# **Occupational Therapy**

### **Department of Rehabilitation Sciences**

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# Overview

The occupational therapy program, as part of the rehabilitation science department in the School of Public Health and Health Professions at the University at Buffalo, is based on the philosophical belief that people have a vital need for occupation. Occupation is defined as the meaningful and productive ways in which people use their time. It includes activities such as self-care, play, learning, work, and leisure. A person's engagement in occupations fulfills four primary functions: (1) to acquire skills and behaviors necessary for insuring one's survival, (2) to achieve a sense of quality in one's life, (3) to contribute to the progress and well-being of society, and (4) to promote one's personal physical and mental well-being. The ability to engage in occupation and realize these four functions may be compromised as a result of illness, disability, or other life circumstances.

A fundamental principle of the occupational therapy program is that human beings learn and adapt through active engagement in occupations. Learning and adaptation occurs when a person receives information from his or her senses, processes it, and compares it with knowledge and experience previously obtained. Through repetition of these experiences, new behaviors are demonstrated and used. These fundamental concepts are applied to the clients that we prepare our students to work with, as well as to the students themselves.

Clients who receive occupational therapy services are engaged in active, meaningful occupational activities. Following observation, evaluation, and consultation with the client and family, therapists choose activities that are appropriate for the individual's developmental level, skill level, and the environment in which the client will function. This is done to enable the client to move towards occupational goals and a greater degree of health and independence.

The entry-level professional occupational science/occupational therapy program is a five year combined BS/MS program. Preceding their professional preparation, students receive a liberal arts education in their pre-professional studies. The professional program, structured to prepare students for personal and professional development, is flexible enough to meet the needs and interests of individual students while still ensuring that upon graduation they will be competent to enter the profession.

Professional-level classes begin in the fall of the third year of the program, following successful completion of all prerequisite courses, including Gross Human Anatomy, ANA 407. Two academic semesters and a summer at the undergraduate level provide learning experiences structured to integrate theory and practice. In the fall semester of the fourth year, students progress to the MS component of the program and complete more of the professional practice courses. In the spring semester of the fourth year, students register for six months of full-time supervised fieldwork experience. During the fifth year, students complete their master's project in addition to other required courses.

Students choose fieldwork sites by a lottery system and in consultation with the fieldwork director. Additional fieldwork experiences in such specialized areas of practice as developmental disabilities, substance abuse, and ergonomics are available as electives. The program maintains clinical affiliation agreements with more than 150 healthcare facilities throughout the United States for student placement. Students should expect to leave the Western New York area to fulfill this requirement. Upon completion of fieldwork, students return to the campus for the fifth year of the program. Students must complete all requirements of the professional component of the program, including fieldwork and the graduate research project, within a five-year time period.

The professional entry level BS/MS program in occupational therapy at the University at Buffalo is accredited through the 2016-2017 academic year by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). AOTA is located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, PO Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220. Telephone: 301-652-AOTA.

Graduates are eligible to apply to take the National Certification examination; students must apply directly and pay all required fees. Contact information: NBCOT, located at 12 South Summit Avenue, Suite 100, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-4150. Website: www.nbcot.org. Phone: 301-990-7979; Fax: 301-869-8492

### **About our Degrees**

# **Occupational Therapy**

### **Acceptance Criteria**

Students must complete the required prerequisite courses with a grade of C or better and have a minimum GPA of 2.8 in the prerequisite courses in order to apply to the professional component of the occupational therapy program. Students must submit evidence of completion of a minimum of seventy (70) hours of volunteer experience in a United States OT setting providing direct patient/client care under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist. This volunteer experience must be undertaken within two years prior to application in a maximum of two (2) settings. Verification/Evaluation forms are available online; only ratings of "Excellent" or "Good" will receive credit toward this requirement.

