



Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

Applicant Handbook
(entering 2011-2012)

*Occupational Therapy:
Living Life to Its Fullest*

Application Materials for Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

Priority Deadline: February 15

The MS in Occupational Therapy Program is offered through the School of Science and Health of Philadelphia University. Students seeking admission must meet the Occupational Therapy Program and University's acceptance criteria. Candidate selection is based upon the number of applications, candidates' collective qualifications and the number of openings in the program.

Admission Requirements

- Complete bachelor's degree with minimum overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA) [Official transcripts of all previous undergraduate or graduate study must be provided to the Graduate Admission's Office]
- Earn minimum overall 3.0 GPA in OT Program prerequisite courses (minimum grade of "B-" or better in each course):

Developmental Psychology (Lifespan)	Anatomy & Physiology I
Abnormal Psychology	Anatomy & Physiology II
Sociology/ Anthropology/ Cultural Studies	Science with Lab (Physics recommended)
Sociology/ Anthropology/ Cultural Studies	Statistics

- Complete **interview** with OT Program faculty. After application materials are screened, qualified applicants will be contacted by the OT Program to schedule an interview. Areas reviewed include awareness of profession, motivation for pursuing an OT career, interpersonal and oral communication skills, independent thinking ability, and preparation for weekend-format educational experience.
- Provide two letters of **reference** (one academic and one professional)
- Provide current **resume**
- Submit a career goals statement/ personal **essay** (500 words) The essay will be examined for written communication skills, knowledge of the occupational therapy field, and motivation for the profession.
- Submit results of standardized test score: either Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or Miller Analogies Test (MAT)
- Provide documentation of 20 hours of **clinical observation** under the supervision of an occupational therapist before beginning the professional program. *Applicants are encouraged to complete clinical observation hours as early as possible. Students who are unable to complete observations prior to submitting the admission application must include a letter outlining a plan for completion of these hours with their applications (see *Observation Documentation form in this packet).*
- Submit **Program Prerequisite Record** (see *form in this packet)
- Review, sign and submit the **Occupational Therapy Program Academic Standards Statement** (see *form in this packet)

*send to OT Program if not included with admission paperwork

Submit application materials by February 15 priority deadline to:

Philadelphia University
Office of Graduate Admission
School House Lane & Henry Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144-5497
215/ 951-2943
www.PhilaU.edu/gradad

For more information, please contact:
Occupational Therapy Program
215/ 951-2911
www.PhilaU.edu/ot

Accepted Student Requirements

Students in the Occupational Therapy Program are expected to fulfill the following requirements during their student experience at Philadelphia University.

- A. Obtain materials and/or complete documentation required for Fieldwork:
 - a. Health Clearance (by August, New Student Orientation)
 - i. Annual physical examination (use PhilaU Student Health Medical Record Form)
 - ii. Annual update of immunizations according to fieldwork site requirements
 - iii. Annual proof of active health insurance coverage
 - b. Legal Clearance
 - i. Annual criminal background check (www.CertifiedBackground.com)
 - ii. Annual child abuse history clearance
 - iii. Requirements unique to specific fieldwork sites. Many settings require students to be fingerprinted, undergo a drug screening, and/or gain clearance from the PA Sex Offender Registry. Students are responsible for the costs of these processes, as well as for transportation arrangements and costs associated with fieldwork experiences. Information regarding how to meet these requirements is provided by the program.
 - c. CPR certification (required prior to Level II Fieldwork)
- B. Maintain professional organization memberships (highly recommended):
 - a. Philadelphia University Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)
 - b. American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
 - c. Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) (or other state OT association)

Certification/ Licensure Requirements to Practice Occupational Therapy

To practice as an occupational therapist, students must satisfy all the requirements for the MS in Occupational Therapy degree, including maintaining a 3.0 GPA, satisfactory completion of fieldwork, and complete the following:

- A. Apply for Philadelphia University graduation through the Registrar's Office
 - B. Apply for and pass the *NBCOT national certification exam as a prerequisite for state licensing
 - C. Complete the PA (or other state) *licensing application
- *A felony conviction may affect a student's ability to be placed at a fieldwork setting, sit for the certification exam or to attain state licensure.

Philadelphia University OT Program Accreditation

The Philadelphia University Occupational Therapy Program is registered with the PA Education Department and accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association, 4720 Montgomery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220, 301/652-2682. The most recent reaccreditation was granted in April 2008. Upon graduation students are eligible to sit for the national certification exam that is administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). In addition, most states require licensure in order to practice occupational therapy; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the national certification exam. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the certification exam or to attain state licensure.

