



University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Applied Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy
1919 West Taylor Street, M/C 811 Chicago, Illinois 60612-7250

Visit: ahs.uic.edu/OT
Contact: OTdept@uic.edu or (312) 996-7538 (Admissions)

Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD)

Post Professional Doctorate

Information Packet

Why Complete a Professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy?

As the field of occupational therapy continues to grow, many occupational therapists find themselves needing advanced therapeutic skills, knowledge and expertise to manage people and programs, and greater ability to convey their knowledge effectively to others using educational methods. Entry-level degrees in occupational therapy focus on developing generalist practitioners. By comparison, the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) focuses on developing **advanced practitioners with specialized expertise**, advanced knowledge and skills, and the ability to take on leadership and educational roles in the field. The OTD also focuses on evidence-based practice and research that can be applied to improving your practice and developing new areas of innovative practice.

For the currently practicing occupational therapist, an OTD offers opportunities for career development and advancement. For a currently enrolled master's student, an OTD offers the opportunity to enter the field with advanced knowledge and skills.

Differences between a Professional Doctorate (OTD) and a Research Doctorate (PhD)

An OTD focuses on developing advanced professional skills (which we call a practice scholar), while a PhD focuses on developing skills to conduct research and become an independent investigator (which we call a scholar of practice). Although the OTD program will provide applied research knowledge and skills, it will focus on using existing evidence to inform professional and community-based practice. The research training of PhD students is much more extensive, with the expectation that they will actively engage in developing new knowledge through independent inquiry. Your career goals should determine which of these advanced degrees you pursue.

The Department of Occupational Therapy at UIC and its Scholarship of Practice

The Department of Occupational Therapy at UIC was founded over 70 years ago and is one of the oldest and most respected departments both nationally and internationally. Today, the department is recognized as one of the most influential in the field. Faculty members are national and international leaders. Some of the most widely used books in occupational therapy were written by our faculty members. The department operates one of the most productive and well-funded research programs in occupational therapy.

The organization of the department supports and sustains our educational model, which we call the *Scholarship of Practice*. Our educational, and theoretical and research efforts all have as their goal to better understand and enhance occupational therapy practice. This model also means our vision for graduate education is one that prepares occupational therapists to better comprehend and make contributions to the development of the field as clinicians, educators or researchers. OTD students pursuing a degree at UIC obtain the knowledge and skills to be a practice scholar – that is, to engage in a high-level of clinical reasoning; to understand and participate in scientific investigations of practice; to articulate, use and critique the theories underlying practice; and to advance practice. Faculty scholarship covers a wide range of topics. The integration of education, scholarship, and clinical practice with a disability studies perspective is the hallmark of the educational programs offered at the UIC Department of Occupational Therapy and offers unique learning opportunities for individuals who wish to pursue an OTD.

For current faculty research and publications go to the UIC OT website at ahs.uic.edu/OT and choose the Faculty and Research link for a summary. You may also choose the links to individual faculty members for their curriculum vitae.

Educational Programs in the Department

The OTD is one of three doctoral programs offered through the Department of Occupational Therapy. In addition to the OTD, the Department is a major participant and contributor to the Ph.D. in Disability Studies Program and the Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences. Across all doctoral programs, students come from all over the world, giving us a rich and diverse student body. The Department of Occupational Therapy also offers the Master of Science degree in occupational therapy (hereafter referred to as the Master of Science or MS program).

Course of Studies

OTD Applicants fall into one of three categories:

1. Occupational therapists with a bachelor's or master's degree who are already practicing and want to obtain an advanced degree
2. Students who are currently enrolled in the UIC MS program and wish to continue on to OTD after completing the master's degree in occupational therapy
3. Students who want to co-enroll in the MS and OTD programs

OTD Students will immerse in the following areas of advanced competency:

1. Advanced practice in a specific area/setting/age cohort/type of practice setting;
2. Education and teaching skills, and learning theory knowledge and evidence; and

3. Leadership in areas such as management/administration, program development, policy, professional leadership, and evidence-based practice.

The course of study for the OTD will be composed of five major components:

1. Required Courses
 - Core coursework in theory and research (if not completed prior to OTD enrollment)
 - OTD Proseminar and Seminar in Occupational Therapy
2. Elective Courses
 - OTD coursework in areas of advanced practice, teaching/education, leadership, and applied research or theory (in the OT department or other relevant programs at UIC)
3. Advanced practica
 - Clinical Specialization
 - Education
 - Leadership/Management
 - Scholarship of Practice
4. Field Examination
5. OTD Final Project

The program stresses a **strong mentorship model** in which students work closely with a faculty mentor to complete a program tailored to the student's career goals. Students may matriculate full-time or part-time.