### **Acceptance Information**

The occupational therapy program has a freshman admission policy. Students who declare occupational therapy as their major on the UB application are provisionally accepted into the occupational therapy program. Courses in the first two years of the BS program meet the general education requirements and constitute the occupational science prerequisite courses. To be assured promotion to the professional component of the program, which begins in year three, students must complete the prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA of 3.2 and a grade of C or better in each prerequisite course. Students may not take any prerequisite course more than twice and are limited to repeating no more than two prerequisite courses. Promotion to the professional sequence is competitive for students whose prerequisite GPA is between 2.80 and 3.19. Acceptance to the professional sequence is limited to approximately forty students.

#### **Degree Requirements**

Please see Degrees and Policies.

### **About our Courses**

For course descriptions, please see Courses.

### **About our Faculty**

Each faculty member is committed to teaching, research, and community service as part of his/her responsibilities to fulfill the mission of the department, school, and university.

See a list of our Undergraduate Faculty.

# **Acceptance Information**

The occupational therapy program has a freshman admission policy. Students who declare occupational therapy as their major on the UB application are provisionally accepted into the occupational therapy program. Courses in the first two years of the BS program meet the general education requirements and occupational science prerequisite courses. To be assured promotion to the professional component of the program, which begins in year three, students must complete the prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA of 3.2 and a grade of C or better in each prerequisite course. Promotion to the professional sequence is competitive for students whose prerequisite GPA is between 2.80 and 3.19. Students may not take any prerequisite course more than twice and are limited to repeating no more than two prerequisite courses. Acceptance to the professional sequence is limited to approximately forty students.

By January 15 of the second year (sophomore) of the program, students accepted into the Occupational Therapy program under the Freshman Admission or Transfer Student Admission Policy (see below), must complete a Promotion to Professional Sequence form and submit evidence of a minimum of seventy hours of volunteer/work experience in a United States occupational therapy setting providing direct patient/client care under the supervision of an occupational therapist. This experience must be undertaken within two years prior to application in a maximum of two (2) settings. Verification/Evaluation forms are available online; only ratings of "Excellent" or "Good" will receive credit toward this requirement.

Promotion to the professional sequence is competitive for students other than those admitted as freshman or transfer students. Students not accepted through the freshman or transfer admission policies must (1) have a minimum grade of C in all prerequisite courses; (2) complete, by January 15 of the year they wish to enter the professional program, a minimum of seventy hours of volunteer or work experience in a United States occupational therapy direct patient care environment, under the supervision of an occupational therapist; this experience must be undertaken within two years prior to application in a maximum of two (2) settings; and (3) submit an application, the Promotion to Professional Sequence form, by January 15 of the year they wish to enter the program.

### **Transfer Policy**

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Students can enter the occupational therapy program as transfer students from other institutions. Students who declare occupational therapy as their major on the UB application are provisionally accepted into the Occupational Therapy program. To be assured promotion to the professional component of the program, students must complete the prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA of 3.2 and a grade of C or better in each prerequisite course. Promotion to the professional sequence is competitive for those students whose prerequisite GPA is between 2.80 and 3.19. Acceptance to the professional sequence is limited to approximately forty students.

Courses completed at other colleges or universities are not automatically accepted by the program as fulfilling the prerequisite requirements. Determination is made by an evaluation of the student's transcripts, descriptions of courses that he/she has taken, and credit hours completed. It is recommended that prospective transfer students contact the department to determine the suitability of prior coursework.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
- Assembly of Student Delegates (ASD)
- New York State Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (NYSOTA)
- Pi Theta Epsilon (OT Honor Society) [OT honor society]
- National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)

See the UB Student Association.

### **Practical Experience and Special Academic Opportunities**

### **Undergraduate Research and Practical Experience**

#### Independent Study

Students can elect to study specific topics of interest under the mentorship of OT faculty.

#### Internships

Six months of fieldwork in New York or another state is required of all majors, including three months of fieldwork in a selected service area (i.e. mental health, homecare, pediatrics, or geriatrics), and three months in physical disabilities.

