

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

THE PROFESSION

Occupational Therapy is the art and science of facilitating well-being through occupation. The term “occupation” represents the flow of an activity that fill a person’s life and that has an effect on his or her health. Occupational therapy is particularly concerned with how people construct meaningful lives individually and in community.

In the view of Occupational Therapy, well-being is achieved through an active, dynamic and evolving balance between the person and his or her environment. Occupational therapists intervene when illness, disability, or social constraints threaten the person’s ability to actively create or find that balance and participate fully in society. Because Occupational Therapy views people as multidimensional beings, it blends knowledge from the biological and social sciences into a unique, distinct and holistic profession. In order to use occupation strategically, occupational therapists have expertise in how the body, mind and spirit work together to produce occupations as simple as feeding oneself or as complex as leading a hundred-piece orchestra.

Occupational Therapy provides service to individuals, families, groups and populations in communities and institutions such as hospitals, day centers and schools. Occupational therapists both receive referrals from and make recommended referrals to appropriate health, educational, or medical specialists. Delivery of occupational therapy services involves several levels of personnel including the registered occupational therapist, the certified occupational therapy assistant, and aides.

Entry-level occupational therapy professional educational programs prepare the occupational therapist with basic skills to serve as direct care providers, consultants, educators, managers of personnel and resources, researchers and advocates for the profession and the consumer. The health care environment within which occupational therapists practice is changing dramatically, and the profession stands at the threshold of opportunity to expand practice roles. New environments need leaders who can manage organizations and systems as well as deal effectively with change.

ENTRY-LEVEL PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The curriculum of the entry-level professional doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD) responds to important trends in occupational therapy practice, health care, and society in general. Creighton University’s entry-level professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy pathway prepares graduates to fulfill all traditional duties of occupational therapists while helping them become transformative leaders in the profession. The program is based on models of other professional doctorate degrees in health sciences such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and physical therapy. The entry-level professional doctorate in Occupational Therapy at Creighton University is the first such program in the United States.

MISSION STATEMENT

In agreement with the Creighton University Mission and the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions Mission Statement, the mission statement of the Department of Occupational Therapy is as follows:

“The mission of the Creighton University Department of Occupational Therapy is to educate ethical practitioners, to engage in scholarship dedicated to the pursuit of truth, to serve the profession, and to offer occupational therapy expertise to local and global communities. The Creighton University occupational therapy graduate will be creative, holistic, reflective, and committed to life-long learning. Therefore, the department will value and honor diversity, model and foster leadership, and facilitate spiritual, personal and professional growth.”

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical base of the Department of Occupational Therapy is consistent with the Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy (American Occupational Therapy Association-AOTA, 2006). The statement of philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Department states:

“It is the philosophy of the Department that humans are self-directed, adaptive, occupational beings. As such, their development (emotional, spiritual, social, cognitive, and biological) occurs in the context of occupation. Learning comes about through immersed exploration of diverse practice environments, collaboration, service, reflection, and creative thinking. In the view of the Department, teaching is enabling, knowledge is understanding, and learning is the active construction of subject matter. We believe learning is contextual in three ways: new knowledge is acquired by extending and revising prior knowledge; new ideas acquire meaning when they are presented in a coherent relationship to one another; and knowledge becomes usable when it is acquired in situations that entail applications to concrete problem-solving. Thus, the faculty teach through a variety of approaches intended to actively engage learners, draw upon their power as emerging professionals, and integrate occupational therapy knowledge: discussion, reflection, and self-directed learning.”

