

Mission, Vision, Values, Philosophy, & Curricular Design

Mission

The School of Occupational Therapy engages students in transformational education, integrating humanistic values with scientific evidence to become occupational therapists committed to occupation-based practice, life-long learning, scholarship, service, and advocacy to promote occupational well-being and justice in healthcare and society.

Vision:

The School of Occupational Therapy aims to be a distinctive, innovative program in which students experience a collaborative, meaningful education that inspires them to continue embracing and advocating for occupation as a source for health and well-being.

Values:

- **Contextual Teaching & Learning**
Students learn best through varied experiences in a range of environments that have direct application to the development of practice skills and understanding of human occupation.
- **Doing**
By active engagement of mind, body, and spirit in interaction with the environment, persons learn, grow, and actualize life roles that bring meaning, satisfaction, and well-being.
- **Critical Reasoning**
Critical thinking is essential for effective analysis, integration and synthesis of information and systems to enact best practice.
- **Transformation**
Occupation (engaging in meaningful daily activities) has the transformative power to enhance participation in life, and in the process of learning students reflect upon, reframe, and re-envision their beliefs about human capacity and potential.
- **Ethical Practice**
Sound ethical reasoning underlies and guides all that we do to maintain and promote high standards of practice.
- **Occupational Justice**
Promoting more equitable opportunities for individuals and populations to engage in a healthful range of occupations to sustainably support well-being and quality of life.

Philosophy:

The mission of the School of Occupational Therapy is to provide a transformational education to students that assures they are well-equipped to enter practice with skills and knowledge to be leaders in healthcare and the promotion of occupational justice. The three year educational process to fulfill this mission can be likened to the journey that one takes to reach the summit of a mountain. Thus the curricular philosophy is woven into the metaphor of the mountain traveler. Key threads of the curriculum that include how *client-centered and occupation-based practice*, *occupational justice*, understanding occupational *contexts* support *practice scholarship* interlace with program values to enhance development of the integrated practice scholar. (See photograph and diagram at http://www.pacificu.edu/ot/about/documents/Abridged_PhilosophyandDesign-MtHood7-20-12_001.pdf that matches description below.)

The traveler begins the journey to occupational therapy with a foundation of life experience and learning that assures skilled travel over the metaphorical trails, waterways, and ultimately the lofty peaks of professional practice. A process of reflection and goal-setting brings the traveler to identify the goal and plan the trip, similar to how an individual aspires to become an occupational therapist through reflection on goals, values, and life experiences as matched to the opportunities inherent in the profession.

Crossing the mirrored lake to the trailhead, it is easy to visualize the summit, in this case, graduation to become an occupational therapy practitioner. However, as one enters the lowland forest, it may be difficult to keep the goal of the summit in view, just as the early steps of education build foundational understanding of new terminology, theory, skills, and the important and complex interaction of occupation and health, but with limited context to fully understand how the knowledge is applied. With continued reflection and steady travel one builds endurance and strengths for the advanced challenges and rewards ahead as is the result of early experiential learning through fieldwork integrated with didactic courses. Similar to the way the traveler comes to appreciate that the journey is as satisfying as reaching the summit, the student appreciates the value of life-long learning in a curriculum that is learner and learning-centered. Thus the student adopts a model of client-centered practice that uses experiential learning to highlight the value of occupation-based practice.

As the hiker emerges above the tree line, the goal of the journey once again becomes clearly focused in relation to the trip thus far, similar to how students learn to apply theory to practice in advanced full-time fieldwork. New terrain of open trails and glacier fields requires additional equipment and application of a different skill set, likened to the advanced doctoral coursework and specialty electives in our curriculum. As the summit draws nearer, the hiker depends more and more on advanced equipment and collaboration of fellow travelers to assure success as they rope together to traverse steeper and icier terrain, or for the student, exposure to more challenging practice settings. Interprofessional collaboration is woven throughout the curriculum and supports effective team work in the culminating 16 week experiential internship that also requires high level integration and application of all

OT knowledge and skills gained thus far to a rapidly changing healthcare landscape. In this way, the student learns the value of understanding the context of practice and importance of adaptation to rapidly changing circumstances.

