



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE
& OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

www.med.unc.edu/ahs/ocsci

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY INFORMATION SESSION HANDOUTS 2019

Accreditation

The Master of Science program in Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association. The program was re-accredited in 1986, 1993, 2001 and 2011. We are scheduled for our next accreditation visit in the fall of 2020. Accreditation is granted to those occupational therapy educational programs that demonstrate substantial compliance with the Accreditation Standards for a Master's Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist. More information about accreditation can be obtained by contacting: ACOTE, 4720 Montgomery Lane, PO Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220, Phone: (301) 652-2682

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FAST FACTS ABOUT ADMISSIONS:
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM in OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE and OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
2050 BONDURANT HALL
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
OSInfo@med.unc.edu
Version: Fall 2019

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: Tuesday, DECEMBER 3, 2019 by 11:59 p.m. EST for Fall 2020 admission

APPLICATION PROCEDURES: Link to Graduate Admissions Application

[\(<http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html>\)](http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html)

Will be available by mid-August 2019

Application fee: \$90.00

REQUIRED ELEMENTS:

- Official transcripts from all post-high school coursework (upload)
- GRE Scores (within last 5 years)
- Letters of recommendation (3) – 1 must be from OT (uploaded by reference)
- Occupational therapy observations – no certain # hours; diversify!
- Essay – prompt will be provided on application – is called the *Statement of Purpose* on the Grad School website
- Brief reflective essay related to Occupation prerequisite
- Resume – maximum 2 pages - Education, work & volunteer history
- Record of employment & human service work/volunteerism
- 8 Prerequisite courses

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- 8 full-time faculty; 13 current PhD students
- Program is 2 calendar years – 95% of students complete in that time
- Clinical fieldwork is part of educational curriculum and occurs within the academic semesters (FW I and first FWII) and during 1 summer (FW II)
- Fieldwork placements are determined by the FW coordinator in collaboration with the student.
- Students complete a master's research project as a requirement for the MS degree; completing a thesis is atypical and requires additional time & approval from a supervising faculty member
- Most students are able to manage part-time work if they desire
- National certification: 100% overall pass rate /95% first-time pass rate

LINK TO TUITION COSTS: <https://cashier.unc.edu/tuition-fees/>

LINK TO UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL AID: <https://gradschool.unc.edu/funding/>

LINK TO EXTERNAL FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/students/financial-assistance/>

PREREQUISITE COURSES

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.

After reviewing this document carefully and comparing it with your coursework, if you still have questions about whether or not one of your courses will fulfill prerequisite requirements, please complete a Prerequisite Check Form available on the Prerequisites page of our website.

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 are expected to complete the following four fixed prerequisite courses:

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.

FLEXIBLE PREREQUISITES

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

FLEXIBLE PREREQUISITE CATEGORY

5. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT/BEHAVIOR

This course should cover aspects of typical individual human growth and development and/or behavior.

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.

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.

COURSE EXAMPLES

(Please note that this list of examples is *not* all-inclusive.)

Developmental Psychology
Lifespan Human Development
Child Development (early childhood / adolescence, etc)
Adulthood and Aging
Cognitive Psychology
Neuropsychology
Brain and Behavior
Personality

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

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 (not just recipients of information)
7. course content is not designed to be used to benefit, teach or communicate with others

EXAMPLES

Creative Writing
Woodworking
Dance
Theater
Music
Studio Art
Digital Media / Photography
Sports and Recreation

Please Note:

- Common physical education courses are not accepted but course 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

OUTCOME: PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE (This list is not all-inclusive)

Poem, short story, article, etc
Object, furniture or craft constructed of wood
Dance performance (any genre)
Theater production, stage play, public performance
Vocal or instrumental performance
Painting, ceramics, sculpture, weaving, etc
Documentary film, website, photographic images

- 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

TO EVALUATE THE OCCUPATION PREREQUISITE, ASK YOURSELF:

- Was this a new challenge for me that caused me to move beyond my comfort zone?
- Was there an element of *doing* as opposed to solely thinking?
- Did the learning take place in a social environment?
- Was the outcome of this learning experience either a tangible product or performance of the skills I learned?

TIMING AND WAIVERS

The four fixed prerequisites and the three flexible prerequisites MUST have been taken within five 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. Waivers may be granted to those individuals so that they do not have to re-take prerequisite courses that are more than 5 years old (for example, mental health professionals may not have to retake abnormal psychology). If you feel your combined coursework and consistent, recent experiences using the content of that coursework may make you eligible for a waiver, please complete the *Waiver Request Form* linked on the Prerequisites page of our website. The admissions committee will review waiver requests four times a year, at the end of March, May, August, and October.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the standard graduate school application, applicants to the MS program in occupational therapy will be directed within the online process to complete supplemental forms specific to the program. The following information is provided to clarify those requirements:

Prerequisite courses: The applicant will be asked to enter the courses s/he has taken corresponding with the required prerequisites. The applicant must enter the date the course was or will be completed and the grade obtained. If the Occupation prerequisite was not taken for a grade, enter N/A. All prerequisites must have been taken within the last five calendar years unless an exemption is granted by the admissions committee; the occupation prerequisite must have been taken within the past three years. For prerequisite courses that have not yet been completed, enter the anticipated date of completion in the online application.

Statement of Purpose: Each applicant will be prompted to write an admissions essay (approx. 1.5 to 2 pages) according to the guidelines provided on the application. The prompt for the Statement of Purpose can be found on the [Graduate School website](#). Click on Graduate Degrees and Programs and select *Occupational Therapy* from the drop down menu. This document should be uploaded through the electronic application system in the Statement of Purpose section.

Reflective statement: The reflective statement gives prospective students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in the Occupation prerequisite course. The prompt for the reflective statement can be found on the [Graduate School website](#).

Resume: Each applicant is requested to upload a 1-2 page personal resume highlighting academic, work, and volunteer achievements to date. Each applicant will be required to upload a resume AND fill in the Work & Volunteer Experience section on the application.

Letters of Recommendation: Each applicant is required to provide the names and contact information for three (3) individuals who will provide letters of recommendation. For the MS program in occupational therapy, **AT LEAST ONE OF THESE RECOMMENDERS MUST BE A REGISTERED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST**. The other recommenders can be past supervisors or academic personnel who can comment on the applicant's professional characteristics. Please ensure you have a valid email address for each of your recommenders. Each recommender will receive an email generated by the application system with instructions explaining how and where to upload your letters of recommendation. You will be able to see if the letter has been uploaded by signing in to your application with your PIN and password.

Experience with Occupational Therapy: Each applicant is expected to have gained exposure to the profession of occupational therapy through clinical observations, site visits, and conversations with practicing occupational therapists. We do not require a specific number of observation hours; instead, the emphasis is on understanding the breadth of the profession and the different types of practice settings (medical, educational, community-based) and populations served (based on age, diagnosis, situation, etc.). The template for this document is provided on the [Graduate School website](#). Experiences in areas of human service that do not include occupational therapy are not to be included in this section, but are welcomed in the Work Experiences section.

Work & Volunteer Experience: In this section of the supplemental form, applicants are asked to enter information regarding their paid or volunteer work experience.

Additional Document (optional): The Additional Document #3 is designed to allow the applicant to provide information that is relevant to the desire to study occupational therapy, but does not fit into other categories. Please feel free to provide information regarding special skills or achievements, life circumstances that have influenced you, or other things you would like considered by the admission committee. This information should not exceed one typed page.

ESTIMATED TUITION AND FEES

These estimates are based on the tuition and fees for the current academic year and for the previous summer session and therefore may not represent the actual cost for a student enrolling in the program in the future.

