

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DOCTORATE (O.T.D.)/AGING STUDIES, CERTIFICATE IN (GRADUATE CERTIFICATE) [DUAL DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE]

Advanced study in occupational therapy and aging studies is available through a dual degree program co-sponsored by the Department of Occupational Therapy and the Department of Gerontology in the College of Health Professions.

The program allows students to earn an Occupational Therapy Doctorate and Certificate in Aging Studies with a minimum of 116 credits rather than the 119 credits necessary if the two degrees were pursued separately. This efficiency lowers the overall cost of tuition while also reducing time to earning both degrees.

Program goals

The objectives of this dual degree and certificate program are to:

- Prepare graduates to address the complex needs of a diverse aging population using holistic knowledge of biopsychosocial aging process
- Provide graduates with an understanding of empirically and theoretically based components contributing to optimal aging using evidence-based, best-practice approaches
- Prepare graduates to apply current knowledge, theory and professional judgment, while considering the perspectives of older adult clients/patients
- Prepare graduates to develop skills in comprehensive geriatric care to promote well-being among older adults

Among the many benefits offered by participation in the dual degree program is the following:

- Enhance O.T.D. graduates' knowledge and skills in caring for older adults, who represent an increasing segment of occupational therapy practice
- Increase O.T.D. graduates' competitiveness in the job market
- Offer O.T.D. students an opportunity for career advancement by specializing in geriatrics

The diplomas for this dual degree program may be awarded simultaneously. Students must complete separate graduation check out for each program.

Student learning outcomes

See the individual program pages for student learning outcomes.

Other information

Advising

The student is assigned an adviser from each program to develop a coordinated plan of study. Advisers coordinate program curriculum as appropriate. Primarily, the coordination occurs to ensure that O.T.D. students complete all required credits and their doctoral capstone project aligns with requirements of the Certificate of Aging Studies.

Advisers share curriculum sequencing documents for advising students in registration for course work to ensure consistency and uniformity in their guidance.

Once accepted into the dual degree program, the student meets with the advisers in both programs to develop a plan of study. The student would begin taking classes in the aging studies program during the fall semester of their first year while enrolled in the O.T.D. program.

Admission requirements

Students must meet the admission requirements for each program. Admission into one program does not guarantee admission into the other.

The Certificate in Aging Studies program is open to qualified students who have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or the equivalent and who have met all **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**.

The admission requirements for the O.T.D. (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapy/occupational-therapy-otd-entry-level/#admissionrequirements>) can be found on the program page.

Application procedure

Admission to the dual degree program is a two-step process. The first step is admission to the O.T.D. program. After the first summer semester of the O.T.D. program, the student completes the second step by applying for admission to the aging studies program.

Students may contact VCU Graduate Admissions to have their transcripts and letters of recommendation from the O.T.D. application attached to their certificate application. A new personal statement is required.

Dual degree and certificate requirements

As standalone programs, the O.T.D. comprises 104 credits while the certificate requires 15 credits. The dual degree and certificate program allows students to share three credits, therefore decreasing total credits to completion from 119 to 116.

Based on the equivalent knowledge acquired by successfully completing OCCT 783, three credits of electives are satisfied in the certificate curriculum.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
O.T.D. requirements		
IPEC 501	Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1
OCCT 580	Introduction to the Profession of Occupational Therapy	2
OCCT 589	Advanced Functional Anatomy	7
OCCT 590	Functional Movement Analysis in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 591	Neuroscience Applications to Occupational Therapy	4
OCCT 592	Introduction to Injury, Illness and Disability	3
OCCT 593	Analysis of Human Occupation	1
OCCT 594	Theoretical Foundations of Occupational Therapy	3

OCCT 613	Adult Occupational Performance I	3
OCCT 614	Pediatric Occupational Performance I	4
OCCT 615	Level I Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	1
OCCT 616	Research Process in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 618	Systems, Policy and Management	2
OCCT 617	Therapeutic Process in Occupational Therapy	2
OCCT 689	Occupational Therapy Assessment and Evaluation	3
OCCT 692	Assistive Technologies for Occupational Engagement	3
OCCT 693	Occupational Synthesis and Adaptations	2
OCCT 707	Psychosocial Interventions in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 713	Adult Occupational Performance II	4
OCCT 714	Pediatric Occupational Performance II	4
OCCT 715	Level I Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	1
OCCT 716	Evidence-based Practice in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 717	Level I Fieldwork in Psychosocial Occupational Therapy	1
OCCT 721	Clinical Reasoning in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 759	Fieldwork Education Seminar	2
OCCT 760	Level II Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	9
OCCT 761	Level II Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	9
OCCT 780	OTD Leadership Seminar	3
OCCT 781	Program Development and Evaluation	2
OCCT 782	Professional Development Seminar	2
OCCT 783	Doctoral Capstone (three credits satisfy certificate elective)	10
OCCT 784	Practicum Evaluation and Dissemination	1

Certificate requirements		
GRTY 601	Biological and Physiological Aging	3
GRTY 602	Psychology of Aging	3
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
GRTY 606	Aging and Human Values	3
Restricted elective (satisfied by three credits of OCCT 783)		3
Total Hours		116

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual program is 116.

Sample plan of study

Year one		
Summer semester		
OCCT 580	Introduction to the Profession of Occupational Therapy	2

OCCT 589	Advanced Functional Anatomy	7
Term Hours:		9

Fall semester		
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
IPEC 501	Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1
OCCT 590	Functional Movement Analysis in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 591	Neuroscience Applications to Occupational Therapy	4
OCCT 592	Introduction to Injury, Illness and Disability	3
OCCT 593	Analysis of Human Occupation	1
OCCT 594	Theoretical Foundations of Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 617	Therapeutic Process in Occupational Therapy	2
Term Hours:		20

Spring semester		
GRTY 601	Biological and Physiological Aging	3
OCCT 613	Adult Occupational Performance I	3
OCCT 614	Pediatric Occupational Performance I	4
OCCT 615	Level I Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	1
OCCT 616	Research Process in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 618	Systems, Policy and Management	2
OCCT 689	Occupational Therapy Assessment and Evaluation	3
Term Hours:		19

Year two		
Summer semester		
OCCT 693	Occupational Synthesis and Adaptations	2
OCCT 780	OTD Leadership Seminar	3
Term Hours:		5

Fall semester		
GRTY 602	Psychology of Aging	3
OCCT 713	Adult Occupational Performance II	4
OCCT 714	Pediatric Occupational Performance II	4
OCCT 715	Level I Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	1
OCCT 716	Evidence-based Practice in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 707	Psychosocial Interventions in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 781	Program Development and Evaluation	2
Term Hours:		20

Spring semester		
GRTY 606	Aging and Human Values	3
OCCT 692	Assistive Technologies for Occupational Engagement	3
OCCT 717	Level I Fieldwork in Psychosocial Occupational Therapy	1
OCCT 721	Clinical Reasoning in Occupational Therapy	3
OCCT 759	Fieldwork Education Seminar	2
OCCT 782	Professional Development Seminar	2
Term Hours:		14

Year three

Summer semester

OCCT 760	Level II Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	9
Term Hours:		9

Fall semester

OCCT 761	Level II Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	9
Term Hours:		9

Spring semester

OCCT 783	Doctoral Capstone (focused on aging studies; satisfies three credits of restricted electives for certificate)	10
OCCT 784	Practicum Evaluation and Dissemination	1
Term Hours:		11
Total Hours:		116

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual program is 116.

Contact

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