Throughout the curriculum, but especially in fieldwork and the experiential internship, students work interprofessionally to assure that clients being served are receiving a skillful blend of services. From the lofty summit, the traveler gains a transformational perspective of the world. Similarly, the student nearing graduation can more clearly picture the role of occupational therapy in the broader universe of society and healthcare. From this transformative experience, the graduate understands how to most effectively apply the skills and perspective gained through advanced understanding of the science of occupation with the occupational needs of individuals and society.

Like the traveler who returns to the everyday routines of life with a renewed commitment to advocate for sustainable practices that assure preservation of the earth, the OTD graduate enters practice advocating for occupational justice that will sustain health, well-being, and equitable health services. Through the application of scholarly practices, technical skill, and effective teamwork the new occupational therapist is prepared to address the occupational needs of individuals and society.

Curricular Goals:

Through a transformational learning process, Pacific University School of Occupational Therapy graduates will provide service to individuals, organizations and populations within the local and global community by:

- **reasoning and leading from a sound ethical, theoretical, & philosophical base as contributing practice scholars,**
- **promoting health and wellness through occupation across the life span,**
- **supporting the continuous evolution of equitable and quality health care through advocacy for occupational justice,**
- **practicing the art and science of the profession across traditional and unique environments, and**
- **enabling the needs and goals of the client to drive the process of intervention.**

Design of the Curriculum:

The ultimate goal of our occupational therapy transformational education is to prepare occupational therapists to serve people to participate in the full range of life's everyday activities, or *occupations*. Scientific evidence shows that meaningful occupational engagement leads to improved health and well-being (e.g., Clark et al., 1996).

Students in the School of Occupational Therapy collaborate with faculty to shape their student- and learning-centered educational experience in a way that helps them understand the elements of scientifically informed client-centered OT practice (Law, 1998). The

educational process is directed to equipping the doctoral student with a full repertoire of skills, a comprehensive knowledge base, and advanced critical thinking abilities with which to provide excellent and relevant services to his or her future clients and promote occupational justice (Stadnyk, Townsend, & Wilcock, 2010) for all. Occupational injustice occurs when people do not have equitable opportunities to pursue meaningful and healthful occupations due to economic, political, geographic, or other constraints. Occupational therapists increase occupational justice when they empower individuals, communities, or governments to improve opportunities for people to do those occupations that will enhance their health, satisfaction, and meaning in life. Occupational justice is accomplished through many means such as advocacy, work for social justice, education, public health promotion, and direct service to individuals, communities, and populations.

A primary belief within the School of Occupational Therapy is that in order to effectively address the complex problems and challenges facing people living in today's world, health service providers, and occupational therapists in particular, need to practice from an integrated base of knowledge. An integrated practice scholar blends empirical knowledge of traditional sciences with the humanistic knowledge from behavioral, social, and philosophical disciplines for holistic practice (Crist et al., 2005; Yerxa, 2009). Students also are provided with an in-depth understanding of occupation in order to apply this most unique and powerful tool for promotion of health and well-being as the essential tool of occupational therapy. With this unique and complementary knowledge base, the student is transformed to one who considers the person's mind, body, and spirit needs, particularly the spirit for action through occupation, (Reilly, 1962; Yerxa, 2009) that supports the whole human experience for optimal living and doing.

It is increasingly evident that optimum attainment of health and well-being occurs best with active engagement of the client in the therapy process. Likewise, learning occurs best with active involvement or the actual doing, of the learner. The School of Occupational Therapy curriculum immerses the student in active learning experiences that begin in the first year and which culminate with extensive full-time fieldwork experiences (32 weeks total) in which the student is mentored and guided into the field by practicing occupational therapists. As opportunities for fieldwork and practice increasingly include work with clients from diverse backgrounds, the curriculum assures the student will build a solid foundation of cultural competence (Black, 2014; Hasselkus, 2011), and ethical reasoning (Kanny & Slater, 2008).

Once the student has demonstrated competence in classroom and early fieldwork courses, she or he develops projects that create innovative community-based occupational therapy service plans and that envision creative future practices. These advanced projects are designed to address the needs of individuals or groups who typically would not have the option of occupational therapy services, yet are likely to benefit from an enhanced knowledge and role of occupation in their lives.

