



Health Advisors' Handbook

Division of Occupational Therapy

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Occupational Therapy Doctorate

Academic Year

2023-2024

Division of Occupational Therapy
Medical University of South Carolina College of Health Professions
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Version Date: June 20, 2023

Program: Occupational Therapy

Degree: Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD)

For the most current information and details, visit our website: chp.musc.edu/otd

What is Occupational Therapy?

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 Bureau of Labor Statistics lists [occupational therapy](#) as one of the top 20 professions for projected job growth in the next five years. Salaries in South Carolina begin in the mid-\$50,000 range 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).

Why the MUSC Occupational Therapy Doctorate program?

The Program

The Occupational Therapy Educational program at MUSC was the first professional, graduate entry-level program in the state of South Carolina. The entry-level OTD is distinguished among the nation’s finest occupational therapy doctoral programs through its commitment to supporting health and participation in life. The program embraces the university’s core values: compassion, collaboration, respect, integrity, and innovation.

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 four courses online, Evidence-Based Practice I in the first year of the program (semester two), 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.

Cost of Attendance

Prospective students may find the [estimated cost of attendance](#) for the program on the MUSC Financial Aid Services website.

Accreditation

The [entry-level occupational therapy doctoral degree program](#) is accredited by the [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education \(ACOTE\)](#) of the [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\)](#), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is www.acoteonline.org.

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). [NBCOT Exam Data](#) will be available shortly after graduating our first ELOTD class in May of 2022. 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.

What makes a competitive applicant?

The program takes a holistic approach to admissions. That means we consider a combination of GPA, relevant work experience, volunteerism, etc., in addition to the in-person interview (if offered). Applicants receive additional profile points on their application for unique life experiences and service experiences in the AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, or prior military service.

Applicants should demonstrate strong academic backgrounds and life experiences to be competitive. These may include additional OT volunteer work over and above the minimum 15 hours, volunteering in a community setting other than OT, significant leadership experience, research activity, scholarship history, and significant academic or community volunteer awards.

Admissions Requirements

The GRE is no longer required for admission.

- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required. A minimum prerequisite GPA of 3.0 is also required.
- ***Clemson University students who are on the Accelerated Pathway track must provide signed verification of Clemson general education requirements**

validated by the Clemson Registrar’s Office by time of matriculation into MUSC.

- Complete 20 hours of prerequisite coursework at a regionally accredited college or university. A minimum of 12 hours need to be completed by the application deadline. The remaining hours must be completed by matriculation into the program. In-person and online courses are accepted. (see course list below)
- Three references from individuals who know you and your abilities. We prefer two academic (professors or advisors) who are familiar with your academic ability and accomplishments, and one professional, preferably an occupational therapist.
- Complete a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of shadowing or observation in occupational therapy. Shadowing can be completed in-person, via telehealth, or through webinars.
 - We cannot assist in finding placement for shadowing opportunities.
 - Certificate of completion must be submitted with application for webinars. Accepted webinars could include:
 - AOTA Online Modules/Continuing Education
 - OT State Association Online Modules/Continuing Education
- Complete an application through the [Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service \(OTCAS\)](#). [Fee waivers may be available](#) to qualified applicants.
- Complete the MUSC application. [Cost to apply](#).
- Submit a resume and personal statement through OTCAS. The personal statement should describe why you should be admitted to the program and any unique attributes you would bring to the profession.

Note: 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.

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

Prerequisite Special Notes

- *Anatomy and Physiology prerequisites need to be rigorous courses. A minimum of 3.0 (B) is strongly preferred for all Anatomy and Physiology Lecture and Lab courses. Advanced Placement courses are not accepted. 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 labs.
- [View Frequently Approved Prerequisites for the OT program.](#) To speak with an admissions specialist about your coursework or request an unofficial transcript evaluation, please call 843-792-2536 or email oesadmis@musc.edu. The Office of Enrollment Management offers unofficial transcript evaluations between March 1 and June 30.
- If all prerequisite coursework has not been completed by the application deadline, please include courses in progress and those you plan to complete in the "Plans for Remaining Academic Year" in the application's supplemental forms section.
- Dual enrollment courses are accepted for prerequisite courses so long as the course appears on your college transcripts.
- We do not accept advanced placement, transfer of credit, or credit for experiential learning. Applicants do not receive credit for previous coursework and/or experience.