### Study Abroad

Occupational therapy students have the opportunity to travel to Brazil to visit occupational therapy educational programs, rehabilitation programs, clinics, and hospitals. Students also have the opportunity to host and interact with Brazilian students, both professionally and socially, who are visiting the University at Buffalo.

### Research Opportunities

There are several opportunities for research experiences for occupational therapy students. Faculty are involved in research in a variety of areas including: school to work transition for students with disabilities, impact of assistive technology and environmental adaptations on elders and persons with disabilities, and effects of activity and exercise on functional abilities on persons with multiple sclerosis and other disabilities.

# Honors, Awards, and Scholarships

A number of scholarships and financial aid opportunities are available each year to OT students. The following are some of the scholarships routinely available:

# The American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF)

A limited number of scholarships are available for undergraduate and graduate OT students. An applicant for a foundation scholarship must: (1) be a member of the American Occupational Therapy Association, (2) be enrolled as a full-time student in occupational therapy, (3) demonstrate a need for financial assistance, and (4) have a record of outstanding scholastic achievement.

### New York State Occupational Therapy Association (NYSOTA) Scholarships

Awards are granted annually from the Wollman Scholarship Fund. To qualify, students must (1) be currently enrolled full-time or accepted into a professional occupational therapy program in New York State leading to a graduate degree, (2) be a resident of New York State, and (3) be a NYSOTA member. Awards are granted on the basis of community and professional involvement, academic excellence, personal maturity, professional promise, and financial need, not necessarily in that order of importance.

### Stonegraber Scholarship Fund

This fund was established in memory of Eleanor and David Stonegraber. Mrs. Stonegraber was an OTR in the Buffalo and Rochester areas and director of occupational therapy at Rochester Psychiatric Center at the time of her retirement in 1959. The fund provides financial aid for students in occupational therapy and physical therapy at the University at Buffalo. The amount varies from year to year, ranging from \$300 to \$1,500. To qualify, a student must (1) demonstrate financial need, (2) show academic promise, and (3) have a firm commitment to the profession.

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Linda Walters Memorial Scholarship

This award was established to remember the efforts of Linda Walters, an OT student whose ill health prevented her from completing the professional program at UB. Beginning 1993, this scholarship has been issued to a senior OT student who is a COTA. To apply for this award, students must demonstrate professional promise and financial need.

Niagara Frontier District, NYSOTA (NFD/NYSOTA)

The district OT association provides scholarship assistance to students at the University at Buffalo. Other district associations of the NYSOTA also offer scholarships to students whose permanent residence is located within one of these other districts.

### **Career Information and Further Study**

As described on the American Occupational Therapy Association website (www.aota.org), occupational therapy helps people live life to its fullest. It does this by helping people of all ages who have suffered an illness, injury or some form of debilitation relearn the skills of daily living. By focusing on the physical, psychological and social needs of its patients, OT helps people function at the highest possible level, concentrating on what's important to them to rebuild their health, independence and self-esteem. Occupational therapists are specially trained and credentialed in the field and rely on evidence-based best practices and science-driven data to constantly improve patient outcomes. In an era where consumers want to increasingly be empowered and maximize life's potential, more and more people are recognizing the value of occupational therapy and as a result the field is expected to grow significantly over the coming years.

Employment of occupational therapists is expected to increase much faster than average for all occupations through 2016.

### Work settings include:

Occupational therapists work in all types of private, nonprofit and public settings including schools, job training services, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, and community health agencies.

### **Degree Level Required**

Occupational therapy programs are only accredited at the post-baccalaureate degree level.

### **Salary Information**

Salaries vary depending on the work setting and on the region of the country.