The tables below were retrieved from:

https://cashier.unc.edu/files/2019/06/19_20YR.pdf (page 5)

<https://cashier.unc.edu/files/2019/03/TF-summer2019.pdf> (page 2)

Tuition and Fees (2019-20 academic year, per semester)

GRADUATES—Doctor of Audiology, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Masters Degrees in Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Clinical								
Credit Hours:	0 - 2.9 hours		3 - 5.9 hours		6 - 8.9 hours		9+ / Full Load	
	Tuition	with Fees	Tuition	with Fees	Tuition	with Fees	Tuition	with Fees
NC Resident	\$ 2,300.25	\$ 3,279.57	\$ 4,600.50	\$ 5,579.82	\$ 6,900.75	\$ 7,880.07	\$ 9,201.00	\$ 10,180.32
Non-Resident	\$ 4,516.00	\$ 5,495.32	\$ 9,032.00	\$ 10,011.32	\$ 13,548.00	\$ 14,527.32	\$ 18,064.00	\$ 19,043.32
Required Fees	\$ 979.32							

IN-STATE
OUT-OF-

Summer Tuition and Fees (2019, per credit hour)

Graduates

Includes Medicine, Dental Oral Biology,

Nursing, Allied Health Sciences, Pharmacy and

Public Health

per credit hour

277.00

66.00

343.00

876.00

66.00

942.00

IN-STATE

OUT-OF-STATE

TOTALS:

Currently our program is 4 semesters and two summer sessions (in the second summer, for Level II Fieldwork), so:

Time Period	IN-STATE		OUT-OF-STATE	
	Tuition + Fees	Total	Tuition + Fees	Total
Semesters (4)	\$10,180.32	\$40,721.28	\$19,043.32	\$76,173.32
Summer (6 credit hrs)	\$343.00/hr	\$2058.00	\$942.00/hr	\$5652.00
TOTALS		\$42,779.28		\$81,825.32

Based on 2019-20 costs, the *estimated* total for the tuition and fees for the program for a student who pays:

- IN-STATE tuition and fees for both years may be approximately **\$42,779.28**.
- OUT-OF-STATE tuition and fees for both years may be approximately **\$81,825.32**.

ADDITIONAL COSTS: In addition to tuition, student fees, and living expenses you should budget for some additional costs as part of your graduate school education. These costs include the following:

Professional School Tuition: *This is not actually an additional cost*, as it is included in the amount of tuition listed for the MSOT program in the Tuition/Fees document provided each year by the UNC Cashier's Office. Professional School Tuition is a supplemental tuition fee for the graduate professional degree programs in the Department of Allied Health Sciences, including the MS program in occupational therapy. As of 2018, the supplemental tuition is \$3550 per semester (\$7100/year) for NC residents and \$4025 per semester(\$8050/year) for non-residents. The professional school tuition is assessed during fall and spring semesters only and does not apply to summer sessions.

Fieldwork: You should plan for extra expenses associated with traveling to a fieldwork site and securing housing there. When students are on fieldwork, they are considered full time students and are charged regular tuition. Fieldwork sites may require a criminal record check, drug testing, and/or immunizations. Students receive detailed information about these requirements from the fieldwork coordinator early in the summer prior to starting the program.

Books: The required books form the basis of your professional library. As a result, you should anticipate approximately \$1000 for books and printed material over the course of two years.

Research: All students complete a required research project in their second year of the program. Projects generally do not incur significant costs (less than \$100), but this may vary depending on the research question and method selected to answer it. Costs may include additional travel to collect data, paying for transcription of audio-recorded data, or rental or purchase of statistical software for quantitative analysis. The research faculty works with each collaborative research team to ensure a meaningful project while trying to keep the cost down.

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Most of the OT students at UNC fund their studies through a combination of loans, small scholarships and income from part-time work. Below are both internal and external scholarship resources that our students have found helpful in the past.

PLACES YOU NEED TO START LOOKING:

1. www.alliedhealth.unc.edu Click on Student Services and then Financial Assistance
2. www.aotf.org Click on scholarship programs – also check www.aota.org
3. www.gradschool.unc.edu Click on Funding Opportunities
4. <http://guides.lib.unc.edu/AHSFA>

Information regarding financial aid for graduate students is available through the graduate school at: <http://gradschool.unc.edu/funding/>

The Student Aid Office is also an essential source for loan and scholarship information: CB#2300, 300 Vance Hall, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, 27599-2300. (919) 962-8396. This information can also be accessed online at <http://studentaid.unc.edu/>

Please Note: The Office of Student Aid recommends the following regarding the FAFSA form:

The federal processor should receive your completed FAFSA by the priority deadline of **March 1**. *This will mean completing and sending your forms at least by February 15 to insure a timely arrival.* You can file the FAFSA forms during the application period and activate the application once admitted.

OTHER TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE that are available to occupational therapy students but are **not** administered through the Student Aid Office include:

Forgivable Education Loans for Service (FELS) Program

Established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2011, the Forgivable Education Loans for Service provides financial assistance to qualified students enrolled in an approved education program and committed to working in critical employment shortage professions in North Carolina. More information is available at <http://www.cfnc.org/FELS>

American Occupational Therapy Foundation Scholarship Program

Various scholarships, some awarded on the basis of state of residence, are available through the American Occupational Therapy Foundation (www.aotf.org)

American Business Club Scholarships

AMBUCS offers scholarships to US citizen students in their junior/senior year in a bachelor's degree, or graduate program leading to a master's or doctoral degree. Awards range from \$500 to \$1500 annually. Students must be accepted in an accredited program by the appropriate health therapy profession authority in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, hearing audiology and recreational therapy. Awards are based on financial aid and scholarship amounts vary depending on need. For further information and applications, visit their website at: <https://ambucs.org/therapists/scholarship-program/>

Kappa Kappa Gamma Foundation Scholarships

Scholarships are available to Kappa members who are pursuing graduate education on a campus with a Kappa Kappa Gamma chapter. Applicants must be US or Canadian citizens. For further information, see <https://www.kappakappagamma.org/Kappa/Foundation/Scholarships/>.

Daughters of the American Revolution

Scholarships are offered for OT and PT students. For more information, see <https://www.dar.org/national-society/scholarships/nursing-medical-scholarships>

Sallie Mae Loans

Loan information can be obtained at <https://www.salliemae.com/student-loans/graduate-school-information/graduate-school-scholarships/>

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation

The AAUW Educational Foundation supports aspiring scholars around the globe, teachers and activists in local communities, women at critical stages of their careers, and those pursuing professions where women are underrepresented. Information and applications for fellowships and grants are available at: <https://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/>

OTHER POSSIBLE SOURCES:

Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits

For students with a disability, low socioeconomic status, and demonstrated academic competency. Contact: the Vocational Rehabilitation Office in your area.

Civic Clubs

While these are often intended primarily for undergraduate training, some organizations do have available funds for specialized or undergraduate training.

- **Elks Club:** Specifically assists training in care of children with disabilities
- **Business and Professional Women's Clubs:** Loans and other types of assistance to female students. Limited funds available for B.P.W. members who are enrolled in graduate courses.

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

The June C. Allcott Fellowship

June C. Allcott Fellowships in Allied Health are awarded to those students who apply and demonstrate exemplary, ongoing, or new community service. Financial need will be considered. The Fellowship is valued at \$3,500 for the school year. You must complete department of AHS student scholarship form. See deadlines and more information at: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/students/financial-assistance/>

The Thorpe / Mitchell Diversity Leadership Development Award

The Thorpe/Mitchell Fund seeks to increase the diversity of underrepresented minority students into the diagnostic and therapeutic disciplines at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Department of Allied Health Sciences. The Fund provides scholarships for students from under-represented racial/ethnic minorities, You must complete department of AHS student scholarship form. *Open only to incoming students.* See deadlines and more information at: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/students/financial-assistance/>

Hospital Volunteer Association Student Fellowship

The Student Fellowships are supported through a generous gift from the UNC Hospitals Volunteer Association. The fellowships are awarded to deserving allied health students who, in addition to having financial need and scholastic ability, exhibit characteristics of emerging professional excellence. You must complete department of AHS student scholarship form. See deadlines and more information at: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/students/financial-assistance/>

FAQS ABOUT APPLYING TO THE MSOT PROGRAM

- **How many people apply to your program and how many do you accept?**

The Division is committed to ensuring a high quality professional education with small classes, group work, and close faculty supervision for special projects. The resources for teaching and classroom space provided by the University determine the size of our program. Each year we process many more applications than we are able to accept; over the last 4 years we have averaged approximately 240 applications. The Division admits a cohort of 24 students in each class, and unfortunately we are not able to admit all qualified applicants due to lack of space. You should review the description of the accepted UNC student (“Profile of Accepted Students” on our website) to better understand the characteristics of the successful applicant. Applying to more than one entry-level program is recommended to improve your chances of reaching your career goals.