PROGRAM GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES)

The program goals of the clinical doctorate in Occupational Therapy program work toward this end by preparing graduates that:

1. Demonstrate entry-level occupational therapy clinical skills*
2. Develop a new or refine an existing program that enhances occupational therapy practice.
3. Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills and insight into one's professional behaviors to accurately appraise one's professional dispositions, strengths, and areas for improvement.
4. Demonstrate the ability to practice educative roles for clients, peers, students, and others in community and clinical settings.
5. Influence policy, practice, and education by advocating for occupational therapy services for individuals and populations and for the profession.
6. Demonstrate leadership aptitudes and characteristics to assume leadership roles at the local, national and international levels in occupational therapy, health professions, and the community.
7. Develop essential knowledge and skills to contribute to the advancement of occupational therapy through scholarly activities.
8. Apply principles and constructs of ethics to individual, institutional, and social issues, articulate justifiable resolutions to these issues and act in an ethical manner.

*Goal 1 is assumed to be accomplished by all post professional OTD students.

As part of a Jesuit University, we are convinced that the hope of humanity is in the ability of men and women to seek the truths and values essential to human life. Therefore, we aim to lead our students and faculty in discovering and embracing the challenging responsibilities of their intelligence, freedom, and value as persons. We believe that the intrinsic and unique value of human beings is expressed through occupation, and that the deepest purpose of each man and woman is to create, enrich and share life through human community. Further, we believe we should strive for a human community of justice, respect, and mutual concern. Occupations are activities having unique meaning and purpose in a person's life. Occupations are central to a person's identity and competence, and they influence how one spends time and makes decisions (AOTA, 2008). In this program, occupational therapy is viewed as a "profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life" (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2005, p. 3). Occupations unfold at the level of the individual, family, community, society and the world.

The profession-specific portion of the occupational therapy curriculum is conceptualized as encompassing three primary themes: **occupation**, **professional practice**, and **professional identity**. Rather than approach each theme sequentially, the curriculum is built around the nesting of these themes, so that students begin studying all of them as soon as they enter the program and continue to build on them throughout the curriculum. The content of each theme unfolds over the nine semester course sequence, becoming integrated as the student progresses. Course objectives reflect curriculum themes, although some courses emphasize one theme more than others. In addition, a thread of Leadership derived from the theme of professional identity reinforces the development of doctorally prepared therapists committed to serve societal needs. The leadership thread thus serves as a way to integrate the three themes of the curriculum. Students are expected to become engaged professionals who creatively articulate and model the integration of advanced knowledge and ethical decision-making through innovative practice, research, publication, advocacy, policy development and public speaking in efforts to influence broader health systems.

References:

- American Occupational Therapy Association (2006). Association policies: The philosophical base of occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 60, 681-682.
- American Occupational Therapy Association, (2008). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process, 2nd edition. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 62, 609-639.
- World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2005) *Definitions of Occupational Therapy*, Draft 7. Nacka, Sweden: WFOT Promotion and Development Programme.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The program in Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, P.O. Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220. The telephone number is (301) 652-AOTA.

ADMISSION

Students enter the program in the fall semester. The preferred deadline for applications is December 1. The final deadline for applications is February 1. Interviews are required in the admission process. Qualified applicants will be notified if they are selected for an interview. Interviews will be scheduled in January and February.

Enrollment is limited, and meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the professional program. Admission is based on academic and personal qualifications considered necessary for successful, competent practice as an occupational therapist. The OTD program does not require a minimum grade-point average for admission, although grade-point average is considered in the overall evaluation of the applicant's suitability for the program. Candidates are evaluated on the basis of the fit between their personal goals and the mission and objectives of the OTD program. In addition, prior education, work experiences, honors, awards, service to others, and leadership activities serve to provide insight into a candidate's commitment to lifelong learning and doctoral-level education. It is recommended that prospective students spend time observing occupational therapists at work in their communities. This serves to familiarize the applicant with the general responsibilities of an occupational therapy professional.

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) requires that by July 1, 2010, institutions with doctoral level education programs must require applicants for admission to hold a baccalaureate degree or higher prior to admission to the program. For more information on program accreditation, please see AOTA/ACOTE website at <http://www.aota.org/Educate/Accredit.aspx>.

