



PHILADELPHIA
UNIVERSITY

**Master of Science in
Occupational Therapy**

**Applicant Handbook
(entering 2012-2013)**

**Occupational Therapy:
*Living Life to Its Fullest***

Application Materials for Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Priority Deadline: February 1

The MS in Occupational Therapy Program is offered through the School of Science and Health of Philadelphia University. It is designed to accommodate students from all undergraduate disciplines. Qualified candidates who hold or are about to receive an undergraduate degree are eligible to apply. 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.

The OT program subscribes to the new **Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service**, known as OTCAS. Applicants for the 2012 entering class should apply online using the OTCAS application. Our applicant deadline is February 1, though candidates are encouraged to apply early due to rolling admissions. Applications received after the deadline date will be considered subject to space availability in the entering class. Admission letters will be distributed beginning in December.

To learn more about the OTCAS application process and to get started, please go to the **OTCAS Applicant Portal Link: portal.otcas.org**. Once processed, the Admissions Committee looks forward to receiving your application.

Admission Requirements: **all materials submitted to OTCAS**

- Bachelor's degree** demonstrating minimum overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA)
- OT Program prerequisite courses:** minimum overall 3.0 GPA (minimum grade of "B-" or better in each course; courses must be taken within last 10 years):

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

- Clinical observation documentation:** 20 hours of observation under the supervision of an occupational therapist.
- Two letters of reference** (one academic and one professional)
- Resume** (highlight work and volunteer activities, accomplishments and recognitions)
- Career goals statement/ personal essay** (500 words): The essay will be examined for written communication skills, knowledge of the occupational therapy field, personal insight, and motivation for the profession.
- Graduate Record Exam** (GRE) or Miller Analogies Test (MAT) results. Candidates with GRE scores of 950 or greater (or 153 Verbal Reasoning and 144 Quantitative Reasoning on the new, revised GRE) and MAT scores of 400 or greater will receive primary consideration.

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.

OT Program Mission Statement

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Program's mission is to develop competent, reflective and ethical occupational therapists who possess a commitment to professionalism and lifelong learning. In keeping with the University mission to prepare graduates for successful careers in an evolving and interconnected world, the OT Program incorporates interdisciplinary learning and collaboration to enable graduates to practice in diverse environments and changing service-delivery contexts. The curriculum is organized around three themes that reflect the program's philosophy: *Enabling Participation* through being client-centered and grounded in the person-environment-occupation fit; *Applying Evidence and Clinical Reasoning* to enhance practice; and *Fostering Collaboration and Innovation* in order to contribute to our clients' well-being and quality of life.

Occupational Therapy Program Outcomes

The Philadelphia University entry-level master's degree in occupational therapy curriculum is designed to prepare competent, reflective and ethical occupational therapists whose practice philosophy is both client-centered and occupation-based, and who possess a commitment to professionalism and lifelong learning.

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- Provide occupation-based and client-centered care by competently applying and adapting the occupational therapy process
- Establish therapeutic relationships with clients, their caregivers and families
- Demonstrate respect for people's beliefs around health, illness and disability (incorporating ethnicity, age, culture and lifestyle choices)
- Apply core theory, knowledge, skills, and critical reasoning to inform practice
- Locate, evaluate and apply research findings to promote best practice in occupational therapy
- Work collaboratively with clients, caregivers and members of the professional team to implement programs and services that enable health and participation
- Demonstrate the attitudes, behaviors and responsibilities associated with being a health professional
- Promote quality of life through the development of innovative tools, programs or services

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 the 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 Development 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 dismissed 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. A grade below "C" (2.0) is considered failing. While the grade of "C" is regarded a minimum passing grade, it is judged as unsatisfactory performance. Students who earn a "C" grade in core courses must decelerate, and repeat the course before proceeding in the full time program (see Deceleration below). Students who are unable to earn a minimum "B" (3.0) in a repeat course will be dismissed from the program. A course can be repeated only once, and the student must achieve a minimum "B" (3.0) grade on the second attempt.
 - g. If a grade of "F" is obtained in a non-fieldwork course, the student will be dismissed from the program.
 - h. 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. The decision to permit a

- student to repeat fieldwork is dependent on fieldwork educator verbal or written reports about student behavior with respect to adherence to site regulations, site schedule, ethical standards of conduct, or engagement in behavior that puts patient/ client safety at risk.
- 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 receives a grade of “C+” or “C” in any course. Probation for two consecutive semesters will result in dismissal. Probation for any three semesters will result in dismissal.
- c. 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.
- d. A student who violates the OT Program’s *Standards of Professional Behavior* or *AOTA Code of Ethics*.