In the program, students learn that there are many ways to achieve positive change, not only in the lives of their clients through effectively applied therapeutic occupation, but also how to improve society and health delivery systems through leadership and advocacy for occupational justice. The curriculum gradually transitions the student to become an increasingly independent and active participant in the teaching and learning process so that upon graduation, he or she has acquired the ethics and practices of life-long learning. Throughout the second half of the program, the student is selecting elective courses that reinforce the foundation for the final phase, the Experiential Internship.

The Experiential Internship is an individually designed practice experience in which the student develops more advanced practice skills and knowledge in an area of special interest and that is likely to match his or her intended first employment setting. The community practice project, elective courses, and a sixteen week experiential internship in the final half of the program provide the student with the opportunity to further develop practice knowledge and skills of special interest. Throughout the curriculum experiential learning opportunities are service-oriented to instill in the student the importance of giving back to his or her communities throughout one's professional life.

The expected outcome of this educational process is an integrated practice scholar who is prepared to reach the heights of leadership and service to advocate for and lead positive change in her or his clients, society, and healthcare systems through culturally competent service that follows the principles of occupational justice. The graduate is committed to ethical practice in diverse communities and embraces the transformative power of client-centered and occupationally-relevant practice for the health and well-being of the clients and communities served.

Curricular structure & sequence

Throughout the 3 year curriculum, assignments are used across courses and in ways that help students optimize learning from field experiences, and promote efficiency and effectiveness in an intensive course of study. Further integrated learning occurs as fieldwork education is interspersed throughout the curriculum, beginning in the winter term of the first year.

During the first year of the program the student builds a broad foundation for scholarly practice. *Introduction to Distance Learning and Internship (OTD 520)* actually begins the program by looking forward to the final semester's course expectations. OTD 520 assures that the student has the fundamental skills for technologically-based teaching and learning, provides an overview of the curriculum, and the steps needed for the student to develop an elective focus. This overview prepares the student for development of the capstone project and experiential internship. By looking to the culminating practice experience, the student plots the course to successful completion of the program. The first year course series *Foundations of Occupation and Occupational Therapy I & II (OTD*

500 & 505) provides the fundamental building blocks of the profession that include the foundational and historical elements of the profession, the role of theory in practice, therapeutic reasoning and communication, group dynamics, how culture influences occupation, how occupational science supports the development of OT, basic concepts of occupational justice, and the skills for occupational analysis of the person-environment-occupation (PEO) interaction. The more theoretical and humanistic building blocks of the *Foundations* courses are balanced with the scientific exploration of *Human Movement for Occupation (OTD 510)* & *Neuroscience for Occupational Performance (OTD 515)* in which the anatomical, kinesiological, and neurological parameters of occupational functioning are addressed. An occupational therapy tenant is that there is always a psychosocial element to practice (Cara & MacRae, 2013) and the course series *OTD 530 & 535, OT Process with Adults: Psychosocial Challenges I & II* demonstrates this belief by assuring that the student understands the psychological and social factors that influence occupational choice and performance. In this series students learn the many ways that psychosocial considerations undergird sound professional reasoning whether working with people who have long-term mental illness, a person adapting to the effects of a stroke, or a child managing a learning disability in school. Halfway through the first year in the program, students begin applying their learning to practice in the first of many practice-related fieldwork experiences by completing *OTD 550, Level IA Fieldwork*, a two week, full-time assignment to a clinical facility that addresses more traditional OT practices (these experiences are within and outside of the Hillsboro commuting distance). Psychosocial considerations for practice are integrated through each of the OT Process courses to reinforce the integration of this essential element of practice across the wide range of clients and populations served by OT.