Applicants must apply online at <https://creighton-spahp.gotoextinguisher.com/application>

Creighton Preference

The Occupational Therapy Admission Committee has a strong preference for Creighton undergraduate students who complete the majority of their undergraduate coursework at Creighton, including all prerequisites. All Creighton undergraduate students who have achieved a minimum overall grade-point average (GPA) of 3.25 at the end of the semester in which the student applies will be guaranteed an interview.

Guaranteed Admission Policy

Creighton students who began undergraduate studies prior to and including Fall 2007 who meet the following criteria will be granted admission to the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program.

Each student must:

1. Be enrolled and complete all pre-occupational therapy requirements at Creighton University prior to entry into the program.
2. Submit a completed application to the Admission Office by December 1 of the academic year prior to enrollment in the professional program.
3. Remain in good academic and academic-related standing throughout all prerequisite coursework.
4. Have achieved a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 at the end of the semester in which the student applies.
5. Complete an interview expressing an appropriate rationale and demonstrating interpersonal skills for the study and practice of occupational therapy.

Students unable to meet one or more of the above criteria are encouraged to apply for admission through the normal admission procedure.

PRE-PROFESSIONAL COMPONENT

- Beginning fall 2010, a baccalaureate degree has been required. Pre-occupational therapy courses may be completed at any regionally accredited university or college.
- All prerequisite coursework must be completed with a grade of "C" or better.

The courses listed below should be taken by pre-occupational therapy students. These courses are reflective of a liberal education essential for occupational therapy professional practice. The pre-occupational therapy course sequence introduces students to the various traditional liberal arts and empirical sciences which are later extended in the OTD program. Together, the prerequisites and the OTD curriculum contribute to a broad understanding of human culture and prepare students to respond to the needs of society through professional practice.

The School of Pharmacy and Health Professions will make the final determination regarding courses satisfying requirements.

All curricula in the SPAHP undergo constant review and refinement. Questions regarding prerequisites may be directed to the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions Admission Office, (402) 280-2662, (800) 325-2830, phaadmis@creighton.edu.

Prerequisite Courses

	Semester Hours	Quarter Hours
Theology, Philosophy and/or Ethics course (also includes religion or logic)	3	4.5
Culture, Ideas and/or Civilizations course (includes history, world religions, American studies, world literature, or women's studies)	3	4.5
Anatomy (If enrolled in a combined anatomy/physiology course, 6 semester hours will be required.)	3	4.5
Psychology	3	4.5
English Composition (may be replaced with a hands-on fine or performing arts course)	3	4.5
Statistics	3	4.5

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The Doctor of Occupational Therapy education program in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions at Creighton University prepares occupational therapists to serve as primary providers of occupational therapy care. In order to function as a clinical occupational therapist, an individual must be able to meet certain physical, emotional, intellectual and communication expectations for performance. Occupational therapy education requires the accumulation of scientific knowledge as well as the simultaneous acquisition and demonstration of psychomotor skills, cognitive skills and professional attitudes and behaviors. The faculty is committed to an educational environment where students may develop emotionally, spiritually, socially and cognitively.

Technical standards must be met with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The School is committed to enabling students with disabilities to complete the course of study of the OTD Program by means of reasonable accommodations consistent with the ADA. Technical standards are necessary to create specific expectations for student performance in the classroom, laboratory and clinical education environments. The purpose of technical standards is to delineate the psychomotor skills, cognitive skills and professional attitudes and behaviors deemed essential for matriculation into, continuation in and completion of the educational program.