Application Process

- **Complete the MUSC Application.** Opens July 1. Access to supplemental application materials will be available in the application and sent in a follow-up email after you submit your application. The following forms are supplemental application materials:
 - Plans for Remaining Academic Year form
 - Log of Occupational Therapy Experience (15 hours minimum)
- **Complete the OTCAS Application.** Opens July 22. The following application items are submitted via OTCAS.
 - Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended for all college credit courses.
 - Resume

- Three references: Two academic and one from an occupational therapist (see above)
- Personal Statement. See details above.

All above information must be received on or before the application deadline to be considered for admission to the program. 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, and all official transcripts are received by the application deadline).

Early Admission

Applicants must have the following to be considered for early admission:

- Submission of the completed OTCAS & MUSC Application by September 1.
- An overall cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher
- A prerequisite GPA average of 3.5 or higher (at least 12 of 20 prerequisite hours completed at the time of application)
- At least Anatomy & Physiology I (or equivalent course) with a B or higher

Early Admissions Timeline:

July 1	MUSC Application Opens
July 22	OTCAS Application Opens
September 1	Early Admission Application & Materials Due Date
Mid-September	Admissions Committee Review
October	Admissions Offers Made
Late May	Orientation & Classes Start

Regular Admissions Timeline:

July 1	MUSC Application Opens
July 22	OTCAS Application Opens
November 2	Applications & Materials Due Date
Mid-December	Interview Offers Start
January	Interviews Conducted
Mid-February	Admissions Offers Made
Late May	Orientation & Classes Start

International Applicants

MUSC's OT programs are 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.

Use of Marijuana and/or CBD Products

Marijuana is a Schedule 1 drug and is illegal to purchase in South Carolina. Apart from a narrow and limited scope of codified/documented medical exceptions, it is illegal for individuals to use marijuana/tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in South Carolina. Although cannabidiol (CBD) products may be purchased and used in South Carolina, please be aware that CBD products may contain higher levels of THC than represented on packaging and use of CBD products can result in a positive drug screen for THC/marijuana. Be aware that current drug testing methods cannot accurately ascertain the origins of THC metabolites (i.e., whether from marijuana or CBD products). Your academic program has the authority to conduct random and/or scheduled drug testing; if your test result is reported as positive for THC metabolites (even if you only used a CBD product), your ability to be accepted into the program, progress in the program, and/or successfully complete the program may be negatively impacted.

Scholarship Eligibility

MUSC offers scholarships for which you may be eligible. Some are awarded based on academic achievement; others are awarded based on community service, for example. However, the majority of scholarships awarded at MUSC are based on financial need. This means those scholarships are only awarded to students who need some financial assistance to cover the cost of tuition and fees. If you would like to be considered for a financial need-based scholarship, you must have an up-to-date Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file. Make sure you list Medical University of South Carolina on your FAFSA form, along with MUSC's code: 003438. We encourage you to submit the FAFSA as early as possible. It is recommended to submit the FAFSA in January if you plan to enroll in the Fall.

Application Deadline

Start Term	Application Type	Available	Deadline
Summer 2024	Early	July 1, 2023	September 1, 2023
Summer 2024	Regular	July 1, 2023	November 2, 2023

Applicant Statistics

2023 Entering Class - Occupational Therapy Doctorate

Applied		Offered		Entering Students	
Number	339	Number	111	Number	53
In-State	44	In-State	33	In-State	27
Out of State	295	Out of State	78	Out of State	26
Female*	311	Female	106	Female	52
Male*	17	Male	5	Male	1
Average age	22.72	Average age	22.72	Average age	23
Average Cum GPA	3.61	Average Cum GPA	3.68	Average Cum GPA	3.62
Avg. Pre-req GPA	3.58	Avg. Pre-req GPA	3.67	Avg. Pre-req GPA	3.61
Avg. GRE %ile	42	Avg. GRE %ile	46	Avg. GRE %ile	53
*11 Applicants did not offer gender data					