OTD Degree Requirements

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
OT 500	Theories of Occupational Therapy	4
OT 510	Research in Occupational Therapy	4
OT 530, 531,532, 533	Advanced Field Practicum in Clinical Specialization, Management/Leadership, Education, or Scholarship	*4-12 (4 minimum, 12 Max)
OT 590	Doctoral Proseminar in Occupational Therapy (taken twice for 1 credit per semester)	2
OT 595	Seminar in Occupational Therapy	1
OT 592	Doctoral Project Research	12
Total required core course credits		*27-35
Total required elective credits	Courses may be taken within or outside of the OT department*	7-47
Field Exam	Independent studies may be taken in preparation for the field exam*	3
Total Program Credits		68

**Number of credits vary depending on how many credits are transferred in from previous degree program.*

The core courses listed above include a theoretical survey of knowledge in the field, a research methods course, and several advanced field practica designed to meet the career objectives of the student in their designated areas of

advanced knowledge and skills. Core courses also include a seminar and pro-seminar course; in the latter students are required to make a minimum of one presentation.

Elective courses are determined by the student with his/her advisor based on the student's identified goals and must be approved by the OTD curriculum committee.

Field exams are designed to assess each student's mastery of content related to his/her primary and secondary area of focus. The content covered by the field exam will reflect the student's approved study plan/defined areas of concentration. The exam is conducted by a three-person committee, one of whom is the student's major advisor/mentor. The other two committee members will be determined by the advisor based on the student's program of study. At least one of these two committee members must be a faculty member in the Department of Occupational Therapy. The content of the questions and administration format for the field exam will be at the discretion of the committee.

The project involves implementation of a major undertaking of applied scholarship. Components of the project involve planning, implementation, evaluation and dissemination. Students complete the project under the supervision of a three-person committee. Students will develop a project proposal, submit it to the committee in writing, and defend it orally prior to initiating the project work. Upon approval by the committee, the project will be implemented under the supervision of the major advisor/mentor. The final written product will be submitted to the committee and orally defended.

Examples of final project opportunities are provided with the faculty biographies on the Department of Occupational Therapy website.

Program Length

The length of the OTD program depends on the following factors:

- If the student attends full-time* or part-time;
- If the student has already earned a bachelor's or master's degree;
- If the student transfers credits

**Assuming a student is enrolled full-time (12-16 credits per fall and spring semesters and 6-8 credits in the summer), an OT with a master's degree may complete the OTD in 1½ to 2 years. An OT with a bachelor's degree will need 2 to 3 years to complete the OTD.*

Students already enrolled in the UIC MS program who wish to continue on to the OTD after completing the master's degree may complete the OTD in 1-1½ years depending when the student applies to the OTD program.

Students who want to simultaneously apply to the MS and OTD can complete both degrees in 3 years (approximately 2 years to earn the MS and 1 year to finish the OTD).

The length of the program would be extended for part-time students and is subject to the amount of credits the student completes per semester.

The Advising Process

Each student will be matched with a faculty advisor when he/she enters the program. Applicants are strongly encouraged to learn about the work of faculty members and initiate discussions with individual faculty with whom they are interested in working with. *Incoming MS students who wish to co-enroll, and current first year students, do not need to select a faculty advisor until their 2nd year in the MS program. The Program Director of the OTD Program will serve as their advisor during the first year in the MS/OTD program until one has been determined.*

Every effort will be made to match the student's background and interests to an appropriate primary advisor. The advisor guides students through the academic program and is available to provide students with advice on a wide range of topics.

The OTD advisor is responsible for supporting the student's professional development; guiding the student's educational program; involving the student in activities that are consistent with the student's program and career goals; and helping the student to network in the field, etc. The advisor will guide the student in developing his/her project, selecting appropriate courses to prepare for the project, and preparing for the field exam. The OTD project provides the student with the opportunity to apprentice with his/her advisor, a faculty member who is an advanced scholar and clinician in the field. Therefore, through the project the student participates in a larger program of scholarly activity or clinical practice, which the advisor directs. This model of closely mentoring students through their final project provides students with the opportunity to see and experience how a program of scholarship is developed and advances over time and how different components of a program fit together. The model also provides the student with the opportunity to work with a larger team of students and staff who are all contributing to advancing occupational therapy practice.