- I. Observation/ Sensory: Students must have sufficient visual abilities to be able to observe and interpret patients/clients accurately. They should also possess functional tactile and proprioceptive skills and abilities necessary to perceive and synthesize inputs during patient/client interaction, evaluation, and treatment.
- II. Communication: Students must demonstrate effective verbal and written communication with patients, family members/caregivers, faculty/staff, fieldwork preceptors, payers, elected officials, members of the healthcare team and others. They must demonstrate appropriate communication with people of different ages and genders, with diverse physical, cognitive and emotional abilities, and from different cultural, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds and lifestyles. Students must demonstrate the ability to use therapeutic communication and a client centered approach. They must display adequate English language skills in written and oral communication.
- III. Motor: Students must display adequate motor skills to provide safe, efficient, and effective occupational therapy treatment. Examples of skills requiring motor ability include sitting tolerance, splint or assisted technology fabrication, computer usage, performing transfers and assisting with bed mobility, and providing range of motion and strengthening activities. The motor abilities required include adequate gross and fine motor function, vestibular function, strength, and functional usage of the sensory system.
- IV. Intellectual / Conceptual: Students must demonstrate problem solving throughout the didactic and experiential components of the program. This includes the ability to interpret information from multiple sources (written, verbal, environmental, interpersonal, etc.), carry out instructions in a timely manner, and understand and follow written instructions such as policies and procedures. Therefore, the student must be able to read complex material, and write in a way that is accurate, descriptive, free from errors and consistent with guidelines or standards. Further, students must be able to apply critical thinking processes in order to

gather information, identify problems and alternative plans of action. They must be able to make decisions spontaneously in "on the spot" situations, pressure situations from high workload demands, and variable time and environmental demands.

- V. Behavioral/Social Skills /Professionalism: Students must possess sufficient emotional health to fully utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, adhere to ethical standards, complete patient care responsibilities promptly, and relate to others with courtesy, compassion, maturity, and respect for their dignity. Because occupational therapy education and practice takes place in a large variety of settings, students must have the ability to participate collaboratively as a (professional) team member, must be able to modify behavior in response to feedback, and display emotional health when faced with changing environments, clinical uncertainties, and stressful workloads that include multiple concurrent demands and short deadlines. This requires the ability of students to be aware of and appropriately react to their own emotional responses. In addition, students must at all times maintain personal appearance and hygiene that is appropriate for professional and classroom settings.
- VI. Attainment of Technical Standards: Inability to comply with these technical standards may result in course failure. Applicants are encouraged to voluntarily discuss their disabilities with the Director of Admissions and the Assistant / Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the School in order to consider and prepare for the accommodations that may be needed. After enrollment, a student with a disability who wishes to request reasonable accommodations may directly contact the Assistant / Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the School or the Creighton University Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. Verification and documentation of the disability by a qualified professional, such as a physician or psychologist, will be needed before reasonable accommodations are made. Accommodations will not be considered reasonable if they affect the substance of the occupational therapy educational program, compromise the School's educational standards, and/or negatively affect the safety of students and/or other people, including patients, with whom they may come into contact in the course of their studies. If accommodations are provided, this information will be kept in strict confidence.

All occupational therapy applicants must review the technical standards described in this document and perform a self-evaluation to determine if they are able to maintain compliance with them. A signed copy of this form should be returned to the SPAHP Office of Admissions signifying the standards have been read and certifying compliance.

Signing this document will serve as testimony that the student is in compliance with these standards and understands the responsibilities it outlines. A student who is dismissed from the program and subsequently reinstated must re-sign this document as testimony that the student is in compliance with these standards.

PROFESSIONAL COMPONENT

Entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy Pathway

The entry-level professional doctorate curriculum in occupational therapy emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, an understanding of research literature, and professional competence. The degree Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) is granted to students who successfully complete a program consisting of the prerequisite course work and a baccalaureate degree followed by nine semesters of professional education.

In addition to didactic course work, students in the entry-level professional doctorate in Occupational Therapy pathway must register for Level I Fieldwork for four didactic semesters of the curriculum beginning in the second semester. Level I Fieldwork is provided in a variety of settings covering the lifespan, including hospitals, clinics, school systems and community centers. The schedule of didactic classes is organized in such a way to assist students in accomplishing this course requirement. All fieldwork assignments are made by the Occupational Therapy Academic Fieldwork Coordinators.