Occupational Therapy Program Outcomes

General outcome goals of the Occupational Therapy Program

To prepare competent and ethical occupational therapists

Upon completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Use frames of reference, practice models, and theories of practice to facilitate occupational performance
- Establish effective and therapeutic relationships with clients, their caregivers and families
- Select and use appropriate screening and evaluation methods to determine client needs and priorities and make referrals to other disciplines as indicated
- Incorporate occupation-based and client-centered strategies into therapy sessions to support full participation
- Develop and implement discharge plans that address the client's personal, environmental and occupational needs
- Document services to ensure accountability and meet reimbursement standards
- Work collaboratively and effectively with members of the professional team (interdisciplinary colleagues, administrators, practitioners)
- Advocate for individuals and/or groups who are in need of occupational therapy services by communicating with relevant stakeholders
- Use a variety of approaches to service delivery including direct care, consultation, and collaboration
- Validate the effectiveness of occupational therapy services by objectively measuring its effects on the individual's or group's occupational performance
- Locate, evaluate and apply research findings to promote best practice in occupational therapy
- Clarify the skilled nature of occupational therapy services through appropriate written and spoken language

To prepare graduates who possess a commitment to professionalism and lifelong learning

Upon completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Implement skilled, humanistic, ethical and high caliber services
- Engage in a lifelong process of professional development to assure competence and adherence to accepted practice standards
- Explain the roles, functions, and benefits of occupational therapy services to a range of audiences
- Use feedback to develop and refine professional attitudes and behaviors
- Respect the value of diversity
- Apply analytic reasoning to patient/client care and clinical research
- Comply with professional codes of ethics, practice standards, and legal regulations governing the practice of occupational therapy

Philadelphia University Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

PROGRAM ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Occupational Therapy Program admission criteria are designed to select candidates who are most likely to succeed both in an university academic environment as well as in OT professional practice. While the Program faculty is dedicated to assisting students in their professional education, the student also has responsibilities. Students enrolled in the program must demonstrate achievement in academic and clinical competencies necessary for professional practice, and meet academic standards consistent with graduate school criteria. Students must also demonstrate effective professional behavior as detailed in the *Professional Behavior Assessment Form* (see form uploaded to OT Student Center on BlackBoard, "Student Handbook"). In order to remain in good academic standing, students must meet the following standards. These academic standards are in addition to the university academic standards as described in the Graduate Catalog and on the Philadelphia University web site.

Retention and Progression

1. Grade Point Average
 - a. A minimum overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in Occupational Therapy coursework must be maintained each semester. A semester GPA below 3.0 will result in probation for the following semester.
 - b. If the semester GPA is below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters, the student will be suspended from the full-time program.
 - c. A student must attain a minimum overall 3.0 GPA prior to enrolling in Level II fieldwork courses.
 - d. A student must achieve a minimum overall 3.0 GPA to be eligible to graduate.
 - e. A student may not receive more than two grades below B- while in the OT Program.
 - f. If a grade of "F" is obtained in a non-fieldwork course, the student will be dismissed from the program.
 - g. If there is more than 12 months of inactivity in coursework, or there is more than 12 months since completion of the last Level II fieldwork, students will be required to repeat all of the assessment and intervention courses, or demonstrate academic and clinical competency in each of these courses, via examination, to be eligible to graduate.
2. Competency Grading
 - a. Each student is expected to pass every competency on the first attempt with a minimum passing grade of 80%. If unsuccessful, the student will be allowed one retake of the competency; the highest grade that can be earned will be 80%.
 - b. Students must earn a competency grade average of 80% or higher within each course. Students who are unable to earn the minimum 80% average must enter into a remediation program defined by the course faculty.
 - c. Each student is expected to demonstrate proficiency in all safety items in order to successfully pass the competency.
3. Fieldwork
 - a. Students must receive satisfactory reports and evaluations from all fieldwork educators to receive fieldwork credit ("CR").
 - b. If a grade of "NC" (no credit) is obtained in a fieldwork, faculty determine whether the student is permitted to repeat the fieldwork or be dismissed. If permission to repeat the fieldwork is granted, the student must develop a written plan of self-correction prior to being placed in another fieldwork. A fieldwork may be repeated only once, and the student must achieve a "CR" (credit) grade on the second attempt. If a student receives a grade of "NC" in two fieldwork courses, the student will be dismissed from the program.
 - c. Students receiving a "NC" grade, including "W" (withdrawal) in fieldwork will be placed on probation. The student must re-register and repeat the fieldwork in order to progress in the program. Repetition of a fieldwork could delay graduation. Withdrawal for medical or personal reasons, approved by program faculty, will not result in probation.
 - d. A student must earn a grade of "CR" in all fieldwork in order to graduate.

