The Program in Occupational Therapy

Entry-level MSOT and OTD Degree Admission Requirements
The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the intrinsic value of occupational therapy and the essential care it provides to clients. It has challenged our faculty, clinicians and community partners to find innovative ways to educate our students amid the pandemic. As a result, our recent graduates have a unique lens through which to view not only the field, but the delivery of care itself so that clients’ occupational therapy needs can be met.

As an occupational therapist, you can provide clinical services to persons of all ages and with a variety of social, psychological, developmental, and physical or mental disabilities, or you can decide to become an educator, a researcher, a consultant, an administrator or a master clinician. Examining the impact of COVID-19 on chronic disease, participation, independence and community health will be a priority for our profession for many years to come.

As society recognizes the value of enabling health outcomes and wellness, occupational therapists provide the link between the biomedical and sociocultural health systems to improve the performance of individuals with disability or chronic disease as they live their lives and support their health. Our graduates are positioned to become leaders in the communities in which they work and serve and to address issues of prevention, participation, everyday functional performance, habilitation, and quality of life in persons with chronic disease, disability or sociocultural disadvantage.

Founded more than 100 years ago, our Program offers the finest in occupational therapy education and patient care, all built on a strong foundation of innovative research. We thrive in providing a diverse and dynamic academic environment, led by faculty who are leaders themselves in advancing the profession through their research, community practice and outreach efforts. There will be many extraordinary opportunities available to you through our Program and Washington University School of Medicine. We are ranked as a top three occupational therapy program in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.

I encourage you to learn more about our entry-level degree options and the outstanding community of faculty, clinicians, researchers and students you will be joining.

Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L
Associate Dean and Director of Occupational Therapy
Elias Michael Professor of Occupational Therapy and Professor of Neurology
Multiple factors, including aging populations, technological advancements and transitional services, have led a movement toward population health and community-based models of care. Occupational therapy helps bridge the biomedical and socio-cultural perspectives of health so people can manage their health conditions, work, and engage with their families and communities in meaningful ways. Occupational therapists serve many populations in both inpatient and community settings and treat a variety of conditions including neurological impairments, behavioral and mental health, work injuries and developmental delays.

Our curriculum prepares students for the health-care landscape by using active teaching and learning strategies with an emphasis on process. Students learn research-driven, evidence-based evaluation and intervention strategies to support participation and well-being across the continuum of care. The foundation for our coursework is the People-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) model.

Our Program is part of an innovative and interdisciplinary university and medical center environment that cultivates the personal and professional growth of our students. There are multiple opportunities for civic engagement in local, regional and global sociocultural issues that impact health equity. This not only enriches the student experience, but also promotes an inclusive culture of humility and sensitivity. Our graduates enter the field with a unique occupational therapy lens through which to view their clients and communities that will contribute to society’s needs.

We share the university’s commitment to equal access, consistent with its academic mission and standards, and strive to achieve excellence through the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I). We believe that the academic environment is enhanced when diverse groups of people with diverse ideas come together to learn and work. We value the input of multiple viewpoints and perspectives to create a structure and culture that supports all members of our community.

Both the master’s and doctoral degree programs share the same curriculum for the first year of study. Students may enroll in either degree program and apply to transfer to the other at a later date. Typically, the doctoral program attracts students who have further interest in a specialization with advanced knowledge and are preparing to be leaders to advance clinical practice, education and knowledge in the field.
The Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) degree prepares generalist clinicians with the knowledge and skills to work as direct care providers, consultants, educators, managers and advocates for clients.

Our curriculum trains practitioners to develop their unique occupational lens. Curricular threads intersect and overlap so that each student engages with their coursework in a personalized way. Students learn how to select and use appropriate theories, models of practice, and frames of reference to guide the occupational therapy evaluation and intervention process. They are able to evaluate and apply research literature and evidence to support practice. Students develop professional behaviors that are consistent with the occupational therapy code of ethics, governmental requirements, professional standards and institutional policies.

Graduates enter clinical practice with the following competencies to:

- Use evidence to inform occupational therapy assessment and intervention across the continuum of care
- Develop community programming
- Exercise sound, professional judgment and clinical reasoning
- Value and encourage interprofessional collaboration
- Promote an inclusive culture of humility and sensitivity
- Use current technologies and informatics

For students interested in pursuing a PhD in the future, the MSOT degree program also includes the option for students to study with faculty scientists. Students have exposure to topics in participation, public health, aging, children and youth, mental health, work and industry, and neurorehabilitation.