Median annual earnings of occupational therapists were \$66,780 in May, 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$55,090 and \$81,290. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest number of occupational therapists in May, 2008, were as follows:

Home health care services \$74.510

Offices of other health care practitioners \$69,360

Nursing care facilities \$72,790

General medical and surgical hospitals \$68,100

Elementary and secondary schools \$60.020

### **Additional Resources**

American Occupational Therapy Association

# **Degree Options**

Students are awarded the combined BS/MS degree in occupational science/occupational therapy upon completion of all program and university requirements. Students who do not progress to the MS component of the program will be awarded a BS in occupational science after the successful completion of the 129 credits in the BS portion of the program. Only students who are awarded the combined BS/MS are eligible to take the national certification examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Contact information: NBCOT, located at 12 South Summit Avenue, Suite 100, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-4150. Phone: 301-990-7979; Fax: 301-869-8492 The program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy

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Association (AOTA), 4720 Montgomery Lane, P.O. Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220, (301) 652-AOTA. NOTE: A felony conviction may affect a graduate's eligibility to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.

# **Degrees Offered**

Combined: BS/MS in Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy

Graduate: MS in Occupational Therapy, Graduate Certificate in Assistive/Rehabilitation Technology

# **Links to Further Information About this Program**

- Undergraduate Catalog
- Undergraduate Admissions
- Graduate Admissions
- Department of Rehabilitation Science
- School of Public Health and Health Professions

## Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy - B.S./M.S.

#### **Acceptance Criteria**

In order to be considered for acceptance into the professional sequence of the program, students must:

- 1. Complete all prerequisite courses with a grade of C or better; students may not take any prerequisite course more than twice and are limited to repeating no more than two prerequisite courses. Repeating high-demand courses, e.g. ANA 407, may require approval of the program director;
- 2. Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.8 in all prerequisite courses;
- 3. Complete 70 hours of volunteer work in a United States occupational therapy setting providing direct patient/client care under the supervision of an occupational therapist; the volunteer form is to be submitted with the Promotion to Professional Sequence form.
- 4. Complete a Promotion to Professional Sequence form, which includes a personal statement, by the January 15th prior to the third year of the program.

The occupational therapy program has a freshman and transfer admission policy in effect. Students indicating on the University at Buffalo application that occupational therapy is their intended major are provisionally accepted into the program. To be assured promotion to the professional component of the program, students must complete the prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA of 3.2 and a grade of C or better in each prerequisite course. Promotion to the professional sequence is competitive for those students whose prerequisite GPA is between 2.80 and 3.19. Acceptance to the professional sequence is limited to approximately forty students.

### **Advising Notes**

For academic advisement during the pre-professional phase of the program (years 1 and 2), entering freshmen should contact Cassandra Walker-Whiteside or Jillian Reading in the Office for Academic and Student Affairs (OASA) at 716-829-6769 or by email at <a href="mailto:sphhp-OASA@buffalo.edu">sphhp-OASA@buffalo.edu</a>. Transfer students should contact MaryAnn Venezia in the Rehabilitation Science Department at 716-829-6742 or by email at <a href="mailto:venezia3@buffalo.edu">venezia3@buffalo.edu</a>. Upon promotion to the professional sequence of the program, each student is assigned a faculty advisor from the Occupational Therapy program.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

Please note that some prerequisite courses, notably Anatomy, ANA 113, and Physics, PHY 101, are in high demand by the general student population at UB. Students must give careful consideration to dropping a high-demand course. It may not be possible to schedule the course in a subsequent semester. This may delay eligibility for completion of the Promotion to Professional Sequence form for an entire academic year, thus extending the length of the program. Students may not take any prerequisite course more than twice and are limited to repeating no more than two prerequisite courses. Repeating high-demand courses, e.g. ANA 407, may require approval of the Program Director.