- **Will my application be reviewed if my combined GRE verbal and quantitative scores are below the recommended minimum 50th percentile, or if my GPA is below the program average of 3.6?**

Yes, the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy reviews all completed applications. We recognize individual differences and consider a range of factors including GRE scores, grades, work or volunteer and personal experiences, recommendations from supervisors, and knowledge about occupational therapy. Competitive applicants must demonstrate academic potential to integrate the curriculum information at a graduate level as well as the potential to successfully practice as an OT. However, we understand that not everyone capable of doing graduate work may have high GRE scores, and that successful OT practice requires many types of knowledge and ability, so we examine each application carefully and individually in order to make our admission decisions.

- **If I am not a North Carolina resident should I even submit an application?**

We encourage applications from all qualified individuals. Review the characteristics of students who were admitted last year and reflect on your experience and academic history. Strong out-of-state students, especially those who can contribute to class diversity, will be considered equally for admission.

- **Where can I find the application?**

The application can be found at <https://applynow.unc.edu/apply/>. You will need to create an account in order to start the application process; the application does not need to be completed at one time. Be sure to keep your PIN and password as you will need these to access your application at a later date.

- **I can't find Occupational Therapy listed on the application in order to declare my intention to apply for the MSOT program. What should I do?**

The list of programs is alphabetical by department, so it may appear that you have passed the spot where “occupational therapy” should be due to multiple types of programs in other departments (i.e. Dentistry); however, keep scrolling down and you will see Occupational Therapy.

- **If I'm currently enrolled or planning on taking prerequisite courses next semester, what should I put on my application? Will this affect the way my application is viewed?**

On the prerequisites section of the application, you can note that a course is “in progress”. Please use this option if you are currently enrolled and grades will be posted after the application deadline, or if you are planning on taking the course during the spring or summer semesters. In the additional information section, please write the anticipated date of completion for that prerequisite. Competitive applicants usually have all prerequisites or all but one completed by the end of the fall semester in which they apply, but it is possible to be a competitive applicant with two prerequisites incomplete at the time of application.

- **I am currently taking prerequisites at a college or university that is different than where I received my undergraduate degree. How do I represent this on the “Educational History” section on the application?**

Please be sure to include all of the schools you attended on the Educational History section of the application. If you are completing prerequisites at a different institution than where you attended for your undergraduate work, please indicate “no” when it asks if you received a degree or certificate. You can leave other questions about major or degree award dates blank.

- **Where do I send my transcripts?**

Transcripts are now uploaded electronically. You can scan and upload unofficial copies of your transcripts for the application process. Admitted students will be asked to send a hard copy of their official transcripts to the Graduate School. **DO NOT SEND TRANSCRIPTS TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OR TO THE DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE/OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY.**

- **Where do I send my letters of recommendation?**

Letters of recommendation are now uploaded electronically. On the application, you will be asked to provide a current email address for each of your recommenders. Once you provide a valid email address, the application system will generate an email to each of your recommenders explaining the process and how to upload the letter they write on your behalf.

- **When is the last date I can take the GRE to have the scores submitted to the department on time?**

In order to allow sufficient time for us to receive your GRE scores, please take the GRE no later than November 15th.

- **What is the school code for the GRE?**

5816.

- **How can I strengthen my application?**

Applications are reviewed based on a number of factors, including GRE scores, GPA, prerequisite grades, volunteer and work experiences, OT observations (variety and depth), recommendations, and the quality of both content and writing style in the essays. Applicants can strengthen their applications by doing as well as possible on the GRE and in prerequisite courses, building on the work/volunteer and OT observations sections, and spending time reflecting on and answering the essay questions with high quality written communication skills. In particular, be familiar with the UNC program, the philosophy on which it is based, and the work of the faculty. This should allow you to construct essays that reflect an understanding of occupational therapy and occupational science at a level that is reasonable for people applying to an entry-level program. Use references for your essays that include articles from professional journals and/or current text books in addition to other sources of information. Also, choose your recommenders carefully – we want to hear from people who know not only your general character, but also about specific skills or qualities that you have based on how they know you. Examples based on experiences the recommender has had with you are also helpful, as it gives us an idea of how you behave in those situations. Recommenders who only write a few general statements about how wonderful you are don’t help us very much as we review your application. Lastly, examining the document “Profile of Accepted Students” available on the website may be helpful in terms of getting an idea of the qualities/experiences of students we have accepted in the past.

- **What happens after applications are submitted?**

After the application deadline, all applications are reviewed by the faculty of the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Each application is reviewed for a variety of qualities, and receives an overall rating that reflects the reviewers' recommendation for interview of the applicant. The Admissions Committee then considers those recommendations along with other application information and narrows the applicant pool down to approximately 45 people who will be invited to interview. Again, all faculty participate in interviewing applicants, and the Admissions Committee considers interview ratings and other information in order to narrow the applicant pool once again to 24 applicants who will be offered admission into the OT program.

- **What is the timeline for this process?** Although it varies somewhat, faculty review of applications is typically completed by the second week in January, and interview invitations are usually communicated by the 3rd week in January. The interview day is usually on a Friday in early-to-mid February, and final admissions decisions are made prior to March 1st.

- **If I'm invited for an interview, what should I expect?**

Those invited for interviews receive more detailed information close to interview day, but generally applicants are invited to a morning interview session or an afternoon session. Morning interviewees are divided into 3 groups, and rotate through 3 interview activities: 2 individual faculty interviews, each lasting about 20 minutes, a small group information session with the Admissions coordinator, and a session with current students with no faculty present. Around lunch time, afternoon interviewees arrive, and all interviewees and current students have lunch together. After lunch, all applicants attend a large group session in which the overall curriculum and information about fieldwork are reviewed and applicant questions are answered as needed. At that point, morning interviewees are finished and may leave, and afternoon interviewees begin the rotation process through the 3 interview activities. Interviewees should plan to spend about 5 hours in the interview process. Interviewees who cannot attend on-site can phone or Skype in for interview activities.

PROFILE OF ACCEPTED STUDENTS

While every accredited occupational therapy program meets the same accreditation standards, each program is unique in its mission, vision and curriculum design. The UNC program emphasizes occupational science as the underlying academic discipline supporting occupational therapy practice. From that base, we educate students to ground their practice in a solid understanding of occupation, humans as occupational beings, and the use of occupation as a medium of change. We strive to prepare occupational therapists who will thrive in a rigorous academic environment, carry that scholarly approach into their clinical practice, and take on the challenge of helping to shape occupation-centered practice in traditional and emerging practice areas. We are looking for applicants who already demonstrate commitment to learning, scholarship, and human service and who are open to change within occupational therapy.

Generally, we look for applicants with a blend of academic ability, experience working with people, and an understanding of occupational therapy. As with any health care field, multi-cultural experience is a prerequisite to being an effective practitioner. The admissions committee reviews all of the completed applications and attempts to ensure class diversity in multiple ways.

Undergraduate Degrees & Academic Preparedness

Our successful applicants have undergraduate degrees in many different fields including psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, exercise science, languages, art, music, architecture, and education, to name a few. Academically, the average undergraduate GPA is typically above 3.5 and GRE scores are typically around the 60th percentile for the quantitative section and the 70th percentile for the verbal section. GRE writing scores are generally 4 or higher. Some of our admitted applicants are still completing their undergraduate degrees during the application process and start their Graduate Studies shortly after their graduation. Other applicants have worked for two or more years and complete any prerequisites that were not part of their undergraduate degree before entering Graduate School in the fall. In each class, there usually are one or more students with partners and children who successfully balance academics with family obligations.