Probation

The student's cumulative academic record is reviewed at the end of each semester, including summer, to evaluate academic standing and satisfactory progress toward degree requirements. The Program Director will notify the student when problems in academic performance may jeopardize a student's good standing.

Academic probation is a means of emphatically informing students that their records are unsatisfactory, while there is still time to remedy the situation. Students will be placed on academic probation when their records indicate that normal progress toward a degree is in jeopardy. Students on probation should meet with their advisors to discuss a plan for improving their academic performance. They should also consider reducing the number of hours of employment whenever possible and/or limit participation in any other activity that interferes with the performance of their academic work.

Students whose academic records include one or more of the following will be placed on academic probation by the Program Director:

- a. A student who has a cumulative grade point average below 3.0.
- b. A student who has received grades below "B-" in two or more courses.
- c. A student who receives a grade of "C+" or "C" in any course. Probation for two consecutive semesters will result in suspension. Probation for three semesters will result in dismissal.
- d. A student who receives verbal or written reports from fieldwork educators indicating non-adherence to site regulations, site schedule, ethical standards of conduct, or engagement in behavior that puts patient/ client safety at risk.
- e. A student who violates the OT Program's *Standards of Professional Behavior* or *AOTA Code of Ethics*.

Suspension

- a. Suspension means that the student may not progress in the full time program. A program of remediation will occur during a pre-determined time period. The student must successfully complete remediation activities in order to re-enter the program. Students who are unsuccessful with remediation activities will be dismissed.
- b. Since the program is a lock-step curriculum, courses that were not successfully completed cannot be repeated until the following year. A second suspension results in dismissal.
- c. Repeated violations of the OT Program's *Standards of Professional Behavior* or *AOTA Code of Ethics* are also grounds for suspension.

Dismissal -- students whose academic records include one or combination of the following will be dismissed:

- a. Student fails to meet minimum academic standards listed above.
- b. Student receives a grade of "F" in a non-fieldwork course.
- c. Student fails or receives "NC" in two fieldwork experiences.
- d. Student has two suspensions.
- e. Student has three probations.
- f. Student displays egregious conduct that violates professional and/or legal standards, and/or University regulations regarding academic and professional conduct, and/or Program standards regarding professional behaviors.

Students who are dismissed from the OT Program for academic conduct or any other reason are not typically readmitted. In special circumstances, dismissed students may be considered for re-entry. A student who is academically dismissed from the OT Program may apply for readmission only after a period of at least one year. To be considered for re-entry students must have developed and implemented an action plan that would facilitate successful academic performance. Refer to the re-entry policy, below, for further information.

Students who withdraw from the OT Program may have their records reviewed for possible readmission by program faculty. Readmission will be determined by the faculty based on this

review and any additional criteria required at the discretion of the faculty. Refer to the University catalog for further information regarding procedures.

Dismissal actions may be appealed following University guidelines (refer to Catalog accessed at <http://www.philau.edu/academics/catalogs.html>).

CERTIFICATION FOR LEVEL II FIELDWORK

Students must have demonstrated: 1) the ability to meet the academic and program standards outlined in the *OT Student Handbook*, and 2) effective interpersonal communication, professional behavior, and judgment necessary for the field setting to be recommended by the faculty for fieldwork.

- By the terms of the University's contractual agreement with fieldwork sites, only students who have satisfactorily completed the requisite professional courses and demonstrate safety and proficiency in all competencies will be placed in fieldwork.
- Faculty will formally review all students' progress at the end of the spring semester of the second year of professional coursework (or equivalent) to ensure that students are demonstrating mastery of material and are ready for Level II fieldwork. This appraisal includes a review of students' grades, clinical skills, and professional behavior. Faculty retains the final decision to approve students for fieldwork placements.
- Students who frequently display unprofessional behavior and/or judgment, or who are unable to address professional behavior concerns that have been identified by faculty, will be required to appear before a sub-group of the OT Program faculty that includes at a minimum the fieldwork coordinator, program director, and faculty advisor. This faculty group may impose sanctions which can include probation, suspension or dismissal from the program, and/or delay the student from engaging in the fieldwork portion of the curriculum.
- Students must successfully complete Level II fieldwork within 15 months beyond the date of completion of the final didactic semester or repeat selected course(s), and/or demonstrate academic and clinical competency in selected course(s) prior to beginning fieldwork experiences.
- Failure to complete a fieldwork or having to be removed from a placement may result in a student's dismissal from the program. Students who need to repeat more than one Level II fieldwork due to unsatisfactory performance will be dismissed from the program.