In addition to the courses that bridge both first year semesters, (*OTD 500/505, 520 & 530/535*), students continue learning how to apply the Occupational Therapy Process in the course *OT Process for Adults with Physical Challenges (OTD 570)* as they learn the foundations of such practical skills as patient-handling, splinting, and adaptation of the PEO interaction to facilitate more successful occupational performance. Interprofessional teamwork and development begin formally in *CHP 510 & 511 Interprofessional Competence: Theory & Practice I & II* with fellow students from other professional programs. Interprofessional opportunities persist throughout the curriculum both formally and informally in classroom and practice settings through case conferences, fieldwork, and service-learning projects. The second semester includes the first of the three-course scholarship development series (*OTD 580 Evidence-based Practice and Scholarship I*) to help students develop their ability to locate, interpret, and appraise research evidence that can be applied to decision-making in practice, how to effectively write up those appraisals in scholarly form, and begin exploring research methods.

The first year culminates in the summer session that includes the first two fully distance-based courses and *Level IB Fieldwork (OTD 522)* that enables students to apply their knowledge and skills to community-based psychosocial-focused settings. Assuming that every OT is an educator (Bastable et al., 2010) through teaching clients life skill development, and that most practitioners will also teach fieldwork students and fellow practitioners, the *Practitioner as Educator (OTD 610)* course provides the student with basic

theory of teaching and learning along with the foundations for effective presentations, educational technology, an overview of academic teaching, as well as assessing and documenting learning. In another distance-based course offered in the summer, the student continues building his or her research and evidence-based practice skills for practice through *OTD 680 - Scholarship & Evidence-based Practice II*. In this course, students learn the range of qualitative to quantitative research methodologies, further refine scholarly appraisal and writing skills, and prepare for applying evidence-based practices for capstone development and in fieldwork.

As students transition into the second year of the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) curriculum, they continue to develop practice-skills by applying the OT Process with specific populations: adults with conditions like stroke, parkinsonism, and brain-injury in *OTD 670 OT Process with Adults: Neurological Challenges*, and young children to promote learning about early human development as well as pediatric evaluation and intervention in *OTD 620 OT Process with Children*. Throughout the second year curriculum, students spend 1 day a week in Level I fieldwork settings in order to apply new theoretical learning to practice (*OTD 654 & 656 Level IC & D Fieldwork* rotations), primarily in settings that serve children, adolescents, and older adults. Also in the fall semester, students begin the *Community-Based Practice* series (*OTD 630 & 631*) in which they build skills for conducting a needs assessment, collaboratively developing community-based goals, funding services, and the basic process of quality assurance. Enacting these skills in *OTD 630 & 631*, students will team with a faculty consultant and community agency to conduct a quality assurance project, spending time on-site through the fall and spring devoted to the project. Development of this project enhances the students' skills for independent practice, professional reasoning, entrepreneurship, and adds to the foundation for the capstone project and experiential internship.

The second year spring semester includes OT process courses that address evaluation and intervention with adolescents (*OTD 625 OT Process with Older Children & Adolescents*) and older adults (*OTD 675 OT Process with Older Adults*). These courses further develop the student's understanding of how occupation plays out as a determinant of health and wellness across the life span, and they build skill in managing competently in a range of typical OT practice settings. *Competencies for Practice (OTD 660)* is designed to provide opportunities for application of theory to practice as well as additional practice skill development that goes beyond that achieved in the OT Process courses. *OTD 660* is also the course in which students prepare for full time level II fieldwork rotations by exploring performance expectations, the supervisory relationship, and other topics that support success in fieldwork and practice. Simultaneously as students complete their community-based practice projects (*OTD 631*) in this term, they are building competencies for administrative and management roles for leadership in OT departments or innovative programs in future practice through *OTD 640 Management of Occupational Therapy Services*. In order to assure that the student is making steady progress toward their educational and professional goals, a sequence of three consecutive one-credit courses begin in this semester, *Preparation for Capstone & Internship (OTD 781)*. In *OTD 781* the student works closely with his or her capstone advisor and the

course facilitator to continue the work begun in *OTD 520 (Introduction to Distance Learning and Internship)* in developing a specific plan for elective courses that will prepare the student for success in the final year's Experiential Internship.