Experiences in Occupational Therapy

We do not require a specific quantity of volunteer experience in occupational therapy but do value applicants who have thoroughly investigated the profession and the variety of ways occupational therapists work with people.

In developing a solid understanding of practice, witnessing a variety of settings is perhaps more important than the number of hours. Most of our accepted applicants demonstrate this by observing occupational therapy as it is provided for people of a variety of ages and with a range of problems (developmental, psychosocial, and physical disabilities) and in a variety of practice settings including medical models of practice, educational models and community-based programs.

Our most successful applicants move beyond traditional hospital based settings to visit therapists who provide services in the schools, communities or the person's home. The typical accepted applicant over the years 2004-2009 had visited an average of 4-6 different types of sites, spending significant amounts of time in 1 or 2 and observing for multiple hours in the others.

Experiences with Diversity

The ability to enthusiastically work with people from a variety of different walks of life is essential for effective occupational therapy. Our admitted applicants' backgrounds have differed from the people with whom they have worked with in a variety of ways. These differences included working with people who had disabilities, individuals of different ages, or people of varied racial, ethnic, cultural, spiritual, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Among our admitted applicants, all have spent a significant amount of time working with people who were different from themselves. There are a number of ways admitted applicants acquired experiences with diversity. For example:

- Some were employed as life skills trainers, mental health aids or teacher's aids.
- Successful applicants who did not have experience with diversity in the workplace typically had volunteer experience such as working as camp counselors, attendants in shelters for the homeless, or assistants for special activities in nursing homes (these are just some examples).
- Other applicants had first-hand experience from living in a culture that was different from their own or are members of a minority group themselves.
- Some successful applicants also found these experiences closer to home as the primary caregiver for a family member with a disability.

Scholarly Writing

In addition to their experiences, all of our admitted students are able to communicate their knowledge of occupational therapy in a scholarly manner and demonstrate an appreciation for the philosophy behind the profession in their application essays. Successful applicants are also able to write reflectively and analytically about their experiences in learning an occupation and about their experiences with diversity.

Recent Students...

These data represent the averages for students accepted to the M.S. program in OT from 2015-2019 (Classes of 2017-2021).

AVERAGE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS PER YEAR: 246

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS ACCEPTED EACH YEAR: 24

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS WAITLISTED EACH YEAR: approximately 8

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WAITLISTED APPLICANTS

EVENTUALLY ADMITTED INTO THE PROGRAM: approximately 6

AVERAGE GRE SCORES OF ACCEPTED APPLICANTS

QUANTITATIVE: 55th percentile

VERBAL: 70st percentile

WRITING: 4.5

AVERAGE GPA OF ACCEPTED APPLICANTS: 3.6

DIVERSITY

Percentage of out of state students: 23%

Percent ethnically diverse (self-identified): 20%

Percent male: 10%

Over age 30: 8%

Student Outcomes

- The total number of graduates from our occupational therapy program during the four-year period of 2015-2018 (Classes of 2015-2018) was 89, with an overall graduation rate of 99%.
- 95% of students graduating from the program pass the National Board for Certification exam the first time they take it; the remaining 5% pass the second time.
- Graduates report satisfactory job searches following graduation, indicating that when they were ready to begin working as an occupational therapist, they were able to find employment in locations/settings they wanted.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

- Observe in a variety of OT settings and with different populations
- Ask the OTs you know or meet to connect you with other OTs – it’s a very “networking” profession
- Ask OTs for things to read or websites to visit that they think would be helpful for someone interested in OT or interested in a particular practice setting
- Ask OTs how they got interested in OT and/or why they like working as an OT
- Begin thinking about yourself as an “occupational being” – what occupations (or daily life activities), routines, habits are important to you and why? How would you feel if you were unable to do some of those things?
- Attend a regional, state or national conference (info usually on websites – see below)
- Use Facebook, LinkedIn, or other social or professional networking sites to find OTs, OT programs, and OT-related events
- Read all the information you can find on the websites of OT schools you think you may want to attend and note whether or not they use OTCAS (the common application system) or have their own application software...helps to know what you would need to do to apply!
- Consider how you present yourself when emailing, calling, or meeting with faculty and staff at these programs – being polite and patient goes a long way!
- If possible, visit those programs, sit in on a class, talk with current students
- Plan to apply to more than one program – OT schools can be very competitive!
- Begin thinking early about how you will finance your education – take into consideration the costs of living in the area around any of the programs you consider (you can often find information about this on the Chamber of Commerce websites for those places), in addition to tuition and fees, and when look at school websites or visit, ask about additional costs associated with fieldwork placements, etc.
- Check out websites:
 - American Occupational Therapy Association www.aota.org
 - North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association www.ncota.org
 - World Federation of Occupational Therapists www.wfot.org

The Division of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy is rooted in a philosophy that emphasizes the complex and holistic nature of human experience, and views that human experience as a fundamental way to understand occupation. This focus on complexity and holism means that occupations are viewed first and foremost as the ongoing activities through which people and their situations relate to one another. That is, occupation is the way in which people and their environments interact. For instance, a situation we'll call "people coming over for dinner" and the individual to whose home they are coming intersect and become the occupations of shopping for groceries, cooking, and cleaning the house. Of course, it's also more complex than that because cultural, economic, personal and other factors enter into the equation. Perhaps the food is to be kosher, or the person having people over has a limited budget, or there aren't enough seats at the table so some will sit on the floor.... These "occupational situations" require negotiations among people and the social, physical, cultural, political, personal, temporal, and economic dimensions of context—the complex, whole environment through which people live.

Meaning, values, and emotional experience are also part of occupation and come from the ways in which the activity creates new relationships or sustains existing ones. In addition, occupations may become "patterned," that is, become habits, routines, or rituals that are part of everyday life. These patterns of occupation are often linked to personal, cultural, social, and other contextual aspects, such as the Swedish ritual of "Saturday candy" when children are out doing shopping with parents, or family routines for getting chores and homework done.

This orientation toward occupation and the situations in which it happens means that families, other groups, institutions, and communities cannot be ignored in the assessment and intervention processes of occupational therapy. *Occupational therapy*, therefore, is the process of evaluating occupation/situation relationships in order to enhance occupational engagement (and the whole situation) through interventions. *Occupational science* is the study of occupation/situation relationships, as well as interventions based on them, in order to generate knowledge and inform practice.

MISSION STATEMENT

Adopted April 2010

Our mission is first, to produce outstanding occupational therapists and occupational scientists, and second, to develop and expand knowledge about occupation and translate that knowledge to various therapeutic arenas.

We accomplish this mission through enacting our core values:

- the fundamental worth of occupation and its exploration,
- critical engagement with ideas and the world, and
- embracing diversity and community.

These values inform the evolution of creative and committed pedagogy focused on occupation and based in partnerships with students. Our mission requires a faculty who excel in research, theory, and translation to practice. This community of faculty, students, and graduates collaborates with individuals, groups, institutions, and populations to enhance well-being through occupation.

This mission is consistent with the UNC School of Medicine's focus on excellence in education of health care professionals through an innovative and integrated curriculum. Our mission also echoes the School's promise to achieve excellence in research and its translation to applied settings. We align closely with the UNC mission and its fundamental goals to graduate leaders, to extend our expertise to the citizens of North Carolina, and to enhance the quality of life for the state's residents.

CURRICULUM THEMES AND BROAD LEARNING OBJECTIVES

An entry-level professional curriculum is the course of study that students will follow until graduation. While the accreditation standards determine the basic content to be covered, we have developed an approach to occupational therapy education that is based on our mission and philosophical beliefs. Therefore, our curriculum reflects our unique approach to content, the way we view relationships among core concepts, and a progression of learning through coursework, fieldwork, and culminating projects. Seven curriculum themes occur throughout a student's course of study. These themes give the curriculum organization and coherence and include the following:

CONTEXT & COMMUNITY

This theme addresses core concepts of time, place, social relationships, political governance, and culture in their dynamic relationship with human action, participation in occupation, and the practice of occupational therapy. These concepts apply to situations in which individuals, groups, and populations live, work, and make use of occupational therapy services, as well as to situations in which occupational therapists and their colleagues learn and work. The concept of community includes local, state, regional, national, global and virtual groups through which both diversity and commonality among participants exists.

