1 AND 2: ANATOMY and PHYSIOLOGY  A total of two courses in anatomy and physiology are required. | Any of the following course combinations will suffice:  OPTION 1: Anatomy course with human anatomy lab component + a physiology course  **OR**  OPTION 2: Anatomy & Physiology I + Anatomy & Physiology II. There must be an  anatomy lab with human content somewhere in this sequence  **OR**  OPTION 3: Anatomy & Physiology I course with human anatomy lab + physiology course |
| 3. ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY  This course must cover a broad spectrum of intellectual/ developmental disabilities, psychopathology/mental health and behavioral disorders. | The course may also be listed under titles such as Behavioral Disorders or Psychopathology but courses in Biopsychology or Neurobiology are NOT accepted substitutes in this category. |
| 4. STATISTICS  This course must cover both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. | Although often called “Statistics !” or “Introduction to Statistics,” courses by other names may also fulfill this requirement, and may be in mathematics, social science, psychology or public health departments. |

**Timing:** The 4 fixed prerequisites on this page and the 3 flexible prerequisites outlined on page 2 MUST have been taken within the 5 years prior to application to the program. The only potential exceptions are for those who work in fields focused on a specific area AND who have taken the coursework in the past (for example, mental health professionals may not have to retake abnormal psychology). Applicants requesting a waiver of the 5-year rule should document their justification and send it via email to OSInfo@med.unc.edu prior to the application deadline. The Admissions Committee will review and make decisions about waiver requests as quickly as possible.

**FLEXIBLE PREREQUISITES** In addition to the fixed prerequisites, applicants must submit three additional prerequisite courses in the categories outlined below.

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| **FLEXIBLE PREREQUISITE CATEGORY** | **COURSE EXAMPLES**  (Please note that this list of examples is not all-inclusive.) |
| 5. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT/BEHAVIOR  This course should cover aspects of typical individual  human growth and development and/or behavior. | Developmental Psychology  Lifespan Human Development  Child Development (early childhood / adolescence, etc)  Adulthood and Aging  Cognitive Psychology  Neuropsychology  Brain and Behavior  Personality |
| 6. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS  Courses in this category should address the study of  social entities and constructs that influence human action. The study of cultural groups, social institutions and socio-cultural practices are all acceptable. | Cultural anthropology  Minority Studies (focused on ethnicity, race, gender, etc)  Upper level sociology (beyond introductory)  Public Health  Public Policy  Leisure / Recreation Studies  Political Science  Social Work  Education (systems-level, not pedagogy)  Women’s Studies |
| 7. MODES OF REASONING  The intent of this category is to recognize coursework that has challenged the applicant to apply a strategic process of reasoning or problem solving. | Research Methods  Specific courses in quantitative or qualitative methods  or analysis (ethnography, biostatistics, etc)  Philosophy or Ethics (specific topics in ethics accepted)  Literature taught in a foreign language  Comparative religion (not a course based in a specific  faith tradition, but a course that asks the learner to  compare ways of thinking across systems of belief)  Honors thesis work (must have course credit associated) |

**OCCUPATION PREREQUISITE**

**NOTE: The occupation prerequisite must have been taken in the past three (3) years and must be completed prior to application. One of the essays in the application is a reflection on this learning experience, and you must be able to complete that essay and submit it with your application.**

The intent of the Occupation prerequisite is to expose you to a situation in which you attempt something that is a novel challenge and that has an outcome, either a product (something you’ve created) or performance. We ask you to participate in this prerequisite to reflect on the types of learning processes that may be experienced by our clients during occupational therapy. As OTs, we often ask our clients to try new ways of doing things, or things they haven’t done before, in order to meet a goal. For example, we may ask someone who was an avid baker to try using some adapted cooking utensils in order to address concerns about arthritis in her hands. We might ask another baker to use his non-dominant hand to stir cake batter because his dominant hand has been affected by a stroke. In both these examples, the ultimate goal, or outcome, is the return to the valued occupation of baking, as well as the more immediate outcome of a delicious baked good! We feel it’s important for students in our program to have some understanding of what’s happening when a person learns an occupation that is meaningful or of interest, in an ongoing, structured process that involves learning not only from an “instructor” but also from others.

A wide range of learning options can satisfy this prerequisite, and some specific examples and ways to evaluate the prerequisite follow this paragraph. The Occupation prerequisite does NOT have to be taken for credit. It must, however, reflect a learning experience that is offered in a structured and social format. There must be other learners involved in the process, and the learning experience must occur at least once a week over a minimum of 6 weeks. The emphasis here is on *doing* and the learner must be an active participant in the process. Please note that this prerequisite does NOT include courses taken in order to benefit, teach or communicate with others (such as foreign languages, sign language, coaching, therapeutic recreation methods, etc).

The occupation prerequisite must have the following characteristics:

1. new learning/challenge (not something you already do or know how to do)
2. formal (structured) learning context,  but does not have to be a "for credit" course
3. at least once a week for a minimum of 6 weeks
4. social context (other learners present in person, i.e., no online courses)
5. results in a product or performance
6. learners must be active (learning to DO something not just recipients of information)
7. course content is not designed to be used to benefit, teach or communicate with others

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| **EXAMPLES** | **OUTCOME: PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE (**This list is not all-inclusive) |
| Creative Writing | Poem, short story, article, etc |
| Woodworking | Object, furniture or craft constructed of wood |
| Dance | Dance performance (any genre) |
| Theater | Theater production, stage play, public performance |
| Music | Vocal or instrumental performance |
| Studio Art | Painting, ceramics, sculpture, weaving, etc |
| Digital Media / Photography | Documentary film, website, photographic images |
| Sports and Recreation  Please Note:   * Common physical education courses are not accepted but courses that represent a novel challenge for the learner and have an outcome other than a written course exam are OK * Exercise classes to maintain personal fitness (while great!) are not applicable | * Scuba Diving with the outcome of a final test dive * Tennis with the outcome of participation in a tournament * Marathon (or similar) training with the outcome of a completed race |

**IF YOU HAVE READ THROUGH THIS DOCUMENT AND REVIEWED YOUR OWN COURSEWORK AND STILL HAVE QUESTIONS,** please send your questions to [osinfo@med.unc.edu](mailto:osinfo@med.unc.edu). If your question is about whether or not a course you have taken (or are taking) would met a specific prerequisite requirement, please include the name of the course, where you took it, and a course description in your email, as that will assist the committee in determining whether or not that course is acceptable.