Admission Requirements

- **Proof of certification or eligibility for certification** in occupational therapy in the United States, or have an occupational therapy degree from a WFOT approved program outside of the United States. *Note: This criterion will be waived for students who are applying to co-enroll in the MS and OTD programs, but co-enrolled students must successfully complete Fieldwork II and all MS course work in order to continue on in the OTD program.*
- A GPA (Grade Point Average) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (B average) for the last 60 semester hours earned for the baccalaureate degree and graduate coursework. Applicants with a GPA below 3.0, but with strengths in other areas *may* be considered.
- **The general Graduate Record Examination (GRE)**, including the analytical writing subtest, is required for admission. The GRE evaluates verbal and quantitative reasoning as well as analytical writing skills. If you have taken the GRE within five years you must request these scores to be sent from Education Testing Service (ETS) to UIC (ETS retains records for only five years). The minimum recommended score on the **GRE Exam** is 150 each for the verbal and quantitative sections, which is around the 40th-45th percentile. Scores below 150 are acceptable if the applicant's GPA is sufficiently high to demonstrate adequate academic potential. There is no minimum score for the writing assessment, although most accepted applicants earn at least a 4 out of 6. For testing dates and locations call: (800) GRE-CALL or visit www.gre.org. *Note: the GRE can be repeated, but one month must elapse between each attempt. For testing dates and locations call: (800) GRE-CALL or visit www.gre.org.*

Application Materials

A complete application to the OTD program must include the following materials:

- Completion of the UIC Professional Application and submission of the application fee (\$70)
- Completion of the OTD Application Form
- A curriculum vitae
- Transcripts
- Three letters of recommendation from professors, teaching assistants, employers or volunteer supervisors
- Completion of the Personal Statement
- Foreign applicants whose native language is not English must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and submit an education credential report in addition to an ATA translation for coursework completed outside of the United States

Detailed application instructions can be found at the following link:

<http://ahs.uic.edu/occupational-therapy/admissions-and-programs/doctor-of-occupational-therapy/applying/>

Application Process and Admission Criteria

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact and discuss their interests with faculty members prior to the submission of the application materials and discuss possible matches in their personal statements. The application form for the OTD program includes an optional sign-off for faculty members who agree in advance to supervise an applicant if he or she is admitted to the program.

The Admissions Decision

Admission to the OTD program is selective and competitive. Completion of requirements does not guarantee admission. The admissions committee considers the following factors when evaluating students for admission:

- Previous academic performance (GPA) and academic potential (GRE);
- Personal statement, letters of recommendation, work experience, research and teaching experience, volunteer experience, community service, and other relevant life experience and/or expertise;
- Match between applicant's career goals and the intents of the OTD program;
- Match between applicant's interests and faculty scholarship; and
- Availability of a faculty advisor*
- *TOEFL or IELTS scores considered for international students only*

**Incoming MS students who wish to co-enroll, and current first year students, do not need to select a faculty advisor until their 2nd year in the MS program. The Program Director of the OTD Program will serve as their advisor during the first year in the MS/OTD program.*

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) works to ensure accessibility of UIC programs, courses and services to students with disabilities. For assistance, please contact the DRC at (312) 413-2183. Note: Applicants with disabilities can request a modification in the application process. The request must be submitted in writing to the OTD Admissions Coordinator in the Department of Occupational Therapy.

Credit, Non-degree Admissions and Options

Non-degree status is designed for applicants who want to take courses at UIC before they apply to the OTD Program. You can apply as non degree student and take up to 12 credits that can be applied towards your OTD.

Non-degree graduate students interested in changing to degree status must apply to the OTD program. All application credentials must be on file by the deadline for the relevant semester before the change of degree status will be considered. **Note:** *admission to non-degree status does not obligate the OT department to later admit a student to a degree program.*

No more than 12 semester hours of credit earned as a non-degree student can be transferred into the degree program. Students must file a petition for the transfer of non-degree credit; only graduate-level courses in which a grade of A or B was earned will be considered. *See the OTD Application & Instructions for details about what must be submitted for credit non-degree status and for application deadlines.*

Non-degree applicants must submit the non-degree professional application form, application fee, and official transcripts. Application materials must be submitted by **November 1** for spring admission and **March 1st** for fall admission.

For more information about non-degree status, please contact the OTD Admissions advisor at otdept@uic.edu.

Financial Information for Graduate Study

Returning to graduate school can provide financial challenges for students and the Department of Occupational Therapy provides options that make it as accessible as possible. Please consult the UIC website at http://www.uic.edu/depts/oar/grad/tuition_grad.html for current tuition and fees.

