



College of Health Professions
Medical University of South Carolina
151-B Rutledge Avenue, MSC 962
Charleston, SC 29425
Phone: 843-792-5377
chp.musc.edu

Health Advisors' Handbook
Division of Occupational Therapy

Academic Year
2021-2022

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Occupational Therapy Doctorate

Date prepared: July 1, 2021

Program: Occupational Therapy

Degree: Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD)

For current detail or exceptions, visit our website: chp.musc.edu/otd

The Profession

Occupational therapists are motivated and creative problem solvers who like working with people and translating scientific knowledge into everyday practicalities. They are collaborators who bring about desired change and attainment of meaningful goals. Sometimes new skill development is necessary, other times adapting the environment is essential for a productive life.

When people experience trauma, stress, or chronic health conditions their daily routines are often disrupted making it difficult to get up, get dressed, and go to work, make dinner, or enjoy family and friends. That's when occupational therapists intervene to promote performance and participation in life. Helping people engage in everyday tasks and life roles is the trademark of an occupational therapist; it's the key to successful living.

Occupational therapists are in demand. Hospitals, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, home health agencies, community outreach programs, private practices, school-based settings, and specialty practices all employ occupational therapists.

The US Department of Labor lists occupational therapy as one of the top 20 professions for projected job growth in the next 5 years. Salaries in South Carolina begin in the mid-\$50's and vary by region. Practitioners can advance their careers in traditional settings, branch out into emerging areas of contemporary practice, and become leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, and researchers.

Career Options

The major types of work are: clinical work (direct patient care), research, teaching, administration, and consultation. Employment settings include: schools (K-12), hospitals (emergency, acute, and inpatient rehabilitation), outpatient rehabilitation facilities, community clinics, residential and custodial or long-term care facilities, early intervention programs, home health programs, hospice programs, university clinics, private practice, and community outreach programs.

Employment Outlook

In 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Department of Labor reported that employment of occupational therapists will be "much faster than average and is projected to grow 27 percent from 2014 to 2024." US News and World Report lists occupational therapy in 23rd place in its 100 best jobs of 2019.

Salary Information

More than 114,600 occupational therapy practitioners are licensed in the U.S. today. The median salary for an occupational therapist is \$81,910, depending on position, years of experience, degree of education,

geographic location and practice setting. A survey of recent graduates of the MUSC occupational therapy program indicates that the average starting salary is \$60,000/year (range \$50,000 to \$70,000).

The Program

The Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) degree prepares students for lifelong and rewarding careers. Graduates are prepared to improve the quality of life for people who experience difficulties and challenges to everyday living. Our high-quality program is provided at an academic medical center and the curriculum is rigorous and engaging. Educational technology enhances classroom learning, group work develops professional skills, and experiential learning refines practice skills. Interprofessional education is a hallmark of the program and involves connections with other health professionals across the campus and in the community. Research shows that working in teams produces better outcomes. Teamwork supports innovation and promotes excellence.

Beginning in the second year, fieldwork experiences are an integral part of the curriculum and allow opportunities for direct observation and participation in a variety of practice settings and contexts. These experiences help integrate learning from the classroom and lab and enhance capacity for becoming a proficient occupational therapist. We are excited to offer three courses online, Population Health and Visionary Leadership, in the final semester of didactic coursework (semester six) and Professional Seminar (semester eight). Students should have access to personal technology such as a laptop computer, tablet, or PC throughout the duration of the program as well as a working webcam when taking the online courses.

Semesters seven and eight are two full-time 12-week fieldwork rotations at facilities throughout the state and across the country working under the direct supervision of a clinical instructor. The final semester involves a Doctoral Capstone course. The 14-credit capstone course provides an in-depth, customized experience specific to the interests, skills, and professional goals of the occupational therapy student.

Accreditation

The entry-level occupational therapy doctoral degree program has applied for accreditation and has been granted Candidacy Status by the [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education \(ACOTE\)](#) of the [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\)](#). The program must have a pre-accreditation review, complete an on-site evaluation, and be granted Accreditation Status before its graduates will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapist administered by the [National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy \(NBCOT\)](#). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). Passing the NBCOT Certification Examination is necessary, but each state may have additional requirements for state licensure. You can find information about state licensure [here](#). Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.

The Occupational Therapy program's accrediting body is the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.: ACOTE c/o AOTA, 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929
Phone: 301-652-6611 / Fax: 770-238-0414; acoteonline.org

The national certification examination for occupational therapists is administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. [View MUSC's school performance data at NBCOT.org.](https://www.nbcot.org/)

Application Procedures

The program coursework begins near the end of May of each year. Applications are available from July 1st of the year prior to the program starting until November 2nd of the year prior to the classes commencing. The following is the deadline for all application materials:

- **November 2**

In 2021, the MUSC OTD program began using the Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) for all applicants. All materials must be submitted to OTCAS except for the MUSC University Application must be submitted directly through our [website](#).