An experiential portion of the curriculum — six months of full-time fieldwork supervised by experienced clinicians — follows the two years of academic coursework for a total of 80 credit hours. The MSOT degree program is a 28-month, full-time program.
The Clinical Doctorate of Occupational Therapy (OTD) prepares graduates beyond the master’s degree with in-depth knowledge in a specific area such as practice, advocacy, policy, education, research and program development. Doctoral students actively engage in leadership experiences to develop capacity as a change agent in professional practice and develop in-depth knowledge in their practice areas. They learn to analyze the role of occupational therapy across the service delivery continuum for individuals, groups, and populations and design an occupational therapy model for a specific client population.

In the second year of study, doctoral students start developing their advanced practice skillset and the ability to participate in scholarly work. They may choose from multiple concentrations such as productive aging, social participation and the environment, children and youth, work and industry, neurorehabilitation, and rehabilitation science.

Graduates enter careers in clinical practice, teaching, research, consultation, clinical services, and management and policy with the following competencies to:

- Use evidence to inform occupational therapy assessment and intervention across the continuum of care
- Develop community programming
- Exercise sound, professional judgment and clinical reasoning
- Value and encourage interprofessional collaboration
- Promote an inclusive culture of humility and sensitivity
- Use current technologies and informatics
- Lead change in practice
- Participate in scholarly work to advance practice
- Create program plans to address the needs of a specific population

In addition to six months of full-time fieldwork supervised by experienced clinicians, OTD students focus on their specialty area and complete the 14-week doctoral capstone for a total of 106 credit hours over a three-year period. The OTD degree program is a 36-month, full-time program.
# Degree sequence for the MSOT and OTD programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>MSOT</th>
<th>OTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August - December</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Core Coursework (68 credits)</td>
<td>Core Coursework (86 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January - May</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Five Level 1 Fieldwork experiences starting in the first semester of coursework</td>
<td>Five Level 1 Fieldwork experiences starting in the first semester of coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June - July</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Level II Fieldwork</td>
<td>Level II Fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August - December</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Level II Fieldwork</td>
<td>Level II Fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January - May</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td>Level II Fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June - July</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral Capstone</td>
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Our Program’s scholarship agenda has five key themes and weaves together our curriculum design, and the Program and institution mission, vision, and core values. These key themes include community participation, neurorehabilitation, the multidimensional elements of occupational participation and the environment, functional cognition, and our commitment to health equity, facilitating social drivers of health, and inclusion. Faculty research labs formulate and answer research questions that support Ernest Boyer’s model of scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching and learning.

**Community participation**

- Enhancing community participation is central to the educational, clinical and research missions of our Program. Our faculty specialize in training future occupational therapists and, in doing so, conduct scholarship of integration and application to enable diverse populations to participate optimally in their communities.

**Neurorehabilitation**

- As an institution with a core biomedical mission, our curriculum aims to bridge biomedical and sociocultural perspectives. Through multidivisional and interprofessional collaborations, our faculty conduct scholarship of discovery, integration and application focused on understanding the brain, the body, and their core functions and how disease and disability impact occupational performance.

**Multidimensional elements of occupational participation and the environment**

- Guided by the People-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) model, faculty conduct scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching and learning to understand the impacts of environments, facilitators and barriers in social contexts, and the form, function, and meaning of occupations and occupational participation.

**Functional cognition**

- As pioneers and leaders in the science of functional cognition and its impact on occupational performance, faculty conduct scholarship of discovery, integration, and application, developing novel occupation-based assessments and testing the effectiveness of interventions to support occupational participation of diverse clients.

**Health equity, social drivers of health, and inclusion**

- With diversity, equity, inclusivity, justice and anti-racism at the very core of our Program mission and values, faculty conduct scholarship of integration, application, and teaching and learning to make occupational therapy education more inclusive, reduce barriers to community participation, identify inequities impacting health and well-being, and determine effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions for underserved populations.
The health-care professions are adapting and evolving through evidence-based practice, research and technological innovations, and policy reform. In recent years, that adaptation has included broadening the clinical scope to include not only a biomedical view of health, but sociocultural, community and population perspectives as well. There is a significant need locally, nationally and internationally for health-care professionals to be trained to address issues of prevention, participation, everyday functional performance, habilitation, and quality of life in persons with chronic disease, disability or sociocultural disadvantage.

The Program in Occupational Therapy and the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis have responded to this need and paradigm shift by developing a joint degree program. The Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT)/Master of Public Health (MPH) degree will give students a unique combination of skills and knowledge to benefit communities and populations and to create new pathways of research, practice and health programming. Graduates will be prepared to work in a diverse array of settings, including academia, community agencies, government institutions, and non-profit organizations, and to assume leadership roles in public policy, urban planning and advocacy. The program of study requires 120 credit hours, taken over 3 1/2 years.

### Application deadlines

**Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**

The Program in Occupational Therapy admits one class each year in the fall. The OTCAS system opens in mid-July the preceding year, and applicants must complete all required elements by the Nov. 15 or Jan. 30 deadlines below.

