Occupational Therapy

Degree Offered

- Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT)

Introduction

In the fall of 1993, the West Virginia Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a new master's degree program at WVU, leading to an entry-level master's degree in occupational therapy. WVU accepted its first students into the professional program in the fall semester of 1996. The academic and fieldwork program requires three years to complete. Prior to application, students are required to complete approximately fifty to sixty hours of prerequisite courses, which in most instances will take two years to fulfill.

The Profession of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is a health and rehabilitation profession which provides services to people of all ages, and addresses physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory, communication, and other areas of performance in various contexts and environments in every day life activities that affect health, well-being, and quality of life (AOTA, 2004). Occupational Therapy is a caring profession designed to help people regain and build skills that are important for health, well-being, security, and happiness. The purpose of occupational therapy is to help individuals achieve a maximum level of independence and function through engagement in occupation in order to lead independent, productive, and satisfying lives. The focus is on assisting and enabling individuals to develop the capacity to function in all activities (occupations) of daily life, including self-care, work, and leisure. Hence the name occupational therapy.

Occupational therapists work in schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, skilled nursing homes, and private practice.

Accreditation Status

WVU's Division of Occupational Therapy has been granted accreditation status by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, M.D. 20814-3449. ACOTE's phone number, c/o AOTA, is (301) 652-AOTA. The OT program at WVU was initially awarded accreditation in 1998 and awarded re-accreditation in 2013. The next scheduled onsite visit for accreditation will be in 2023-2024. ACOTE information may be accessed at www.acoteonline.org.

Graduates of the program are able to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapist administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy Inc. (NBCOT). The address for NBCOT is: National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc., 12 South Summit Avenue, Suite 100, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-4150. For more information, NBCOT can be contacted at (301) 990-7979 or at http://www.nbcot.org/. After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be an occupational therapist, registered (OTR). Most states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note: A felony conviction may impact a graduate’s ability to take the NBCOT examination and/or obtain a state license. For further information on NBCOT’s Character Review Program, interested parties can obtain information from the licensing board in that particular state.

What to Expect

Like many professional programs, the curriculum in the entry-level master's occupational therapy program is fairly fixed and intense. The first professional year, which begins in the summer, will include courses in basic sciences relevant to the profession and practice of occupational therapy along with introductory professional courses. The second and third professional years will deal more specifically with training in occupational therapy theory and practice as administered across a wide variety of settings. The professional curriculum includes two off-campus, full-time clinical experiences known as Level II Fieldwork. Students are financially responsible for transportation, housing, and meal expenses related to clinical assignments. Students in the program are required to participate in the School of Medicine’s laptop computer purchase lease-to-own program, which provides each student with a state-of-the-art computer that contains course and program-relevant software.

All OT coursework must be completed with a grade of "C" or higher. Further, OT students must maintain an OT coursework GPA of 3.0 or higher while in the OT Program.

Students in the OT Program must complete all didactic coursework and all fieldwork within a period of five years after commencing the occupational therapy program. Furthermore, all Level II Fieldwork must be completed within eighteen months following completion of academic coursework while remaining within the five-year time frame.
FACULTY

CHAIR
• Randy P. McCombie - Ph.D., OTR/L (Loyola University, Chicago)
  Chair, Program Director, Associate Professor

PROFESSOR
• Anne Cronin - Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA (University of Florida)
  Professor

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
• Steve Wheeler - PhD, OTR/L (Virginia Commonwealth University)
  Associate Program Chair; Associate Professor

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS
• Amanda Acord-Vira - MOT, OTR/L (West Virginia University)
  Assistant Professor
• Brandy Brown - OTD, OTR/L (Chatham University)
  Assistant Professor
• Amy Burt - MOT, OTR/L (University of Pittsburgh)
  Assistant Professor
• Diana Davis - PhD, OTR/L (West Virginia University)
  Assistant Professor
• Garth Graebe - MOT, OTR/L (West Virginia University)
  Assistant Professor
• SueAnn Woods - MOT, OTR/L (West Virginia University)
  Assistant Professor

Admission Standards

Normally, students apply to the program during their second year of college. They must have a minimum of fifty to fifty-five hours of college credit which includes the prerequisites listed previously. Students who already have a degree in another field are also eligible to apply. All applicants must meet the following criteria:

