

# DOCTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: ENTRY LEVEL - OTD

## Program Description

Recognized as scholars and leaders in occupational therapy education for over 80 years, St. Catherine University continues this tradition by offering entry-level education to the profession, adding the entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) degree to the entry-level degree options. The entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD EL) Program is a 100-credit entry-level clinical doctorate.

Occupational therapy practitioners are credentialed professionals who work with individuals and organizations, using occupation in all its forms to help them develop to their fullest potential. Occupations are skills for the job of living, including care of oneself and others, work/education, social participation, and play/leisure. Occupational therapy practitioners work with people of all ages and ability levels in a variety of health, educational, and community settings, providing individual, group, or population based services. For more information on the profession, visit the American Occupational Therapy Association website at [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org).

Graduates of the OTD EL program are prepared for dynamic careers as occupational therapists in a range of settings with individuals, groups, and populations of all ages.

## OTD-EL Program Mission

Consistent with the missions of the University, the Henrietta Schmolli School of Health, the Graduate College, and the Department of Occupational Therapy, the Doctor of Occupational Therapy [OTD] and Master of Arts in Occupational Therapy [MAOT] Programs prepare occupational therapists to lead and educate in community, clinical, and emerging practice areas with grounding in evidence-based research, critical thinking, ethics, and social justice.

## Curriculum

In the OTD EL curricula, the St. Catherine University Institutional Learning Outcomes provide the warp threads with a strong base in creative and critical thinking, intellectual inquiry, and social responsibility. The weft within the curriculum model includes the OTD EL curricular tracks. The entirety of the curriculum is underpinned by the tenets of the profession, health, participation, occupational performance, and well-being. The program provides doctoral-level education that prepares graduates to meet emerging challenges in the complex and rapidly changing healthcare environment. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) *Vision 2030* identifies core tenets of future practice (AOTA, 2025) considered necessary to meet future healthcare needs, including:

- **Inclusive and Equitable:** Occupational therapy provides a supportive and collaborative environment for people to grow as occupational beings.
- **Valued Excellence:** Occupational therapy is important across various settings, with a unique value in improving the quality of life and function in those served.
- **Evidence-Based and Client Centered:** Occupational therapy is evidence-based and client-centered, focused on innovative approaches to enhance treatment outcomes.

- **Justice and Advocacy:** Occupational therapy promotes accessibility and advocates for the right of all to engage in meaningful occupations.

The core tenets, embedded within the OTD EL curriculum design and student learning outcomes (below), prepare graduates who are practice-ready in all entry-level contexts. *Note:* Program Student Learning Outcomes with an \* before them indicate expected learning outcomes that are beyond what is required for entry to practice as a generalist.

## Creative and Critical Thinking

Collaborate on intra- and inter-professional teams.

Demonstrate competency in information search, critical analysis, synthesis and application of evidence to occupational therapy practice.

Apply clinical reasoning in evaluation, interventions, and discontinuation of occupational therapy services in a variety of practice settings.

Demonstrate professional written, oral, virtual, and non-verbal communication.

Demonstrate therapeutic use of self with individuals and groups.

\*Use effective communication to achieve personal, client, and team goals in practice, policy, education, and scholarship.

\*Identify, synthesize, disseminate, and implement evidence to influence system change.

## Intellectual Inquiry

Use person-centered approaches to meet occupational performance and participation needs of all persons, groups, and populations.

Identify international contributions to occupational therapy scholarship and practice.

Describe human occupation across the lifespan, for persons, groups, and populations.

Develop and implement intervention plans to address the occupational performance and/or participation needs of persons, groups, and populations.

Apply, evaluate, and critique underlying models, theories, frames of reference, and core concepts for occupational therapy practice.

Create a plan of life-long learning and professional development.

\*Document and organize professional development and scholarship activities.

\*Adapt communication to the health literacy level of the audience.

\*Demonstrate advanced knowledge in a focused area of study in occupational therapy or related area.

## Social Responsibility

Develop leadership competencies through participation in professional associations, conferences, and curricular and co-curricular activities.

Demonstrate personal and professional conduct consistent with the AOTA Code of Ethics, St. Catherine University Policies, and other related documents.

Demonstrate ethical decision making and behaviors in classroom and experiential learning.

Evaluate personal, environmental, and contextual factors that support or limit occupational performance and participation.

Evaluate the outcomes of occupational therapy services at the person, group, and population level.

Analyze the influence of healthcare, education, and social service systems and policies and their influence on occupational therapy practice.

\*Apply understanding of social determinants of health and social justice to address health and social inequities.

\*Advocate for policies, programs, and services across healthcare, education, and social service systems.

## Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the Department of Occupational Therapy and the Graduate OT Programs (MAOT and OTD) regarding human beings and how they learn is consistent with the philosophical base of the occupational therapy profession; that human beings learn through engagement in meaningful occupations. The department's and program's philosophy is published in the OTD EL Program Student Handbook.

## Accreditation

St. Catherine University is an accredited institution through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The Department of Occupational Therapy received full accreditation of the OTD EL program in December 2020 by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 510E, North Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number is (301) 652-6611 and its web address is [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org) (<http://www.acoteonline.org>).