ANA 113/OT 113 Human Anatomy

OT 230 Fundamentals of Therapeutic Interaction (offered spring semester only)

OT 301 Orientation to Occupational Therapy (offered fall semester only)

OT 217 Medical Terminology

PGY 300 Human Physiology

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy

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PHY 101 College Physics I
PSY 101 Introductory Psychology
PSY 322 Abnormal Psychology
PSY 336 Developmental Psychology
SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology
STA 119 Statistical Methods
UGC 211 American Pluralism or SOC 211 Sociology of Diversity
*ANA 407 Gross Human Anatomy
*To be eligible for ANA 407, students must have completed the Promotion to Professional Sequence form and have a minimum GPA of 2.8
in all other prerequisite courses, with no grade lower than a C.
Required Courses
Eligibility is limited to those students who have been accepted into the professional sequence of the Occupation Therapy program.
OT 314 Pediatric Dysfunction and Occupation
OT 322 Rehabilitation Medicine
OT 333 Human Occupation Across the Lifespan
OT 341 Critical Analysis of Scientific Literature
OT 342 Neuroscience I
OT 343 Neuroscience II
OT 344 Neuroanatomy I
OT 345 Neuroanatomy II
OT 346 Introduction to Scientific Writing
OT 352 Assistive Technology
OT 361 Functional Anatomy
OT 381 Occupational Therapy Theory
OT 382 Issues in Occupational Therapy Service Delivery
OT 402 Group Process Skills
OT 450 Prosthetics and Orthotics
OT 503 Psychosocial Practice w/lab and Level I Fieldwork
OT 504 Advanced Clinical Management for OT
OT 505 Applied Geriatrics
OT 506 Research Skills
OT 507 Art and Science of Sensory Integration
OT 508 Physical Disabilities Practice
OT 509 Community-Based Practice
OT 510 Applied Neurophysiology
OT 511 Application of Therapeutic Techniques
OT 544 Applied Treatment in Pediatrics w/lab and Level I Fieldwork
OTD 551 Occupational Behavior Theory
OT 560 Level II Fieldwork
OT 561 Level II Fieldwork
OT 563 Project Guidance I
OT 564 Project Guidance II
Two electives
Summary
Total required credit hours for the undergraduate portion (occupational science): 99
Total required credit hours for the BS/MS (occupational science/occupational therapy): 163
See Baccalaureate Degree Requirements for general education and remaining university requirements.
Recommended Sequence of Program Requirements
FIRST YEAR
Fall PSY 101
Spring ANA 113, OT 230, PSY 322
SECOND YEAR
Fall OT 217, PHY 101, PSY 336, SOC 101, UGC 211; OT 301 (direct transfer students only must take in junior year)
Spring PGY 300, PHI 101, STA 119
SUMMER BEFORE THIRD YEAR
Summer ANA 407
THIRD YEAR
Fall OT 314, OT 333, OT 341, OT 342, OT 344, OT 381; OT 301 (direct transfer students only)
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Spring OT 322, OT 343, OT 345, OT 346, OT 352, OT 361, OT 382

SUMMER BEFORE FOURTH YEAR Summer OT 402, OT 503

FOURTH YEAR

Fall OT 450, OT 508, OT 510, OT 511, OT 544

Spring OT 560, OT 561

FIFTH YEAR

Fall OT 504, OT 509, OT 563, OTD 551

Spring OT 506, OT 564, Advanced Clinical Seminar, Elective

### **Electives and Course Groupings**

OT 530 Computer Access 1

OT 533 Wheeled Mobility and Seating

OT 534 Ergonomics and Job Accommodation

OTD 517 Principles of OT with the Physically Disabled

OTD 532 Societal Impact on Persons with Disabilities

OTE 514 Advanced Evaluation/Treatment Principles I - Infants and Toddlers OTE 515 Advanced Evaluation/Treatment Principles II - Preschool Children

OTE 516 Advanced Evaluation/Treatment Principles III - School Age Children

Not all courses listed are offered annually

### **OT 230: Therapeutic Interaction**

Credits: 3

Semester(s): Spring

Type: LEC

Examines therapeutic approaches used by occupational therapists in working with patients and their families. Also explores interactions among work, play/leisure, and self-care.