• Minimum GPA of 3.0, including overall GPA and prerequisite GPA, is normally required (a higher GPA may be necessary given the competitive nature of the program).
• Minimum of sixty (60) hours of volunteer experience with at least two licensed occupational therapists (Students should contact the Division of Occupational Therapy to determine the type of experience required. Students should keep a record of dates/hours, locations, and names of supervising occupational therapists. Forms to record volunteer/ shadowing experiences can be found online at http://medicine.hsc.wvu.edu/ot)
• Recommendations are required from two Occupational Therapists who supervised the volunteer/shadowing experience. These OTs must be from 2 different clinical facilities. Specific recommendation forms are available at the time of application within the on-line application packet.
• Completion of all prerequisite courses by the end of the semester of application (normally, second semester of sophomore year) is required. All OT prerequisite courses and WVU GEC courses must be completed by June 1st prior to starting the OT Program.
• *Note: Some OT prerequisite courses have their own course specific prerequisites. For example, physics courses at WVU require that students have completed college algebra and trigonometry. Students must check with those departments for specifics.
• IMPORTANT NOTE: Applicants must have completed all but a maximum of 2 OT prerequisite courses by the end of their Fall semester prior to the close of the Spring application period. Those applying to the OT Program will not be considered in the application review process if they are taking more than two OT prerequisite courses in the Spring semester prior to their anticipated start of summer classes in the OT Program. In other words, for those applying to the WVU OT Program, all but a maximum of two OT prerequisite courses must be fully completed by end of the Fall semester. Thus, applicants who are taking three or more OT prerequisite courses in the Spring semester will not be considered for acceptance into the OT Program. Applicants must plan on taking no more than two OT prerequisite courses in the Spring semester prior to the summer start of the Program for which they are applying. This requirement does not apply to WVU non-OT prerequisite general education (GEC) course requirements. Note: Courses with a required lab, including those courses that have labs with a separate course number, may be considered one course for purposes of this requirement, i.e., a course plus its lab equal one course. Students are strongly urged to contact the Division of OT for clarification or if they have any questions on this requirement.

Application forms are available online on the program homepage at medicine.hsc.wvu.edu/ot Questions regarding application materials may be directed to The Division of OT at (304) 293-8828 or to the OT Program Academic Advisor at (304) 293-1690. Application materials are traditionally available November 15 through February 15. The deadline for submission of application materials is typically February 15. The official deadline will be posted on the occupational therapy website and printed in the admissions packet.
Course information for the master of occupational therapy degree can be found on the following website: http://medicine.hsc.wvu.edu/ot

**Degree Requirements**

Minimum grade of C required in all courses.

Minimum GPA of 3.0 required.

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>OTH 500</td>
<td>Health Care Issues in Occupational Therapy</td>
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<td>OTH 501</td>
<td>Management for Occupational Therapy Practice</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapy in the Work Environment</td>
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<td>OTH 550</td>
<td>Education in Occupational Therapy</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapy in Prevention &amp; Wellness</td>
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<td>OTH 697</td>
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**Total Hours**: 39

**PROGRAM TIME FRAME**

Students must complete all didactic coursework and Level II Fieldworks within a period of five years after commencing the occupational therapy program. Furthermore, all Level II Fieldwork must be completed within eighteen months following completion of academic coursework while remaining within the five-year time frame.

**Major Learning Goals**

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

The following learning goals that reflect the threads of WVU OT Program curriculum, which include rural healthcare, neuro-rehabilitation, evidence-based practice, professional advocacy, and occupation-based practice, have been established:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to frame issues and problems of human occupation that are consistent with and reflective of current frames of reference, theoretical models, and approaches within the profession of Occupational Therapy.

2. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for and understanding of the value of professional advocacy and promotion of the profession of Occupational Therapy.

3. Students will demonstrate competence in addressing the distinctive issues associated with treatment of clients with acute and chronic neurological diseases or trauma.

4. Students will be able to identify and address unique issues related to providing OT services to individuals in a rural setting.

5. Students will demonstrate entry-level competence in areas of evaluation, treatment, communication, critical reasoning, and leadership upon graduation.

6. Students will complete all academic and fieldwork requirements within the required program time frame.

7. Students will ultimately pass the national certification exam which serves as the basis for licensure in most states.