## Certification

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) conducts a national certification program. To be certified as a registered occupational therapist (OTR), a person must be a graduate of an accredited program and must pass a national certification examination, which is administered by NBCOT. Completion of all academic, fieldwork, and capstone requirements is necessary for eligibility for the examination. When graduates apply to take the certification examination with NBCOT, they will be asked to answer questions related to the topic of felony convictions. A student who is concerned about whether something in their background could affect eligibility to sit for the national certification examination can request an Early Determination Review directly from NBCOT. For more information, visit the NBCOT website at <https://www.nbcot.org/en/Students/Services#ED> (<https://www.nbcot.org/en/Students/Services/#ED>).

To continue to use OTR, occupational therapists must renew their registration every three years following the procedures established by NBCOT. Continued NBCOT certification is required for licensure in some, but not all, states. If one chooses not to renew one's NBCOT certification, then one simply uses the credential OT after one's name.

For more information, you may contact NBCOT at

800 South Frederick Avenue, Suite 200  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-4150  
(301) 990-7979  
<http://www.nbcot.org> (<http://www.nbcot.org/>)

## Degree Requirements

### Academic Course Work

Students must complete 100 graduate credits in occupational therapy courses, fieldwork credits, and capstone credits. Students will typically take 13-16 credits in fall and spring terms and 6-12 credits in summer terms. Students must be prepared to do additional work outside of class time.

### Fieldwork

Fieldwork provides opportunities for students to experience working with a range of ages, conditions, and in a wide variety of settings. Students complete two types of fieldwork. Level I Fieldwork is attached to two Seminar courses in the first two years of the program. Level II Fieldwork (10 credits) occurs following the majority of academic course work. It involves six months of full-time clinical experiences in the field. Students may elect to take an additional (4 or 6 credits) Level II Specialty Fieldwork experience in a specialty area of interest.

### Capstone

The doctoral capstone provides students with an in-depth exposure beyond the generalist level to clinical practice, research, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education or theory development in a chosen area of practice. The doctoral capstone consists of two primary components: 1) a 14-week full time Capstone experience, and 2) a Capstone project.

## Years to Complete the Program

St. Catherine University's OTD EL program courses are offered in traditional face-to-face, hybrid, and fully online formats. Students will take courses in all 3 formats within the program. The program takes approximately 3.25 years to complete, but must be completed within five years. All OTD EL students have up to five years from the initial term of enrollment to complete all program requirements for a graduate degree. Level II fieldwork must be started within one year of the date of the last course in the curriculum. The two required level II fieldwork experiences must be completed within 18 months of the start of the first level II fieldwork.

## Transfer Credits

Requests for transfer of credit are considered on an individual basis and only graduate courses will be eligible. Students must request a review of previous course work upon admission to the program if they wish to receive credit for previous work.

## Progression Policy

### Standards for Progression

In order to successfully complete the OTD EL Program, the student must fulfill the following:

1. Maintain a 3.0 grade point average in the OTD EL Program
2. Earn a grade of C or better in each graduate course
3. Successfully complete each Level I fieldwork assignment
4. Successfully complete Level II fieldwork requirements

- 5. Demonstrate satisfactory professional attitudes and behaviors as defined by the program
- 6. Successfully complete the Capstone requirements.

**Conditions for Academic Probation**

Students are placed on academic probation by the OTD EL program if:

- A grade of C has been earned in any OTD EL course
- The grade point average for an academic term falls below 3.0
- The overall GPA for the OTD EL Program is less than 3.0
- The student fails one Level II fieldwork experience

The OTD EL Program Director, in consultation with the faculty, will identify the written conditions of academic probation. Failure to meet the written conditions for academic probation by the end of the next semester/term may result in automatic dismissal from the program under ordinary circumstances.

**Removal from Academic Probation**

Students will be removed from academic probation if the conditions are met by the end of the following semester/term. Failure to meet the written conditions for academic probation or to bring the next semester grade point average or the graduate program overall GPA to 3.0 by the end of the next semester/term may result in automatic dismissal from the program.

**Academic Conditions for Program Dismissal**

Students are automatically dismissed from the program for academic reasons if:

- A grade of C- or below is earned in any OTD EL course
- More than one grade of C or lower is earned in any OTD EL course
- Conditions for removal from academic probation are not met
- Overall GPA in the OTD-EL Program is less than 3.0 by the end of the semester/term on probation
- Failure of one Level I fieldwork experience
- Failure of two Level II fieldwork placements
- Failure of the capstone experience or project
- Under extraordinary circumstances, you may petition in writing to repeat a course or fieldwork, but you may not take the next courses in sequence unless the petition has been approved and you agree with the conditions for continuance.

**Other Conditions for Probation or Program Dismissal**

Students may be placed on academic probation or dismissed from the program for the following violations:

- Violation of the Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association
- Violation of the Institution's policy on academic integrity
- Violation of the Institution's policy on student conduct

The policies and procedures for these violations are outlined in the OTD EL Student Handbook. Students may appeal an academic probation or dismissal from the OTD EL program by following the Student Complaint Process identified in the OTD EL Student Handbook.