Two of the nine professional semesters required for the awarding of the entry-level OTD degree are three-month Level II Fieldwork placements at supervised, approved facilities. Eligibility for Level II Fieldwork experiences is determined by the student's mastery of the professional curriculum. In addition, a 16-week Professional Rotation experience is required during the ninth (last) semester of the curriculum. A GPA of 2.00 or higher is required for Level II Fieldwork placement.

It is the student's responsibility to finance transportation and living accommodations for all fieldwork and Professional Rotation courses. Students should plan to travel to sites outside of the local area for both Level I and Level II Fieldwork, as well as for Professional Rotation.

Entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy Pathway - Alaska Program

In 2007, we began our University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)-Creighton University Distance Initiative. This entry-level program initiative includes asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning in a unique distance hybrid model. Students complete lab and experiential learning activities at the UAA campus.

Students must be residents of Alaska and meet the admission requirement and criteria identical to the on-campus applicants. (see above for more information)

Post-Professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy Pathway

The School initiated a post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) pathway in the fall of 1995. This pathway is one of the first professional OT doctoral programs of its kind in the country and is designed to strengthen occupational therapists' professional, practice management, teaching, and administrative skills. With the expertise and credentials gained by completing this program, graduates are more able to compete for positions in a diverse range of practice environments and will be poised to lead the profession into the 21st century. In 2001, the school instituted the post-professional OTD program in a distance format to make the program readily accessible to occupational therapy practitioners who wish to pursue doctoral education while working. Students are able to access didactic coursework supportive of occupational therapy practice through course websites, print, videotape, CD-ROM, and web technology.

The post professional curriculum provides well-developed learning opportunities related to the practice of occupational therapy. In addition, the curriculum offers education in instructional and research methods in an effort to prepare students for academic as well as practice-oriented careers. Didactic coursework addresses advanced theory, knowledge, and skills in critical analysis, personnel supervision, examination of health care policy, legal and ethical parameters of practice, and quality review methodologies. Various methodologies enhance the practice relevance of the coursework.

The distance pathway, designed for practicing professionals, allows students to enroll in two or more courses per enrollment term. The introduction to clinical doctoral studies course (POTD 500), and research proposal course (POTD 554) are held on Creighton University's campus. Once students successfully complete POTD 500, they may begin to enroll in courses to complete their plan of study.

After successful completion of POTD 580, students participate in 16 credit hours of professional rotations. Rotations can be developed in a variety of practice settings including pediatrics, industrial rehabilitation, hand rehabilitation, neonatal intensive care, private practice, psychiatry, home health, gerontology, community, cross-cultural environments and academia.. Students can develop rotations in the state where they reside or where they work

Students accepted to the post-professional OTD pathway must have completed a bachelor's or entry-level master's degree in occupational therapy at an ACOTE accredited institution and have successfully passed the certification examination. Students accepted into the distance post-professional OTD pathway must demonstrate that they have access to the necessary technology for the web curriculum.

Applicants must apply online at <https://creighton-spahp.gotoextinguisher.com/application>

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

In order to satisfy the requirements for graduation, the entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy and the post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy students must successfully complete all requirements for admission, and all required courses in their professional curriculum, and must participate in a capstone event at the end of the academic program. A cumulative grade-point average of not less than 2.00 is required for graduation based on all work attempted while enrolled in the professional program. Candidates for the entry-level OTD and post-professional OTD degrees must be determined by the faculty to be of good moral character and fit for the practice of the profession, must have paid all indebtedness to the University, and must be present at the ceremonies where the degree is conferred (unless excused under University rules). To participate in Commencement, a candidate must submit an application for degree available online through the Registrar's Office by the University deadline. In an effort to comply with accreditation and ongoing programmatic quality assurance, completion of all course evaluations and graduate exit survey is required in order for the student to be assigned a course grade and/or graduate.