Learning outcomes:

- Critically evaluate the interplay of social, political, economic, cultural, physical, and temporal contexts on occupational engagement for individuals and groups.
- Analyze the concept of community as it influences and is influenced by participation in occupation for individuals and groups.

HUMAN CAPACITY FOR ACTION

Human beings function as actors through physical, social, and cultural worlds by integrating embodied capacities for action with interpretation of occupational situations. The extent to which a person lacks the capacity to act in accordance with the pressures of a given situation is regarded as disability and the occupational situation becomes a focal point for occupational therapy. Although educational practices may foreground different aspects of human capacities (e.g. physiology, perceptual, structural), they are understood with an appreciation of interdependence in the functional system of action that includes the interpretation of the situation.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand how transaction of mental, physical, emotional and social structures and processes shape the capacity for human action.
- Analyze and interpret factors that enable or limit occupational performance from multiple perspectives including biological, observational and phenomenological
- Understand changes in body functions and structures over the lifespan, and as impacted by injury, illness, or disability, and their potential influence on human capacity for occupation

OCCUPATION

Occupations represent patterns of time use across the life course enacted by individuals, groups and communities situated through relevant life contexts. Occupations include the coordination of everyday routines as well as exceptional life events. People experience occupations from the framework of past experiences and in anticipation of the future. In addition, occupations are comprised of shared activities that are recognized in the immediate social and cultural contexts.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand occupations as complex transactions among individual, contextual, cultural and societal factors.
- Understand how occupational performance, habits and occupational development emerge from dynamic transactions joining people and the environment through the stream of time and across the life span.
- Analyze occupation and habits as they relate to health, development, and well-being, and how contemporary models of ablement and disablement [ICF] discriminate factors that facilitate, enhance, or impede participation for individuals and groups.

ETHICS, JUSTICE AND CARE

This curriculum theme is comprised of three interwoven terms which together form the foundation as to how practice is enacted: Ethics, Justice and Care. Ethics refers to the values, motivation, and principles that shape behavior within the practices of individuals, professions, and across organizations. Justice refers to ensuring the protection of human rights, and equal access to occupational participation regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances, demographic characteristics or other situational factors. Care refers to embodied motivation, values, practices, and relational capabilities informing response to the needs of others to promote human flourishing

Learning outcomes:

- Evaluate the protection of human rights and dignity, equitable distribution of resources and equal access to occupation.
- Apply ethical principles in practice through advocacy and client- centered approaches to promote justice in occupational opportunities and access to care.
- Apply the AOTA professional Code of Ethics to guide conduct
- Evaluate ethical issues that arise in practice and research, integrating information from multiple sources, and collaborating with others to formulate and evaluate possible courses of action
- Understand human diversity and demonstrate respect and interest in in all its forms.

LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

This theme addresses the importance of collaboration, vision, communication and lifelong professional development in carrying out effective professional relationships and enacting leadership roles. Leadership, in this view, focuses on habits of character, service, innovation, and wisdom, applied to informal, emergent and traditional leadership roles. Supervision and management of personnel and programs, stewardship of resources, professional development and innovation in practice are areas of emphasis within this theme.

Learning outcomes:

- Apply principles of professional conduct, communication and collaboration to optimally meet societal, community and individual needs.
- Apply principles of professional behavior, standards and roles in occupational therapy to represent the values of the profession to external audiences.
- Create, evaluate, and implement potential applications of occupational therapy to areas of human need through system consultation, policy development, program development, supervision, and/or education.
- Apply entry-level skills in personnel management, facilitation of others' professional development and organizational leadership.
- Understand professional responsibility in acquisition and stewardship of resources—including fiscal/capital assets, people, and the natural environment—to meet the occupational needs of present and future clients.

INQUIRY, SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION

This theme integrates concerns of occupational therapy and occupational science through the process of inquiry. Inquiry is fostered through the understanding of various research methodologies, the applications of those methodologies to practice and active engagement in scholarly endeavors. Inquiry is seen as an iterative process that is fostered first through purposeful exploration, assessment, and application, and then through critical self-evaluation of each of those process components. The skills of inquiry are applicable to issues of scholarship about occupation, evidence based practices and the ongoing systematic appraisal of the relevance of those practices to individual clients (broadly defined) as well as the communities and contexts in which they participate. A long-term goal is to develop habits of intellectual curiosity, scholarly rigor, life-long learning, innovation and dissemination of knowledge.

Learning outcomes:

- Evaluate, analyze, and apply scientific research and clinical evidence to enact best practice and advance the science of occupation and its translation to therapeutic practice Apply critical thinking skills relevant for the consideration of arguments, evidence, research methods, inferences, and other matters for evidence-based practice.
- Understand the importance of developing scholarly habits of life-long learning and intellectual curiosity for evidence based practice and scholarship about occupation.
- Understand the value of and need for occupational therapy practitioners to create, apply and disseminate professional knowledge.

THERAPEUTIC PROCESSES

This theme addresses the methods of thought, action and interaction employed by occupational therapists while engaged with clients* in the process of assessment, intervention planning and implementation, and evaluation of therapeutic outcomes. It includes the use of theories and conceptual models, tools and materials, intervention techniques, collaborative relationships, therapeutic use of self, procedural knowledge, and creative reasoning to engage clients in successful and satisfying return to meaningful occupation and/or improved quality of life. Content addressed by this theme is built upon a core understanding of areas of occupation, human capacity for action, context and communities, and ethics, justice and care. It is supported by an attitude of inquiry and scholarship and a willingness to engage in roles of leadership and professional collaboration.

*Clients as defined in the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, 3rd Edition* (AOTA, 2014) p. S3.

- Persons (including those involved in the care of a client)
- Groups (collectives of individuals, e.g., families, workers, students, communities)
- Populations (collectives of groups of individuals living in a similar locale or sharing the same or similar characteristics or concerns)

Learning outcomes

- Apply and evaluate theoretical frameworks to inform clinical and professional reasoning throughout the OT process.
- Create therapeutic relationships to optimize client satisfaction, agency and outcomes.
- Evaluate clients' occupational profile, analysis of occupational performance and occupational environments, using best available evidence.
- Create, implement, monitor, evaluate and modify therapeutic interventions that are occupation-centered, evidence-based and formulated in collaboration with clients.
- Apply and critique occupational therapy services, including screening, therapeutic use of self, consultation, education, and advocacy.
- Collaborate effectively with team members, colleagues, and others in service to the interests and needs of clients.
- Apply standards of safety, accountability, documentation, and professional judgment.
- Create and modify services to meet client needs and interests, using a systematic program development process.

Division of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Curriculum: Course Descriptions