Code	Title	Credits
OCTH 5010	Human Occupation	3
OCTH 5200	Mental and Behavioral Health	3
OCTH 5210	Mental and Behavioral Health: The OT Process	3
OCTH 5410	Children, Adolescents, and Families	3
OCTH 5450	Children, Adolescents, and Families: The OT Process	3
OCTH 5500	Neuroscience	3
OCTH 5560	Participation and Technology	3
OCTH 5600	Kinesiology for Rehabilitation	3
OCTH 6000	Foundational Skills for Occupational Therapy Practice	3
OCTH 6010	Seminar A: Entering the Profession	1
OCTH 6020	Seminar B and Level I Fieldwork - Psychological and Social Factors Impacting Performance	1
OCTH 6030	Seminar C and Level I Fieldwork Practice Reflection	1
OCTH 6040	Seminar D: Readiness for Level II Fieldwork	1
OCTH 6060	Physical Assessment and Intervention Planning	3
IPE 7000	Evidence Based Practice: Interprofessional Perspectives and Competencies	3
or OCTH 6310	Evidence Based Practice	
OCTH 6410	Foundations of Research	3
OCTH 6610	Rehabilitation Concepts	3
OCTH 6615	Rehabilitation Practices	3
OCTH 6620	Ethical Management	3
OCTH 6700	Older Adults in Context	3
OCTH 6710	Older Adults - The OT Process	3
OCTH 7100	Social Determinants of Health	1
OCTH 7200	Critical Issues	1
OCTH 7700	Level II Fieldwork	5
OCTH 7710	Level II Fieldwork	5
OCTH 7900	Doctoral Orientation Camp	1
OCTH 8005	Essential Knowledge and Competencies for Leadership	3
OCTH 8010	Evolution of Ideas in Occupational Therapy	3
OCTH 8020	Educational Methods	3
OCTH 8030	Program Evaluation	3
OCTH 8040	Organizations and Systems	3
OCTH 8050	Advanced Practice	3
OCTH 8060	Scoping Review Project	3
OCTH 8080	Doctoral Capstone Project Proposal	1
OCTH 8100	Doctoral Capstone Experience A	3
OCTH 8150	Doctoral Capstone Experience B	3
OCTH 8250	Doctoral Capstone Project	3
OCTH 8300	Doctoral Capstone Footprint	1
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>100</b>

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Summer Term</b>		
OCTH 5010	Human Occupation	3

OCTH 5500	Neuroscience	3	OCTH 8300	Doctoral Capstone Footprint	1
OCTH 7900	Doctoral Orientation Camp	1	<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>Fall Term</b>					
OCTH 5410	Children, Adolescents, and Families	3			
OCTH 6000	Foundational Skills for Occupational Therapy Practice	3			
OCTH 6010	Seminar A: Entering the Profession	1			
OCTH 6410	Foundations of Research	3			
OCTH 6700	Older Adults in Context	3			
<b>Spring Term</b>					
IPE 7000	Evidence Based Practice: Interprofessional Perspectives and Competencies	3			
OCTH 5200	Mental and Behavioral Health	3			
OCTH 5600	Kinesiology for Rehabilitation	3			
OCTH 6020	Seminar B and Level I Fieldwork - Psychological and Social Factors Impacting Performance	1			
OCTH 6610	Rehabilitation Concepts	3			
<b>Summer Term</b>					
OCTH 6030	Seminar C and Level I Fieldwork Practice Reflection	1			
OCTH 7100	Social Determinants of Health	1			
OCTH 7200	Critical Issues	1			
OCTH 8010	Evolution of Ideas in Occupational Therapy	3			
OCTH 8020	Educational Methods	3			
<b>Fall Term</b>					
OCTH 5210	Mental and Behavioral Health: The OT Process	3			
OCTH 5450	Children, Adolescents, and Families: The OT Process	3			
OCTH 6060	Physical Assessment and Intervention Planning	3			
OCTH 6620	Ethical Management	3			
OCTH 8005	Essential Knowledge and Competencies for Leadership	3			
<b>Spring Term</b>					
OCTH 5560	Participation and Technology	3			
OCTH 6040	Seminar D: Readiness for Level II Fieldwork	1			
OCTH 6615	Rehabilitation Practices	3			
OCTH 6710	Older Adults - The OT Process	3			
OCTH 8030	Program Evaluation	3			
OCTH 8040	Organizations and Systems	3			
<b>Summer Term</b>					
OCTH 8050	Advanced Practice	3			
OCTH 8060	Scoping Review Project	3			
<b>Fall Term</b>					
OCTH 7700	Level II Fieldwork	5			
<b>Spring Term</b>					
OCTH 7710	Level II Fieldwork	5			
OCTH 8080	Doctoral Capstone Project Proposal	1			
<b>Summer Term</b>					
OCTH 8100	Doctoral Capstone Experience A	3			
OCTH 8150	Doctoral Capstone Experience B	3			
OCTH 8250	Doctoral Capstone Project	3			