**Application Deadlines:** Nov. 15 (early admission) or Jan. 30 (regular admission)

The Program in Occupational Therapy awards scholarships at the time of admission. The scholarships selection process is competitive and based on the quality of the student’s application.

**Master of Public Health**

The Master of Public Health program admits one class each year in the fall. The application deadline for joint degree students is Dec. 15 for admission and scholarship consideration. Because the MSOT/MPH program begins with two years of occupational therapy (OT) study, students with interest in the joint degree may wait to apply to the program in the first or second year of their OT studies. Further information about the program is available to OT students after they matriculate.

**Application Deadline:** Dec. 15

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**Joint degree MSOT/MPH application process**

Joint degree applicants will be required to apply to both the MSOT and MPH programs.

**Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Application:** You will apply to the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University in St. Louis through the OTCAS common application system. Visit [https://portal.otcas.org/](https://portal.otcas.org/) to apply.

**Master of Public Health Application:** You will apply to the Master of Public Health Program through the SOPHAS common application system. Visit [http://www.sphas.org](http://www.sphas.org) to apply. You can find additional information at [mph.wustl.edu/apply](http://mph.wustl.edu/apply).

**Campus visit(s)**

We encourage you to visit both programs. Visit sessions are held bimonthly at the Program in Occupational Therapy. To view upcoming sessions, please visit [ot.wustl.edu/visit](http://ot.wustl.edu/visit).

The Brown School offers monthly MPH information sessions, as well as personalized visits. Please visit [mph.wustl.edu/learn-more/visit](http://mph.wustl.edu/learn-more/visit) to view the schedule of upcoming sessions or to schedule a visit online.

You may also contact the Brown School Office of Admissions and Recruitment at (314) 935-6676 or brownadmissions@wustl.edu.

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The Brown School’s Master of Public Health program is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health; its web address is [www.ceph.org](http://www.ceph.org).
## Joint degree MSOT/MPH sequence

### Core Coursework (40 credits)
- Integrated with Level I Fieldwork

### Core Coursework (28 credits)
- Integrated with Level I Fieldwork

### Level II Fieldwork (6 credits)

### Level II Fieldwork (6 credits)

### Capstone II (1 credit)

### MPH Practicum and Capstone I

### Calendar | Semester  | MSOT | MPH
--- | --- | --- | ---
August - December | Fall | Core Coursework (40 credits) | Core Coursework (39 credits)
January - May | Spring | Integrated with Level I Fieldwork | Integrated with MPH Practicum and Capstone I
June - July | Summer | Level II Fieldwork (6 credits) | Level II Fieldwork (1 credit)
August - December | Fall | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abnormal Psychology</td>
<td>An abnormal psychology or a psychopathology course fulfills this requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental Psychology</td>
<td>You may choose a child development or a lifespan course that includes learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td>principles and motor, language, cognitive, emotional and social development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Must be 200 level or above; no lab is required. Suggested courses include, but are</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td>not limited to, human anatomy, neuroanatomy, comparative anatomy, pathophysiology,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zoology, genetics, botany, ecology and cognitive neuroscience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physiology</td>
<td>Must cover the organization of cells into tissues, organs and organ systems in</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td>humans. A course titled “Anatomy and Physiology” is acceptable; however, if the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>course is part of a two-part sequence, both courses must be completed to be able</td>
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<td>to fulfill prerequisites. One part can fulfill the life science prerequisite, with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the second part for the physiology prerequisite.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Suggested courses include, but are not limited to, other psychology courses,</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td>sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, public health, epidemiology,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gerontology and urban studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>You may choose behavioral, educational, psychological or mathematical statistics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td>Business statistics does not fulfill this requirement.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Admission requirements

Applicants must satisfactorily complete prerequisites and possess personal qualities of character, integrity, and motivation, as well as the capacity to perform essential functions suitable for a career in occupational therapy. All applicants must pass a drug screening, criminal background check, and family and child services review.

The admissions committee takes the following factors into consideration:

1. **Undergraduate education:** A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college/university or enrollment in an affiliated 3-2 program* (becomes 3-3 with an OTD) and satisfactory completion of all prerequisite coursework. At least four of the six prerequisite courses must be complete at time of application.

2. **Prerequisite and cumulative GPA:** Advanced placement (AP) courses and test scores do not count for prerequisites. The six prerequisite courses (3 semester hours each or equivalent if on quarter system) must be completed with grades of B or better, and a 3.25 cumulative GPA is required for the MSOT and OTD programs.

3. **Recommendations:** Three letters of recommendation are required from:
   - A professor, teacher or academic advisor.
   - A person who can speak to your clinical potential, such as someone who supervised you during an OT-related experience or worked with you in a setting related to health care or populations related to OT.
   - A person of your choice, such as work supervisor, club advisor or another teacher.