# OT 301: Orientation to Occupational Therapy

Credits: 3 Semester(s): Fall Type: LEC

Provides an overview of philosophy, theory, and occupational therapy practice.

### **OT 314: Pediatric Dysfunction and Occupation**

Credits: 2

Semester(s): Spring

Type: LEC

Presents the etiology, course, prognosis, and medical management of diseases and disabilities of concern to occupational therapists working with children.

### **OT 317: Medical Terminology**

Credits: 1 Semester(s): Fall Type: LEC Introduces language used by health-care professionals whose medical decisions affect and determine the course of the rehabilitation and therapeutic process.

# OT 322: Rehabilitation Medicine II

Credits: 4

Semester(s): Spring
Pre-requisites: OT 301

Type: LEC

Examines various orthopedic conditions, their clinical management, and their impact on occupational performance.

### OT 333: Occup Across Lifespan

Credits: 2 Type: LAB

OT 341: Critical Analysis of Scientific Literature

Credits: 2

Pre-requisites: STA 119

Type: LEC/DIS

Enables students to access, interpret and analyze research articles and oral presentations, and apply the findings to clinical practice, rehabilitation and/or exercise training.

### OT 342: Neuroscience I

Credits: 3
Semester(s): Fall
Type: LEC

Explores the fundamental neurophysiology and clinical

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neuroanatomy of sensory systems.

#### OT 343: Neuroscience II

Credits: 3

Semester(s): Spring
Pre-requisites: OT 301

Type: LEC

A continuation of <u>OT 342</u>, focusing on clinical neuroanatomy of motor systems and integration of sensory, motor, and cognitive functions.

### OT 344: Neuroanatomy I

Credits: 1 Semester(s): Fall Type: LEC

Exposes students to anatomical structures associated with neurophysiological concepts discussed in <u>OT 342</u> and <u>OT 343</u>.

### OT 345: Neuroanatomy II

Credits: 1

Semester(s): Spring Pre-requisites: OT 301

Type: LEC

Exposes students to the anatomical structures associated with neurophysiological concepts discussed in <u>OT 342</u> and <u>OT 343</u>.

# OT 346: Introduction to Scientific Writing for Health and Rehabilitation Professionals

Credits: 1 Type: LEC

Introduces BS/MS OT students to the process of writing a literature review. Completion of this course will enable students to use a written format to communicate their analyses of research articles and begin to develop research questions. Course is designed for OT students, but is open to any student taking or who has taken ES/OT 341.

# OT 352: OT Practice Skills II

Credits: 3

Semester(s): Spring Pre-requisites: OT 301

Type: LEC

Focuses on assistive technology and environmental adaptations to meet individual occupational performance needs.

# **OT 361: Functional Anatomy**

Credits: 3

Semester(s): Spring
Pre-requisites: OT 301
Type: LEC/LAB

Examines kinesiology, biomechanics, and ergonomics for

occupational therapy students.

### **OT 381: Theory of Occupational Therapy**

Credits: 2 Semester(s): Fall Type: LEC

Presents the philosophy and theory of occupational therapy. Also examines the theory of occupational behavior, which provides a broad perspective for practice. The lab provides experience with occupational assessment.

### OT 382: Issues in Occupational Therapy Service Delivery

Credits: 3

Semester(s): Spring
Pre-requisites: OT 301

Type: LEC

Gives an overview of current issues impacting the roles, functions, and provision of OT service in diverse areas of occupational therapy practice, from clinical and management perspectives.

### **OT 402: Group Process Skills**

Credits: 4

Semester(s): Summer

Type: LEC

Reviews the medical management of psychiatric disorders and occupational therapy intervention strategies in treating the mentally ill, and introduces group process theory.

### **OT 450: Prosthetics and Orthotics**

Credits: 1 Semester(s): Fall Type: LAB

Examines the knowledge and skills required for manufacturing splints and orthotic devices, and for fitting and operating orthoses and prostheses.