Deceleration

- a. Deceleration means that the student may not progress in the full time program. Students decelerate when they receive a “C” (2.0) in any core course (Functional Anatomy, Applied Neuroanatomy, Clinical Skills A, B & C, Assessment & Intervention courses (Children & Youth; Adult), and Psychosocial Interventions [or their equivalent]). Students must repeat the course and earn a minimum “B” (3.0) in order to proceed in the program. Students who are unsuccessful with remediation activities will be dismissed. Students can decelerate once.
- b. Since the program is a lock-step curriculum, a course that was not successfully completed cannot be repeated until the following year. A second deceleration results in dismissal.

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 decelerates once and receives a “C” in a subsequent semester.
- e. Student placed on probation for two consecutive semesters, or any three semesters.
- f. Student repeats a course and does not earn a minimum “B” (3.0) grade.
- g. Student displays egregious conduct that violates professional and/or legal standards, and/or University regulations regarding academic and professional conduct, and/or repeated violations of the OT Program’s *Standards of Professional Behavior*.

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>).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The following is consistent with the Philadelphia University Graduate Education Policy for graduation, and includes specific references to the additional Occupational Therapy program requirements. (See also Graduate Studies Catalogue.)

- Students must fulfill the 72 credit hour requirements for the Occupational Therapy graduate program. Credit hour requirements include all didactic and Level II Fieldwork A and B related coursework.
- A candidate for graduation must have earned at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and no more than two grades below B- to be certified for graduation.
- Students must complete all requirements for the Master's Portfolio.
- Students must submit an *Application for Graduation* prior to the semester in which they plan to graduate. This form is available on-line in WebAdvisor. Students will be billed for graduation fees.
- Students must earn a minimum percentile score on a comprehensive examination in order to be cleared for graduation (e.g. the Occupational Therapy Knowledge Exam [OTKE] or other comparable practice examination developed by NBCOT). Students who do not earn a minimum score as identified by OT faculty must register for a 1-credit remediation course prior to retaking the comprehensive exam. Students must show performance improvement on the exam to receive credit for the remediation course and to be cleared for graduation.

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 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.

Philadelphia University Occupational Therapy Program
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Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

The M.S. in Occupational Therapy at PhilaU features is delivered in a hybrid learning model. 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 within 3 academic years.

Curriculum by Semester	Cr	Class Schedule
Semester 1: Fall Portfolio Seminar Foundations for Practice Functional Anatomy/Movement Occupational Competence Clinical Skills A	1 3 4 3 <u>1</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 2: Spring Assistive Technology Design Intro to Evaluation Clinical Skills C Applied Neuroanatomy Level I Fieldwork A Interpers Rel & Dynamics of Collaboration	2 1 1 4 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 *Additional hours of fieldwork during semester scheduled by student in collaboration with field site
Semester 3: Summer Evidence-Based Practice Clinical Skills B Level I Fieldwork B Psychosocial Interventions	3 1 1 <u>5</u> 10	*7 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 Assessment & Intervention: Adults Environmental Dimensions of Occupation Level I Fieldwork C Older Adults: Enabling Participation	5 3 1 <u>2</u> 11	*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 Professional Issues & Trends Level I Fieldwork D Assessment & Intervention: Children & Youth Innovative Practice in OT	3 1 5 <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 Practice Platform Seminar Specialty Practice	2 <u>3</u> 5	7 weekends Friday: 9:30-6:00; Saturday 8:30-6:00
Semester 7 & 8: Fall & Spring Level II Fieldwork A (Oct-Dec) Clinical Reasoning I (Oct-Dec) Level II Fieldwork B (Jan-Mar) Clinical Reasoning II (Jan-Mar) Clinical Mastery (April)	3 1.5 3 1.5 <u>1</u> 10	Two 12-week full-time fieldwork placements off-site, and on-line clinical reasoning courses.
Total Credits	72	