4. **OT-related experience:** Thirty hours minimum of occupational therapy–related experience or observation is required. We encourage you to visit different sites to experience the diversity of the profession. Visit [ot.wustl.edu](http://ot.wustl.edu) for a list of readings, videos, podcasts and other resources that can contribute to OT-related hours.

5. **Understanding of OT and strong writing skills:** Applicant should answer the personal statement prompt provided by OTCAS. The statement should reflect knowledge of OT as gained through observations and other experiences, show strong writing skills and articulate your future goals.

6. **Life experience:** Participation and leadership in extracurricular activities, work, research or other pursuits is encouraged. Please complete the portions of the OTCAS application regarding extracurricular experience fully even if you mention activities in other places, such as your personal statement.

7. **Video interview:** Following the processing of your application, you will receive an email from us with a link to complete an asynchronous video interview to better understand your interpersonal and problem-solving skills.

8. **International students:** TOEFL and TWE should be taken no more than one year prior to application. Transcripts from universities outside the United States must be reviewed by a credentialing agency. Visit [ot.wustl.edu/international](http://ot.wustl.edu/international) for more information.

*For a list of 3-2 partner schools, visit [ot.wustl.edu/partnerschools](http://ot.wustl.edu/partnerschools)

Washington University undergraduate students, visit [ot.wustl.edu/WUSTL32program](http://ot.wustl.edu/WUSTL32program)

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**About**

The Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis is ranked as a top three occupational therapy program in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Located in the heart of the Midwest, the Program offers the finest in occupational therapy education and patient care, all built on a strong foundation of innovative practice and research.

**Faculty**

- 31 primary appointed faculty
- 16 joint appointed faculty (MDs, PTs, PhDs, MPH)
- 1 academic fieldwork and capstone coordinator

**Honors**

- Academy of Research, American Occupational Therapy Foundation
- Roster of Fellows, American Occupational Therapy Association
- Outstanding Educator, Missouri Occupational Therapy Association
Washington University participates in AOTA’s centralized application system for occupational therapy educational programs, OTCAS (https://portal.otcas.org/). Students manage their applications online and may apply to more than one school at a time. Washington University does not require a separate application or fee.

The Program admits one class each year in the fall. Applicants begin the admission process during the preceding fall and must complete all required elements by the Nov. 15 (early admission) or Jan. 30 (regular admission) deadlines.

The application process is as follows:

• The OTCAS system is open for applications in July for those applying for admission the following fall.

• Your application, official transcripts and three letters of recommendation must be submitted to OTCAS by Nov. 15 or Jan. 30 deadlines.

• Once completed, “OTCAS applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.” In our experience, it can take two to four weeks before an application is verified by OTCAS and released to us for review.

• Once completed OTCAS applications are released to us, they are reviewed in the order in which they are received.

• Applicants are encouraged to complete the application process well in advance of the deadline. Decision notices for early applications will be sent out by Dec. 11 and must be accepted or declined by Jan. 11. Decision notices for regular applications will be sent out by Feb. 28 and must be accepted or declined by March 28.

Please consult the FAQ section of admissions pages at ot.wustl.edu for further information or email us at otadmissions@wustl.edu.

Scholarships and financial planning

Financial support is available in the form of scholarships and loans. The Program awards merit-based partial scholarships and assistantships to admitted students. All students who are offered admission will be considered for these awards. Admitted students will receive information from the Office of Student Financial Planning to help them through the process of applying for loans.

Visit us

Current, future and accepted applicants are encouraged to visit us in person or join in one of our regularly offered virtual visit sessions. We also welcome people who are exploring career options and considering occupational therapy. Dr. Kathy Kniepmann, one of our faculty members, opens our visit sessions with an informal presentation and discussion, followed by a tour that’s led by one of our current occupational therapy students. For upcoming sessions, please visit:

ot.wustl.edu/visit

How to apply

Your application, official transcripts and three letters of recommendation must be submitted to OTCAS by Nov. 15 (early admission) or Jan. 30 (regular admission).

PLEASE NOTE: Applicants will have until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Nov. 15 or Jan. 30 to submit to OTCAS, not from any other time zone from which your application may be sent. The portal will close at 12:00 a.m. EST on Nov. 16 and Feb. 1, and you will not be able to submit your application. These are hard deadlines set by the Program and OTCAS, so please plan accordingly.

The Program in Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE’s telephone number, c/o AOTA, is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is www.acoteonline.org.

Graduates of the Program are eligible to sit for the national certification examination for occupational therapists which is administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT), located at One Bank Street, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD, 20878. NBCOT’s phone number is (301) 990-7979 and its web address is www.nbcot.org.

A felony conviction may affect a graduate’s ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.
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