WITHDRAWAL/TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Occupational Therapy Program curriculum is sequential and integrated in nature. For this reason, withdrawal from one course may require withdrawal from another course. The faculty recognizes that various circumstances may result in a student needing to withdraw from the program. Students who wish to reenter at a later date must be in good academic standing at the time of withdrawal. To withdraw or apply for a leave of absence students must follow the policies and procedures described in the current graduate catalog. Additionally students must:

- meet with the Program Director
- complete relevant forms available at the Learning and Advising Center's web site at <http://www.philau.edu/learning/advisingforms.html>

Academic leaves of absence are granted for no less than one year and no more than two years. In select instances students may request to return and complete the program in less than full-time status. Students enrolled in the program in less than full-time status *must* follow the specific course of study delineated by the program director at the time the student reenters the program.

If there are two or more years since completion of the last Level II Fieldwork experience, students will be required to repeat all of the assessment and intervention courses, or demonstrate academic and clinical competency in each of these courses, via examination, to be eligible to graduate.

Philadelphia University Occupational Therapy Program
School House Lane & Henry Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19144-5497 • 215.951.2911

Occupational Therapy Academic Standards Statement
(return this form to the Occupational Therapy Program)

Name: _____

Local Address: _____

Local Phone Number: _____

Permanent Address _____

Permanent Phone Number: _____

E- mail address: _____

To: Program in Occupational Therapy

I wish to apply to the Occupational Therapy Program. I am aware of the criteria I must meet each year in order to maintain my status in the Program.

I understand I must maintain a minimum overall 3.0 grade point average and may not receive more than two grades below "B-" to meet OT Program and graduate school academic standards. To assure competence for clinical practice I understand I may be required to repeat a course or complete other remedial work for any course where I earn a grade lower than "B". I agree to these requirements and understand that failure to do so could result in my dismissal from the program.

I understand that I must demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills and judgment to remain in good standing and in order to participate in the fieldwork education component of the program. I agree to maintain these standards at all times. I understand that faculty retains the final decision to approve students for fieldwork placements.

The occupational therapy education process includes multiple fieldwork experiences for which there are health and legal clearances required including: yearly physical examinations, immunizations, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation certification (CPR), criminal background check, and child abuse clearance, as well as active health insurance coverage. In addition many settings require students to be fingerprinted, undergo a drug screening, and/or gain clearance from the PA Sex Offender Registry. Students are responsible for the arrangements and costs of these processes, as well as for transportation and costs associated with fieldwork experiences. Information regarding how to meet these requirements is provided by the program.

I understand that I must be continuously matriculated in the program. In the event a leave of absence is required, this must be requested and approved by Occupational Therapy Program faculty in order for the student to maintain a place in the program and eventually be eligible to graduate. A formal leave of absence must also be filed through appropriate University offices (see catalogue for more information).

I understand that it is my responsibility to review the additions and amendments to the Occupational Therapy Student Handbook on an annual basis while a member of the program.

(Signature)

(Date)

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Clinical Observation Hours
 (return this form to the Occupational Therapy Program)

The Philadelphia University Program in Occupational Therapy requires that each of our Occupational Therapy prospective students observe or assist as a clinical volunteer under the direction of an Occupational Therapist for a minimum of **20 hours**. We believe that this time helps provide prospective students with a realistic view of the clinical aspects of therapy that are essential to their academic success. Please have this form completed by an occupational therapist and submit it with your admission materials. Multiple copies of this form can be made if observation hours will be completed at more than one site. Thank you.

Name of Student: _____

Name of Clinical Facility: _____

Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____

Total Hours Spent at your Facility: _____

In what capacity? Observation: _____
 Assistance: _____
 Other (explain): _____

Please assess the student in each of the following areas by circling the corresponding rating for each category:

1/ Below Average; 2/ Average; 3/ Above Average; 4/ Superior

Accepts direction	1	2	3	4
Carries out instruction	1	2	3	4
Communicates appropriately	1	2	3	4
Demonstrates interest/motivation	1	2	3	4
Uses appropriate judgment	1	2	3	4
Is reliable/dependable	1	2	3	4
Attends to appearance, hygiene	1	2	3	4

Additional Comments:

 Signature

 Institution/Department

 Therapist's Title

 Date

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Occupational Therapy Program Prerequisite Record
 (return this form to the Occupational Therapy Program at Philadelphia University)

Name of Student: _____

Indicate anticipated entry date to the Occupational Therapy Program (Fall 20xx): _____

Program Prerequisite Record

For each of the program's prerequisite courses or activities listed below, indicate the timeframe during which they have been completed, are in progress, or the anticipated date of completion. For completed coursework, indicate the grade received.