YEAR 1	
Fall Semester	
<p>OCCT 725: Human Capacities: Body Structures and Functions 1 takes place in the first half of the semester and provides an introduction to the structures, functions, and processes of the human body that support participation in occupation. The course will focus on mental processes, sensory processing, digestion, reproduction, endocrine, and immune responses that support human occupation are explored.</p>	<p>OCCT 726: Human Capacities: Body Structures and Functions 2 takes place in the second half of the semester and provides an introduction to the structures, functions, and processes of the human body that support participation in occupation. The course will focus on motor and somatosensory capacities and the structures related to those functions.</p>
<p>OCCT 770: Occupational Science provides an introduction to the philosophical tenets of Occupational Science and their application to Occupational Therapy. The course highlights the multiplicity of interconnected factors which generate participation in occupational situations.</p>	
<p>OCCT 755: Foundations of Professional Practice introduces core foundations for occupation-centered occupational therapy practice. Students learn fundamentals of professional communication and behavior, therapeutic use of self, clinical reasoning, activity analysis, theory, and evidence-based practice. Includes Level 1 fieldwork experiences.</p>	
<p>OCCT 765L: Foundations of Professional Practice Lab provides opportunities for students to practice and begin developing key clinical skills in observation, analysis, interpersonal interactions/communication, documentation, and applying concepts related to theory-based and evidence-based practice.</p>	
<p>OCCT 736: Occupational Therapy Practice Environments covers the fiscal, regulatory, ethical, legal, interdisciplinary and cultural aspects that transact in practice systems, and addresses pragmatic reasoning as applied to varied settings where OT services are delivered.</p>	
Spring Semester	
<p>OCCT 771: Life Course: Early Years focuses on the changing capacities for engagement with occupations of children and young adults, examining how young people shape and join with families, educational programs, and communities. Development is viewed as involving a transactional relationship of the “person-in environment as a whole” thus the social, physical, cultural, and historical contexts and individual characteristics are considered.</p>	
<p>OCCT 727: Perspectives on Disability & Health 1 addresses the biological and phenomenological aspects of specific mental and physical health conditions that may be experienced by children, adolescents and young adults.</p>	
<p>OCCT 756: Therapeutic Processes I focuses on OT practice with children, adolescents and young adults that have disabilities or health problems that inhibit occupational performance and/or social participation, across a variety of situations. Includes Level 1 fieldwork experiences.</p>	
<p>OCCT 766L: Therapeutic Processes Lab provides opportunities for students to practice and begin developing key clinical skills in assessment, intervention planning, intervention strategies, and documentation in practice with children, adolescents, and young adults.</p>	
<p>OCCT 781: Environments & Technologies highlights the environmental dimensions of occupational performance and environmental, assistive and rehabilitation technologies used in occupational therapy practice. Students will learn to assess various environmental characteristics and their impact on occupational performance, modify the environment for therapeutic effect, and utilize technology as a means to access, engage in and control the environment.</p>	
<p>OCCT 704: Research Methods focuses on understanding the scientific process, and the application of different methodologies, including qualitative and quantitative methods, to address clinical concerns</p>	

YEAR 2
Fall Semester: August/September (7.5 weeks)
OCCT 772: Life Course II: Adulthood focuses on human life in the decades between childhood and old age, and considers changing perspectives on this part of the life course, which has recently been characterized as more varied than previously thought. Concepts of establishment, commitment and bridging to both past and future life periods will be highlighted as students consider issues of identity, role fulfillment and individual and group relationships in context.
OCCT 728: Perspectives on Disability & Health II addresses the biological and phenomenological aspects of specific mental and physical health conditions that may be experienced by adults.
OCCT 757: Therapeutic Processes II focuses on OT practice with adults who have disabilities or health problems that inhibit occupational performance and/or social participation, across a variety of situations.
OCCT 767L: Therapeutic Processes Lab provides opportunities for students to practice and begin developing key clinical skills in assessment, intervention planning, intervention strategies, and documentation in practice with adults and older adults.
OCCT 990: Applied Research continues the work started in the Research Methods course on understanding the process of scientific inquiry and the application of different methodologies, including qualitative and quantitative methods. Each student will refine the research proposal developed in Research Methods and submit an IRB for University approval of his/her study.
Fall Semester: October - December
Level 2 Fieldwork (12 weeks, full-time)
Spring Semester
OCCT 773: Life Course III & Practice in Aging explores transitions older adults' engagement in occupation as a result of changing capacities and environments, highlighting the impact of major life transitions on occupational participation including retirement from paid employment, caregiving for parents and life partners, and changes in community mobility. Lab content provides students with experiential learning activities that supplement course content.
OCCT 729: Perspectives on Disability & Health III addresses the biological and phenomenological aspects of specific mental and physical health conditions that may be experienced by older adults.
OCCT 836: Community-Level OT Practice focuses on the principles for population and system level practice in occupational therapy. And includes content related to social systems, needs assessment, program development and evaluation processes, policy, and community health.
OCCT 992: Applied Research supports each student to continue the learning and research processes of the two previous research courses by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, preparing a poster to disseminate findings, and completing a final research poster and paper.
OCCT 837: Professional Development & Transition to Practice addresses professional development from perspectives that include the history of the profession itself, engaging as a professional in local, state, national and international OT organizations, maintaining professional competence, and the practical aspects of becoming a beginning practitioner.
Summer
Level 2 Fieldwork (12 weeks, full-time)

SAMPLE CLASS SCHEDULES

DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SCHEDULE: FALL

TIME	MONDAY			TUESDAY			WEDNESDAY			THURSDAY			FRIDAY
	1 st Yr.	2 nd Yr.	PhD	1 st Yr.	2 nd Yr.	PhD	1 st Yr.	2 nd Yr.	PhD	1 st Yr.	2 nd Yr.	PhD	
8:30													
9:00	OCCT 725/726			OCCT 770	OCCT 990	OCSC 845							
9:30	8:00-11:50	OCCT 728		8:30-11:20	9:00-10:50	8:30-11:20							
10:00		9:30-11:20					OCCT 736 + FW Seminar				OCCT 755	OCCT 757	
10:30	(virtual)						9:00-12:00		OCCT 728		9:00-11:50	9:00-11:50	
11:00													
11:30				COMMON TIME / COMMUNITY MEETINGS									
12:00	COMMON TIME FOR MEETINGS			COMMON TIME / COMMUNITY MEETINGS					Research Forum		COMMON TIME FOR MEETINGS		
12:30									4 th Wed.				
1:00													
1:30	OCCT 725/726	OCCT 757		OCCT 725/726	OCCT 767								
2:00	1:00-3:50	1:00-3:50	AHSC 904	1:00-4:50	1:00-3:50						OCCT 765L	OCCT 767L	
			2:00-5:00 (9/25-12/4)				Orientation, etc.		OCCT 772	AHSC 902	1:00-3:50	1:00-3:50	
			Faldowski						1:00-2:50	2:00-4:50 (1 st 5 wks);			
										AHSC 903			
2:30										2:00-3:50 (2 nd 5 wks)			
3:00										1:00-3:50			
3:30													
4:00													
4:30													

Community Meetings: 1st Tuesday of the month (all students) (Sept/Oct, G010; Nov/Dec, 2020)
 Brown Bag Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of the month (PhD students) (OT Lab)
 Faculty Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month (faculty and student reps) (OT Lab)
 Faculty OTD/OS: 4th Tuesday of the month (faculty) (OT Lab)

DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: SPRING

Time	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday
	1 st YR	2 nd YR	PhD	1 st YR	2 nd YR	PhD	1 st YR	2 nd YR	PhD	1 st YR	2 nd YR	PhD	
8:30						OCSC 890							
9:00	OCCT 704					8:30-11:20					OCCT 836		
9:30				OCCT 781	OCCT 837					OCCT 756	8:30-11:20		
10:00	9:00-11:50			9:30-11:20	9:30-11:20					9:00-11:50		SPHS 802: EBP	
10:30		9:30-11:20										9:30-12:30 (required grant course)	
11:00													
11:30				Common Time									
12:00	Common Time MSOT 1 & 2			Community Meeting Faculty Meeting							Common Time MSOT1 & MSOT 2		
12:30													
1:00	OCCT 766	OCCT 992	AHSC Research Modules	OCCT 727	OCCT 773						OCCT 766	OCCT 729	
1:30	(PBL)	1:00-3:50		1:00-2:50	1:00-3:50		Fieldwork I	Research on own			1:00-3:50	1:00-2:50	
2:00	1:00-3:50												AHSC 914 Academic Writing
2:30													2:00-5:00
3:00				OCCT 771									
3:30				3:00-4:50									
4:00													
4:30													
5:00													

OVERVIEW OF FIELDWORK

The Master's Program curriculum design includes developmentally sequenced clinical experiences throughout the course of study. Clinical experiences are considered part of the curriculum, and are designed to support learning relative to the curriculum themes. Class discussions and assignments draw upon clinical experiences to build an understanding of the relationship between academic coursework and occupational therapy practice. These experiences are in a variety of settings, from community based to institutions, with individuals of varying ages, ability levels, and health conditions. Over the course of the academic program, students are exposed to all curriculum objectives in fieldwork experiences. Many courses have additional community based projects, service learning and assignments that are not formal fieldwork experiences. Becoming an occupational therapist encompasses development of clinical as well as professional skills. Communication, receptiveness to feedback, taking initiative, dependability and other interpersonal behaviors are essential learning outcomes of fieldwork and coursework. Two levels of fieldwork experiences, Fieldwork I and II, are offered in accordance with the "Standards of an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist." These experiences are supervised by occupational therapists, as well as other professionals depending on the setting and the purpose of the fieldwork.