Information about student loans can be obtained from the Office of Financial Aid. Applications for financial aid are accepted after January 1 for the fall semester. Priority consideration is given to those whose applications are received by March 1, and aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Student Financial Aid at (312) 996-3126 or visit the website at: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/financialaid/>. Please consult the graduate college catalog at <http://www.uic.edu/gcat/>

A limited number of graduate and research assistantships are available for qualified students. These assistantships provide a small stipend and a partial waiver of tuition and fees for the period of the assistantship, and require 10 hours per week of work. Assistantships are competitive and students will be notified when positions are available. Students apply directly to the faculty member who has an available assistantship position. Qualifications for assistantships vary depending on the specific needs of the position and the faculty member.

Transferring Credits

The general UIC policy on transfer credit may be found at the Graduate College website at: <https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/graduate-college-policies/transfer-of-credit-2/>. Doctoral applicants who have previously earned a *relevant* master's degree or its equivalent from an accredited school may be granted 32 semester hours of credit toward the doctoral degree if approved by the program at the time of admission. The 32 hours are subtracted from the total hours required for completion of the doctorate (68-32 = 36).

Students who have taken additional graduate coursework beyond what was required to obtain their master's degree can petition to have up to 4 additional credits transferred to their OTD. The credits must be relevant to the student's program track and be approved by the student's advisor and the OTD Program Director.

UIC Campus Information

UIC is the largest institution of higher learning in the Chicago area, one of the top 70 Research I universities in the United States, and an increasingly significant center for international education and research. UIC's approximate 27,000 students (approximately 63 percent undergraduate and 37 percent graduate and professional degree students) can earn bachelor's degrees in 89 fields, master's degrees in 93 fields, and doctorates in 86 academic specializations. The faculty include renowned scholars and researchers.

The UIC campus is just west of Chicago's Loop in an area that includes two historic landmark neighborhoods and the West Side Medical Center District, the world's largest concentration of advanced public and private health care facilities. The UIC Medical Center includes 596 licensed inpatient beds and 52 outpatient diagnostic and specialty clinics. The \$60 million UIC Hospital contains the most advanced technology and health care systems available. The College of Applied Health Sciences department heads typically serve as clinical service chiefs at the UIC Hospital. The college also affiliates with other hospitals throughout the region and the state.

Commitment to Diversity

The Department of Occupational Therapy embraces diversity in many ways. We admit a diverse student body that reflects a variety of life experiences and personal characteristics. We host visiting scholars from around the world. Course work and practical experiences emphasize culturally sensitive and competent work practices. One of the strengths of UIC is valuing our urban environment and doing work to improve life for people with disabilities in the Chicago area and beyond. The faculty commits to this vision by engaging in research and practice that advances knowledge of the urban context and provides improved services for residents. This knowledge is applied in settings across the U.S. and abroad.

Urban Health Program

The University of Illinois at Chicago's Urban Health Program represents a major effort to increase minority student enrollment in schools and colleges on the campus and to improve health care services in Chicago's underserved communities. As one of its services, the College of Applied Health Sciences' Urban Health Program staff offers assistance in academic planning and career selection to prospective students. Support in the admissions process is also provided. Those seeking advisement should contact:

*Urban Health Program (MC 528)
College of Applied Health Sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago
1919 West Taylor Street, Room 560
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7305
(312) 355-3011*

Equal Opportunity

The commitment of the University of Illinois to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity requires that decisions involving students and employees be based on individual merit and be free from invidious discrimination in all its forms. It is the policy of the University of Illinois not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era and to comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action laws, orders and regulations. The nondiscrimination policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in university programs and activities. Complaints of invidious discrimination prohibited by university policy are to be resolved within existing university procedures. For additional information or assistance on the equal opportunity, affirmative action, and harassment policies and procedures of the University of Illinois at Chicago, please contact:

*Patricia A. Gill, Associate Chancellor
(Title IX, ADA, and 504 Coordinator)
Office for Access and Equity (MC 602)
717 Marshfield Building
809 South Marshfield Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612
(312) 996-8670*

OTD Courses

OT 500: Theories of Occupational Therapy. 4 credits.

Develops an understanding of the theoretical basis of occupational therapy and the impact of theory on clinical practice. Covers the history of knowledge and practice development in the field. Focuses on specific practice models developed as guides to clinical reasoning.

OT 510: Research in Occupational Therapy. 3 credits.

Serves as an introduction to basic elements of research design relevant to occupational therapy practice, and prepares students to become critical consumers of research in occupational therapy. This course will introduce students to both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. Students will develop the basic skills they need to contribute to the development and use of knowledge in occupational therapy.

OT 528: Race, Culture, and Health Disparities. 3 credits.