	<i>Semester/Year Completed</i>	<i>Grade Received</i>	<i>Semester/Year in Progress</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion Date</i>
Bachelor's Degree				
Developmental Psychology (Lifespan)				
Abnormal Psychology				
Sociology/ Anthropology/ Culture I				
Sociology/ Anthropology/ Culture II				
Statistics				
Anatomy & Physiology I with lab				
Anatomy & Physiology II with lab				
Science (Physics recommended)				
20 Hours Clinical Observation (recommended)				

Additional Comments:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

Philadelphia University's Master of Science in Occupational Therapy features an innovative approach to instructional design and delivery. The majority of coursework is offered in a unique format where students engage in bi-weekly on-campus weekend sessions supplemented by off-campus on-line programming. Some courses may require additional days on campus or travel to clinical facilities (to be determined each semester). The 72-credit program can be completed in 28 months.

Curriculum by Semester	Cr	Class Schedule
Semester 1: August and Fall OCC 612 Foundations for Practice Seminar (August) OCC 610 Portfolio Seminar OCC 611 Foundations for Practice OCC 613 Functional Anatomy OCC 621 Occupational Competence OCC 625 Clinical Skills A	1 1 3 4 3 1 <u>13</u>	8 weekends (plus final exam weekend) Friday: 9:30-6:00; Saturday 8:30-6:00 Generally two on-campus sessions per month
Semester 2: Spring OCC 615 Assistive Device Design OCC 623 Applied Neuroanatomy OCC 635 Clinical Skills B OCC 631 Conceptual Assumptions for OT Practice OCC 624 Dimensions of Human Movement	1 4 1 3 <u>3</u> 12	8 weekends (plus final exam weekend) Friday: 9:30-6:00; Saturday 8:30-6:00 Generally two on-campus sessions per month
Semester 3: Summer OCC 645 Clinical Skills C OCC 735 Level I Fieldwork A OCC 736 Assessment & Intervention: Adults OCC 741 Interpers Rel & Dynamics of Collaboration	1 1 4 <u>3</u> 9	*8 weekends (plus final exam weekend) Friday: 9:30-6:00; Saturday 8:30-6:00 Generally two on-campus sessions per month *40 hours of fieldwork during semester scheduled by student in collaboration with field site
Semester 4: Fall OCC 745 Level I Fieldwork B OCC 746 Psychosocial Interventions OCC 756 Assessment & Intervention: Children & Youth OCC 754 Environmental Dimensions of Occupation	1 4 4 <u>3</u> 12	*8 weekends (plus final exam weekend) Friday: 9:30-6:00; Saturday 8:30-6:00 Generally two on-campus sessions per month *40 hours of fieldwork during semester scheduled by student in collaboration with field site
Semester 5: Spring OCC 626 Evidence-Based Practice OCC 766 Older Adults: Enabling Participation OCC 751 Professional Issues & Trends OCC 755 Level I Fieldwork C OCC 757 Innovative Practice in OT	3 2 3 1 <u>3</u> 12	*8 weekends (plus final exam weekend) Friday: 9:30-6:00; Saturday 8:30-6:00 Generally two on-campus sessions per month *40 hours of fieldwork during semester scheduled by student in collaboration with field site
Semester 6: Summer OCC 760 Practice Platform Seminar OCC 763 Clinical Mastery OCC 764 Specialty Practice	1 2 <u>2</u> 5	May-June intensive (multiple days on-campus, including some weekdays and weekends, generally 8:30-6:00)
Semester 7and/or 8: Fall and/or Spring OCC 771 Level II Fieldwork A (July-Sept or Oct-Dec) OCC 775 Clinical Reasoning I (July-Sept or Oct-Dec) OCC 781 Level II Fieldwork B (Oct-Dec or Jan-Mar) OCC 785 Clinical Reasoning II (Oct-Dec or Jan-Mar)	3 1.5 3 <u>1.5</u> 9	July-December or October-March Two 12-week full-time fieldwork placements off-site, and on-line clinical reasoning courses
Total Credits	72	