In the summer of the second OTD year, students begin their full-time level II fieldwork education with OTD 750 Level IIA Fieldwork in one of our local, national, or international placements that is a twelve week full time placement. This is the beginning of the portion of the curriculum during which students may choose to move away from the campus as from this point until the brief residency associated with graduation and presentation of the capstone project, students are engaged either in full time fieldwork, internship, or distance-based coursework, or a combination of these courses. This is also the point at which most students will begin taking the 6 credits of required electives (although with permission, this will be possible earlier in their program of study). While students are enrolled in *Fieldwork IIA*, they also will be taking the second *OTD 781* course through a distance-learning approach and developing a focus for their Experiential Internship through an extensive literature review. The Level II fieldwork experiences provide students with many opportunities to apply theory to practice as they work under the supervision of occupational therapists with experience in a range of practice settings that include both typical entry-level practices as well as emerging practices that demonstrate innovative practice models.

Also in the third year of the OTD program the student cohort is divided into two sub-cohorts, one group that goes on to complete the Level II requirement (*OTD 752 Level IIB Fieldwork*) while the alternate group of students are enrolled 3 distance-based courses. In *Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice III (OTD 780)* students learn more advanced research methods and apply them through the development of a research project that prepares them to more independently complete the research that accompanies their Experiential Internship. The *Leadership, Advocacy, & Ethics Applied (OTD 710)* focus is on learning and applying additional theoretical and practical understandings of the three topics to assure that as a doctoral level practitioner, the OTD graduate will be prepared to practice ethically, lead from a sound base of knowledge, and advocate for client and profession. This advocacy promotes health and well-being in a rapidly changing world in a way that is grounded in the core principles of occupational therapy and occupational justice. Though the themes of leadership, ethics, and advocacy are threaded in preceding courses to support professional reasoning and practice, *OTD 710* provides opportunities for advanced application to cases that are hypothetical, those drawn from fieldwork experiences, or both. *Advances in OT Practice (OTD 720)* provides the student with advanced understanding of the theoretical, political, social, cultural, and economic factors affecting current trends in the OT profession and practice as applied to real-life issues experienced in prior OT fieldwork courses as well as those drawn from current literature. Following the completion of either of these two tracks above (Level IIB Fieldwork or the on-line courses), the sub-cohorts exchange roles and the students who completed fieldwork will take the final core courses, and those who had been in coursework, will complete the Level IIB rotation. The final course in the *Preparation for Capstone & Internship (OTD 781)* series provides structure for faculty advisement and project development and will be completed simultaneous to the third year on-line courses. By the end of this fieldwork and distance-based

year of courses, the student is expected to have completed six credits within their elective course options as individually selected in collaboration with the academic advisor. At this time, the student will take a comprehensive examination to demonstrate readiness to proceed with the Doctoral Internship.

As students approach the end of their final spring in the program, they enroll in the sixteen week *Doctoral Experiential Internship (OTD 850)* and the accompanying *Capstone Project/Scholarship (OTD 785)* courses. The student has worked toward this Internship from the first days in the program. Through careful planning and guidance from the student's academic & capstone advisors, as well as more specific supervision and direction from a carefully selected Community Advisor the student establishes goals to develop a relative specialty area of practice. This specialty area can range from pediatrics, to upper extremity rehabilitation, global practice, practice management, or to working toward a career in academic OT education among other options. In this internship, the student has progressed beyond the role of student, but is not quite yet ready for independent practice. The internship experience enables the students to develop and refine skills that are likely to be useful in their first jobs as practitioners. The Capstone Project is individually mentored and tailored to help the student complete his or her learning objectives in the Experiential Internship, the results of which will be prepared in publishable form and presented on campus to peers and practitioners as part of the final week's brief residency. The student will also be expected to have proposed presenting his or her work at a professional conference or other scholarly outlet.

As the student completes this final component of the doctoral education process, he or she has built a scientific foundation of knowledge of humans as occupational beings, the role of occupation in the achievement and maintenance of health, and the factors that constrain or promote occupational justice in the world. Equipped with the practice, leadership, and advocacy skills required of an independent doctoral practitioner, he or she will be able to apply theory to practice in an integrated and scholarly manner needed to promote positive change in a rapidly changing world. The transformation thus experienced through the educational process into an integrated practice scholar supports the graduate's ability to facilitate transformative change in clients, communities, and the healthcare systems within which he or she works.

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**CLIENT
CENTERED
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JUSTICE
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PROFESSIONAL**



REFLECTION
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