Focuses on developing students' critical thinking skills as they relate to race, health disparities and engaging in culturally responsive care.

OT 530: Advanced Field Experience: Clinical Specialization in Occupational Therapy. 4-12 credits.

Provides opportunity for the student interested in advanced occupational therapy practice to observe a master clinician and participate in treatment and/or clinical research.

OT 531: Advanced Field Experience: Occupational Therapy Management. 4-12 credits.

Practicum experience working with an experienced professional to develop projects or programs in student's interest area, e.g., administration, supervisory skills, consultation, program development/evaluation, or entrepreneurship.

OT 532: Advanced Field Experience: Occupational Therapy Education. 4-12 credits.

Provides opportunity to be mentored in preparing and presenting lectures/lab to occupational therapy students in technical or professional curricula or to develop skills as a clinical educator.

OT 533: Advanced Field Experience: Occupational Therapy Scholarship. 4-12 credits.

Practicum experience working with an experienced scholar to observe and participate in activities that generate evidence about practice, disseminate such evidence, and/or develop practice materials based on evidence.

OT 553: Program Evaluation: Documenting the Impact of Human Services. 3 credits.

Examines methods in program evaluation with emphasis on empowerment and participatory evaluation. Students will study quantitative and qualitative strategies, how to communicate information to stakeholders, and how to design evaluations.

OT 558: Writing for Professional Publication. 3 credits.

Addresses processes and issues related to writing for publication in occupational therapy and related journals and magazines, including preparation and submission processes, Institutional Review Board documents, receiving critiques, and communicating with reviewers and editors.

OT 561: Disability and Community Participation: Policy, Systems Change, and Action Research. 4 credits.

Focuses on the critical examination of disability policy, activism, and research, with emphasis on conducting

participatory action research in collaboration with constituents with disabilities, community organizations, and policy makers.

OT 563. Disability and Global Health. 3 credits.

Focuses on disability and health equity in a global context, and addresses disability-related health disparities and their determinants in the context of global poverty, development aid and humanitarian crises

OT 566. Knowledge Translation in Disability and Rehabilitation Research. 3 credits.

Using an equity focused model students will form knowledge translation collaboratives to both learn and apply knowledge translation principles for advocacy, education, and clinical practice.

OT 568: Learning, Teaching, Curriculum Design, Delivery and Evaluation. 2-4 credits.

Focuses on how diverse adults learn and how to design, deliver and evaluate effective teaching and learning in university, professional, continuing education, and community settings and online contexts. We will focus on how to teach and what's involved in designing effective learning opportunities (lectures, workshops, seminars, problem-based learning groups, online learning and cognitive apprenticeships) that incorporate current learning theory and evidence on how to promote critical thinking, problem solving and social learning in context. Also focuses on how to design and adapt teaching and learning activities and environments to accommodate students with disabilities and diverse learners. Designed for learners who want to gain knowledge, skills and experience in teaching and in designing and evaluating courses and curriculum

OT 571. Knowledge Translation in Disability and Rehabilitation Research. 3 Hours.

Using an equity focused model students will form knowledge translation collaboratives to both learn and apply knowledge translation principles for advocacy, education, and clinical practice.

OT 590: Doctoral Proseminar in Occupational Therapy. 2 credits (taken twice at 1 credit). Students participate in faculty-student presentations and discussion of ideas related to the student's chosen foci and leading up to the student project.

OT 592: Doctoral Project Research. 1-12 credits. Applied scholarship involving planning and implementation of one or more action projects based on theory and evidence, evaluation, writing a comprehensive report, dissemination, and oral presentation.

OT 594. Pediatric Processes of Care. 2 hours.

Focuses on students acquiring practical knowledge and skills in how to reinforce client-centeredness in their future pediatric practice, both with individual clients and within an organizational context. Students will learn about assessing client-centered care and outcomes, process modeling techniques to appraise client-centeredness within organizational workflows, and ways to develop a tangible career plan for longer-term contributions.

OT 594. Special Topics in Occupational Therapy. 1-4 Hours.

New course under development and selected seminar topics of current interests to faculty and students. Course Information: Prerequisite(s): Consent of the instructor.

OT 595: Seminar in Occupational Therapy. 1 credit. Students attend a series of colloquia, including seminars that are relevant to their doctoral project and area of study.

OT 596: Independent Study. 1-4 credits. This course is for graduate students who wish to pursue independent study not related to their project/thesis research.

Additional Electives

In addition to electives in the Department of Occupational Therapy, students can take courses in other departments such as education or special education, disability and human development, psychology, neuroscience, community health sciences, health policy, urban planning, and sociology.