Fieldwork I

Fieldwork I experiences are incorporated in academic courses. Fieldwork I (FW I) is an integral component of learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the occupational therapist. From the beginning of the program, structured opportunities for conducting observation, interview, assessment, evaluation and treatment in clinical settings enable the student to apply course work and theoretical information to practice settings. Course instructors plan Fieldwork I assignments in a developmental progression for gradual building of clinical skills. In early courses, FW I expectations focus on developing observation and interviewing skills. Subsequent fieldwork experiences are designed to advance students' evaluation and intervention skills. Most FW I experiences are local (within 50 miles of Chapel Hill). Students are frequently assigned to FW sites outside of the Triangle for the week-long experiences.

Fieldwork II

Fieldwork II is a separate course for which students will register as OCCT720A and OCCT 720B. Except in rare circumstances FW II is a full time experience, in which the OT student follows the schedule of the site. In many hospitals and rehabilitation centers occupational therapists may work weekends or four 10 hour days, so students should not assume M-F, 8:00-5:00 schedules. All occupational therapy students must complete Level II Fieldwork within 24 months following completion of academic preparation.

Fieldwork Site selection

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) schedules and assigns all FW placements. Input from the student is considered, with the AFWC having final authority to make assignments. Student input is discussed in FW Seminars, and students are given opportunities to indicate preferences about upcoming FW. The exception to this is the first semester placements that are made prior to the student beginning the program.

In addition to student preferences, the considerations for site assignment include the quality and appropriateness of the learning experience, variety of experiences available in a site, and the contract status. A further consideration is to ensure continuity of students each year at sites that have a history of collaboration and support for UNC students.

For FW II, priority for local sites is given when the student is a primary caregiver for a child, older adult or disabled person. Many sites are outside the Triangle Area. Students arrange and pay for travel, transportation and housing. We have a small number of out-of-state sites and at some times fieldwork sites in other countries are an option.

CORE INFORMATION

How would you define occupation and occupational therapy in your program?

Occupation has been defined in a number of different ways. At UNC we discuss and study the activities of everyday life that are valued by and given meaning by sociocultural groups of people. These activities can include what people do to look after themselves and others, pursue because doing the activity is interesting or enjoyable, or find meaningful as the activity contributes to their families and communities. Our students learn to focus on the "occupation within occupational therapy," that is, the *therapeutic use* of everyday activities, habits, and routines for the purpose of enhancing people's functional capacities, health, development, and felt experiences of well-being and participation in life.

How can I learn more about the curriculum and the philosophy of UNC's program?

One thing to do is read about both occupational therapy and Occupational Science. The *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* and the *Journal of Occupational Science* should be available to you through direct access or inter-library loan at most academic libraries. We also recommend reading articles written by our faculty (see Faculty pages for names). We think that finding a graduate program that suits your needs is a very important decision and welcome visits from interested applicants at our periodic information sessions. You can also arrange to visit a class (during the academic year).

What is the difference between your professional master's program and an entry level clinical doctorate degree (an OTD)?

All professional programs that offer entry into the practice of occupational therapy are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). Our current program emphasizes a 2-year preparation to practice innovative occupational therapy in both traditional and emerging settings. A professional doctorate is a relatively new degree in occupational therapy and, like a doctorate in clinical psychology, dentistry, physical therapy, or pharmacy, should take 3 to 4 years after the bachelor's degree to complete. OTD programs are designed to include additional (beyond 2 years) academic preparation for practice, including an extended clinical internship and focused individual capstone project. There is currently no outcome data that indicates that those with an entry-level OTD have greater job or salary opportunities than do those with an entry-level master's degree. Also see our question and answer regarding the difference between an OTD and a Ph.D.

Why are changes in degree level happening in occupational therapy?

In September of 2017, ACOTE (Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education) released mandates that the profession move to a doctoral entry level for OT and a bachelor's entry level (from an Associate's degree) for OTA. These mandates were quite controversial for a number of reasons. After a period of time in which the mandates were in abeyance, the decision was made to allow for dual levels of entry for both occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant programs. This means that OT programs may be at either the Master's or Doctoral level, and that OTA programs may be at either the Associate or Bachelor's level.

Is the UNC program in Occupational Therapy transitioning from an MS to OTD degree?

The UNC OT program is in transition from Master's to OTD (clinical doctorate) level education. This is a multi-year process in part because of the need for curriculum revisions and additions, and because we will need approval from within UNC and by the NC Legislature. In addition, we are viewing this as an opportunity to develop an OTD program that will be innovative and future oriented while continuing to meet and exceed the standards set by ACOTE for OT education. This means that we are using the time we have to be thoughtful, intentional, and visionary as we design our new program, but we also are adhering to the deadlines we have for submitting our plans to the University and to the Legislature.

What is the timeline for the transition?

Our current plan is to admit our first cohort to the OTD program in the fall of 2023, which means we would start taking applications for the OTD in December of 2022. Admissions requirements for the OTD likely will be available on our website in the fall of 2021 if not before. While there may be some similarities to the requirements for the MS program, until we have the curriculum fully designed, we cannot offer any information about OTD admissions requirements. We will continue to offer the Master's Program, and will graduate our last cohort of MSOT students in 2023, meaning they would have started the MS program in the Fall of 2021 (having applied in December of 2020).

Should individuals considering an OT degree be concerned about whether they pursue a Master's degree or an OTD?

If you have concerns about pursuing a Master's degree given this recent situation within the profession, you may be reassured by knowing that it is very unlikely that the "status" of OTs with an entry-level Master's degree will be lower than those with an OTD in terms of jobs, salary, or career opportunities. When OT went from a Bachelor's to a Master's entry level in 2007, OTs with Bachelor's degrees did not lose professional opportunities. One of the reasons for this is that the standards for entry-level education remain just that...all entry-level OT programs must meet the same standards for education related to the clinical practice of OT. While you may decide for yourself that the OTD is the way you want to go, it is important to know that having a Master's degree in OT is unlikely to put you at a professional disadvantage in the future.

What is the difference between a clinical doctorate in OT (an OTD) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree?

As the title suggests, an OTD offers preparation for clinical practice with additional emphasis on becoming a consumer of research evidence and program development. Like becoming a medical doctor or dentist an OTD is a clinical degree. A person who wishes to have an academic or research career in occupational therapy or occupational science should pursue a Ph.D. Research degrees that prepare an individual for academic and research leadership positions take 6 to 7 years to complete after a baccalaureate degree (approximately 5 years post master's degree).

FIELDWORK

What types of fieldwork experiences will I have and when will they occur?

Fieldwork (FW) experiences are developmentally sequenced and integrated throughout the program. There are 2 levels of experience. FW I is for direct observation and participation in occupational therapy services with occupational therapists, as well as participation in community service projects without occupational therapists on site. These range from half day to weeklong experiences. FW II offers an in-depth experience over 12 consecutive weeks. FW II experiences are designed to promote competence and independence in clinical reasoning, therapeutic practices and professionalism at the level of a therapist entering the profession. Students complete all FWI and FWII requirements within the timeframe established by the program. For more information, see "MS Curriculum" under the "MS Program" links on the Division website.

How are students assigned to FW experiences?

The FW coordinator screens and selects fieldwork sites to ensure students have opportunities for experiences that develop clinical skills consistent with the philosophy of the program. Currently, the Occupational Therapy program has affiliations with over 150 sites across the country. The FW coordinator is responsible for securing reservations at these sites and for assigning students to the sites. When possible, the FW coordinator considers the student's input on assignments, but the primary consideration is given to the quality of the educational experience during FW. The FW coordinator has the final authority to assign a student to a FW placement.

Can I stay in the Triangle area during my fieldwork experiences?