For questions about the online application process or for a pre-application review of an undergraduate transcript, contact the Office of Enrollment Management (OEM) at (843) 792-5396 or oesadmis@musc.edu. For additional information about the program, you can also contact Dr. Cristina Smith, Director of Admissions for the Division of Occupational Therapy at (843) 792-0701 or email: smithcris@musc.edu

Application Requirements

- Students entering the OT program are evaluated by their GRE scores, undergraduate academic performance, and successful completion of prerequisite courses. A minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA is required.
- We also assign credit for volunteer/work experience. In order to obtain credit, applicants must complete a minimum of 30 hours (preferably in two or more settings such as clinics, hospitals, schools, home health, etc.) in occupational therapy .
- Three references (submitted through OTCAS), one from the occupational therapy practitioner who supervised volunteer or work experience. The second and third references should be provided by major advisors or professors.
- GRE scores can take up to 4 weeks to delivered and should be received by the deadline. The GRE test code is 4792.

To be competitive, applicants should demonstrate a strong academic background, strong GRE scores, and good life experience activities such as: additional OT volunteer work over and above the minimum 30 hours, volunteering in a community setting other than OT, significant leadership experience, research activity, scholarship history and significant academic or community volunteer awards.

NOTE: We do not allow advanced placement, transfer of credit or credit for experiential learning. Applicants do not receive credit for previous coursework and/or work experience.

See our website for important temporary exceptions to the OTD Admissions Cycle due to COVID-19.

Prerequisites

A bachelor's degree and 20 hours of prerequisite coursework are required.

Prerequisite Courses	Semester Hours
Human Anatomy (must include lab) within 10 years	4
Human Physiology (must include lab) within 10 years	4
Statistics	3
Lifespan Human Development	3
Abnormal Psychology	3
Sociology/Anthropology	3
Medical Terminology (recommended)	1
TOTAL	21

Special Notes:

For a guide of Frequently Approved Prerequisites, [click here](#).

Combined Anatomy and Physiology courses are accepted; however, you **MUST** take Anatomy and Physiology I and II to fulfill the separate Anatomy and Physiology requirements, including the labs.

Anatomy and Physiology prerequisites need to be rigorous classroom-based courses, online Anatomy and Physiology lab will not be accepted. Advanced Placement courses are not accepted for Anatomy and Physiology prerequisite courses. Prerequisite courses must be from an accredited institution.

The Office of Enrollment Management is able to offer unofficial transcript evaluations from March 1st - June 30th. Please call Enrollment Management at 843-792-2536 to speak with an admissions specialist or email them to oesadmis@musc.edu.

Before applying to our program, please be aware that a felony conviction may affect your ability to sit for the examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy after you graduate, and subsequently your ability to attain state licensure. The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy offers an early determination to assess examination eligibility. Go to www.nbcot.org and read the Early Review section for details.

Application Checklist

See above for important temporary exceptions to the OTD Admissions Cycle due to COVID-19.

1. Minimum of a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale.
 - a. Must check Pre-Requisite course equivalents [here](#) prior to applying.
2. Complete [university application](#). Access to supplemental application materials will be available in the application and sent in a follow up email after they submit the application.
3. Complete [OTCAS Application](#):
 - a. Official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended for all college credit courses
 - b. Official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (at least 4 weeks before the application deadline) (Submit on OTCAS with GRE code 4792)
 - c. Resume (Submit on OTCAS)
 - d. References (Submit on OTCAS)-- Two academic and one from an Occupational Therapist-see requirements above (Submit on OTCAS)
 - e. Personal Statement (Submit on OTCAS)
4. [Completed Academic Plans Form](#)
5. [Log of Occupational Therapy Experience](#) (at least 30 hours minimum preferred in at least two different settings)

Admissions Timeline:

- MUSC Application Opens: July 1
- OTCAS Application Opens: July 16
- MUSC Application, OTCAS Application, and Application Materials (including official GRE scores) must be received by: Nov. 2
- Interview Offers Start: Mid-December
- Admissions Offers: Mid-February
- Orientation and Classes Start: Late May

Applicants receive additional profile points on their application for unique life experiences and service experiences in the AmericCorps, the Peace Corps, or prior military service.

Please note: All above information must be received on or before the deadline an admission decision can be made. It is the applicant's responsibility to review the progress of his/her application by viewing the [Application Progress Portal](#) and ensure that all application materials (including official reference forms, official GRE scores, and all official transcripts are received by the application deadline).

International Applicants

MUSC's OT degree program is unable to admit international students requiring an F-1 visa. Applications will only be accepted from U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or those holding other valid nonimmigrant visa classifications that allow participation in lawful study while in the United States.

Application Deadline

Start Term	Application Type	Available	Deadline
Summer 2022	Regular	July 1, 2021	November 2, 2021

Applicant Statistics

2021 Entering Class - Occupational Therapy Doctorate

Applied		Offered		Entering Students	
Number	306	Number	87	Number	54
In-State	52	In-State	28	In-State	27
Out of State	254	Out of State	59	Out of State	27
Female	276	Female	85	Female	52
Male	15	Male	2	Male	2
Average Age	22.76	Average Age	22.49	Average Age	22.57
Average Cum GPA	3.59	Avg. Cum GPA	3.70	Avg. Cum GPA	3.66
Avg. Pre-Req GPA	3.59	Avg. Pre-Req GPA	3.69	Avg. Pre-Req GPA	3.66
Avg. GRE %ile	48	Avg. GRE %ile	54	Avg. GRE %ile	51