There is no guarantee that any student will be assigned to a local site for FW. Students may have to relocate for some FW I and FW II experiences. Priority for local sites is given to students who are primary caregivers for others.

Are there opportunities to do fieldwork outside of the U.S.?

There are opportunities to do all or a part of Level II Fieldwork in international settings, but these are limited, and change somewhat from year to year, depending on a variety of factors. Once in the OT program, students can explore the possibility of international fieldwork with the Fieldwork Coordinator, but students should not assume such opportunities will be available every year.

Is there financial assistance for FW experiences if I have to relocate?

Students should budget for the extra cost of travel and living arrangements for fieldwork. Historically, Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) have provided some housing and transportation financial assistance for FW students at North Carolina clinical sites. The support includes partial reimbursement for mileage and a housing stipend for students who relocate within the state for their FW experiences.

SPECIALIZATION

Can I choose a specialization area while I am a student at UNC?

UNC's program in occupational therapy is designed to prepare graduates for Occupational Therapy practice as a "generalist." That is, our graduates are prepared to work in a variety of settings such as day care centers, schools, hospitals, rehabilitation clinics, home health agencies and nursing homes. We expect our graduates will be called on to work with people of different ages and with varied social and cultural backgrounds. It is also important that graduates leave with clinical and analytical reasoning skills that an OT "generalist" can use to address new conditions and develop original programs for people who can benefit from occupational therapy. Part of this preparation for both current and future practice can include some greater depth of knowledge one can acquire through focused study and practice. Therefore, opportunities are present for students to develop some specialized areas of interest while in the program. Students work with their academic advisor and other faculty to determine the extent and nature of a specialization area that is right for them. Curriculum opportunities to create a special focus include:

- Class projects and papers
- Final research paper
- The second Level II (12 week) Fieldwork

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION AND CERTIFICATION

What are your requirements for a research/special project as a part of my graduate studies at UNC?

We believe that graduates who possess the attitudes and abilities for inquiry will adopt clinical methods that are based on evidence (i.e., engage in evidence-based practices) and be positioned to develop innovations in practice. Activities that support learning to read and synthesize the occupational therapy literature are embedded in all of the courses. In addition to a course on research methods, all students complete a research project under the guidance of a faculty member, in a group-based mentoring context. A Master's thesis is not required, but may be an option for strong students with existing research skills.

What else is required in order to graduate?

Successful completion of all coursework and fieldwork are required for graduation, in addition to the research project. A Master's Comprehensive Self-Assessment (MCSA) also is required and is completed after all coursework is finished. The MCSA takes the form of a portfolio of student work during the span of the entire program, and includes course work that represents student learning in each of the curriculum themes. It also includes an essay in which the student reflects on their learning over the course of the program.

Are there any restrictions on who will qualify to take the certification exam?

The student is eligible to apply to take the National Certification Examination once all program requirements have been met. Students will have to prove eligibility for graduation (all curriculum requirements including FW are completed) before sitting for the certification exam. When you apply to take the certification examination with the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT), you will be asked to answer questions related to the topic of felony convictions. For a fee, the Qualification Review Committee can be asked to review the background of a potential program applicant or student prior to their eligibility to apply for the certification examination. For further information on potential limitations, or early determination, you can contact the NBCOT at:

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
800 S. Frederick Avenue, Suite 200
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-4150
Telephone: (301) 990-7979
<http://www.nbcot.org/>

FINANCIAL

Is it possible to work while I am in graduate school?

We anticipate that students are making a full-time commitment to their graduate work. At the same time, many of our students have been able to find the right job and balance their studies with part-time employment. During the academic year, you will take up to 15 credits a semester and will meet at various times during the day, five days a week. Some of the courses will require extra hours for lab work, group meetings, and community activities. In addition, some courses have full day clinical and community assignments (See our question and answer about fieldwork experiences). Thus if you have to work a few hours a week, you will want to look for a job with flexible hours. During the summer, when you are doing FW II, you will be "on the job" 40 hours a week. In addition, because everything is so new, many people find that they have to prepare the night before for the next day of FW II, or work some on weekends to keep their progress notes and clinical reports up to date. As a result, you should not plan on working during the summer.

What is the Professional School Tuition?

The Professional School Tuition is a supplemental tuition that has been instituted for the graduate professional degree programs in the Department of Allied Health Sciences, including the MS program in Occupational Therapy. The supplemental tuition is in addition to the UNC tuition and fees. Over the past several years, our costs for delivering the occupational therapy program have increased significantly, as a factor of both general cost-of-living increases and specific costs associated with new requirements for graduate level professional education. 25% of these tuition revenues will be used to fund Division administered financial aid for North Carolina residents and students from under-represented minority groups, who are qualified for admission, but who are unable to afford the costs of the program. In addition, the revenues will allow us to enhance instructional resources including state of the art equipment in our teaching labs and funding teaching assistants. The supplemental tuition will be included as part of the coat of attendance for calculating financial aid packages by the UNC Office of Student Aid.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Nancy Bagatell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA. Program Director, Associate Professor. *Research interests:* Occupations and routines in families with adolescent-aged children; the experiences of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their caregivers; occupation and identity, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Teaches in both the MS and PhD programs.

Antoine L. Bailliard, PhD, OTR/L. Assistant Professor. *Research/clinical interests:* Mental health; migration; social justice; cross-cultural issues; embodiment of occupation; sensory features of occupation; ethnography. Teaches in both the MS and PhD programs.

Sue Coppola, OTD, OTR/L, BCG, FAOTA. Professor. *Clinical / research interests:* meaningful occupations of older adults; effects of occupational engagement on preventing functional decline in aging; interdisciplinary teamwork; fieldwork development; community-based practice, and international practice. Teaches content related to practice environments and occupation-centered practice with older adults.

Khalilah R. Johnson, MS, OTR/L, PhD Assistant Professor; Research interests include occupation-based and transition services for young adults and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Katie Sorensen, OTD, OTR/L Assistant Professor; Fieldwork Coordinator *Research and teaching interests* include Physical disabilities, Global health, Universal design and accessibility, and adaptive sports.

Raheleh Tschoepe, MS, OTR/L, ATP is a graduate of the MSOT program at UNC, and has had significant clinical experience working with people with spinal cord injuries and other neurological disorders. She has both teaching and clinical responsibilities within the Division.

Linn Wakeford, PhD, OT/L, FAOTA Associate Professor *Clinical/research interests:* pediatric practice; development of occupation and social engagement in children with autism; family and social group influence on occupational development. Teaches primarily clinical content related to occupation-centered practice, particularly with children, and applied research.

Jenny Womack, PhD, OTR/L, SCDM, FAOTA. Professor; *Clinical / Research interests:* adult physical and neurological rehabilitation; life participation; chronic disability; community mobility; supplemental transportation systems; community-based practice; ethnography.

Adjunct Instructors

David Benthall, MS, OTR/L

Allison Bolin, MS, OTR/L

Angie Fannon, MS, OTR/L

Post-Doctoral Research Associate

Ryan Lavalley, MOT, OTR/L, PhD

Faculty Emeriti

Marlys Mitchell PhD OTR/L FAOTA (deceased) Professor Emerita, Founder of the Division.

Cathy Nielson MPH, OT, FAOTA, Professor Emerita, Former Program Director.

Virginia Dickie Ph.D., OT, FAOTA Professor Emerita, Former Program Director.

Ruth Humphry, PhD, OT/L, FAOTA, Professor Emerita, Former Program Director

Jane D. Rourk OT, FAOTA, Associate Professor Emerita, Former Liaison to OT in NC Public Schools.

Doctoral Students

Susan Agostine, MS, OTR/L

Amanda Carroll, MS, OTR/L

Adam DePrimo, MS, OTR/L

Ya Cing Syu

Feddah Ahmad, OT

Abigail Carroll, MS, OTR/L

Ben Lee, MS

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Kierra Peak, MS, OTR/L

Katie Williams, MS, OTR

Allison Calhoun, MS, OTR/L

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Admissions Administrative Support

Business Support

Fieldwork Support