

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DOCTORATE (O.T.D.)/HEALTH RELATED SCIENCES, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) [DUAL DEGREE]

The VCU College of Health Professions offers a dual degree that results in an Occupational Therapy Doctorate and a Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences. This dual degree program allows outstanding entry-level O.T.D. students to earn their degree while simultaneously completing course credits in the interdisciplinary health related sciences Ph.D. program. Students accepted into the dual degree program would complete specified Ph.D. courses while in their O.T.D. program. In addition, students would be assigned a research mentor and have opportunities to earn research credits that would count toward the Ph.D. The dual degree program allows students to complete their O.T.D. in three years, with efficiencies to complete the Ph.D. 12-18 months earlier than 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

Goals of the dual degree program include:

- Increasing the number of Ph.D.-trained occupational therapists who can contribute to the evidence base of the profession
- Increasing the accessibility of a Ph.D. for a diverse range of students by reducing the time and cost associated with earning this post-professional degree

The dual degree O.T.D./Ph.D. prepares future occupational therapists with the skills required to advance to positions as researchers and educators. The program allows students to pursue both degrees using a coordinated program of study and apply a limited number of O.T.D. requirements toward fulfillment of requirements for the Ph.D.

The dual degree program is designed for students who want to become career researchers or academics within the field of occupational therapy or who want to do clinical research within the larger health care system. Strong applicants for this dual degree program will have exceptional academic performance and be highly motivated for a career in research. Prior research experience as an undergraduate is highly recommended.

The diplomas for this dual degree program will be awarded sequentially. Students would graduate from the Department of Occupational Therapy with an O.T.D., then transition to complete course work and the dissertation for the Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences.

Student learning outcomes

See each degree program page for student learning outcomes.

Other information

Advising

The student is assigned an adviser from each program to develop coordinated plans of study.

Admission requirements

Admission to the dual degree is a two-step process. The first step is admission to the O.T.D. program (see the Graduate Bulletin for admission information.). Students enrolled in their first year of the O.T.D. program may apply to the Ph.D. (dual degree) program in the spring semester. Applicants must have a minimum 3.3 GPA in the O.T.D. program and have received a minimum grade of B in OCCT 616 in order to apply to the dual degree program.

The steps for applying to the program are as follows:

1. Interested students first talk to their faculty adviser, or the Ph.D. program representative, to discuss their research interests and possible faculty mentors.
2. Students will sign a release allowing the VCU OT department to transfer the following information to the Ph.D. program:
 - a. Undergraduate transcripts
 - b. Graduate (VCU OT) transcript
 - c. Prior letters of references submitted in OT program application
3. Students will submit the following directly to the Ph.D. program adviser:
 - a. Personal statement that outlines career goals, research interests and how the Ph.D. program, specifically, will help them reach their goals
 - b. One letter of reference from a VCU faculty member (preferably proposed faculty research mentor)
4. All applicants will be asked to complete a timed writing sample as part of the Ph.D. program admission.

Deadlines

- The deadline to submit application materials is April 1.
- Applicants will be notified of acceptance by the end of May.
- Course work would begin in June.

Degree requirements

The entry-level O.T.D. is a 104-credit program and the Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences requires a minimum of 51 credits. Students would complete the full program of study for the O.T.D. and the Ph.D. with the following courses shared by both programs:

Course	Title	Hours
OCCT 616	Research Process in Occupational Therapy (satisfies the prerequisite graduate-level statistics course for the Ph.D.)	3
OCCT 618	Systems, Policy and Management (satisfies ALHP 781)	2
OCCT 783	Doctoral Capstone (six of the 10 credits satisfy ALHP 792 and ALHP 793 or ALHP 795 in the Ph.D.)	10
Total Hours		9

Bearing these nine credits of substitution in mind, students would need to complete an additional 42 credits in the Ph.D. program to graduate; nine of these credits would be dissertation credits (ALHP 899) while 33 would be direct course work.

Students would earn their O.T.D. prior to their Ph.D. and be eligible to sit for their National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy examination upon completion of their O.T.D. curriculum requirements.

Curriculum requirements for the dual degree

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 (satisfies the prerequisite graduate-level statistics course for the Ph.D.)	3
OCCT 617	Therapeutic Process in Occupational Therapy	2
OCCT 618	Systems, Policy and Management (satisfies ALHP 781 in Ph.D.)	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 (six of 10 credits satisfy ALHP 792 and ALHP 793 or ALHP 795)	10
OCCT 784	Practicum Evaluation and Dissemination	1
Ph.D. requirements		
ALHP 701	Health Services Delivery Systems	3
ALHP 702	Finance and Economic Theory for Health Care	3
ALHP 708	Health Science Ethics	3
ALHP 712	Instructional Design and Evaluation for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 716	Grant Writing for Health Science Research	3
ALHP 760	Descriptive and Univariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 761	Health Science Research Design I	3
ALHP 762	Multivariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 763	Health Science Research Design II	3
ALHP 765	Data Management for Health Science Research	3
ALHP 781	Doctoral Seminar (satisfied by OCCT 618)	3
ALHP 792	Independent Study (three credit hours required; satisfied by OCCT 783)	3
ALHP 793	Research Practicum (satisfied by OCCT 783)	3
or ALHP 795	Teaching Practicum	
ALHP 890	Dissertation Seminar	3
ALHP 899	Dissertation Research	9
Total Hours		146

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual degree is 146.

Plan of study

Students accepted into the dual degree program would complete all of the O.T.D. courses in the order and sequence of their cohort, and meet all accreditation requirements and eligibility to sit for the National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy examination. The students would also complete courses each semester in the Ph.D. program, which would count toward their Ph.D. program credits. As the Ph.D. program is a hybrid, the majority of course work for this program would be completed online during times that are convenient for the student.

By overlapping the programs, the length of the Ph.D. program would be 12-18 months shorter and would therefore reduce both the time and cost associated with a Ph.D. degree. Students who apply to the dual degree program may also be eligible for certain scholarships or research assistantships that would offset the cost of tuition.

Sample plan of study

Course	Title	Hours			Hours
Year one					
Summer semester					
OCCT 580	Introduction to the Profession of Occupational Therapy	2		OCCT 716	Evidence-based Practice in Occupational Therapy
OCCT 589	Advanced Functional Anatomy	7		OCCT 781	Program Development and Evaluation
Term hours:		7		Term hours:	20
Fall semester					
IPEC 501	Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1		Spring semester	
OCCT 590	Functional Movement Analysis in Occupational Therapy	3		ALHP 702	Finance and Economic Theory for Health Care
OCCT 591	Neuroscience Applications to Occupational Therapy	4		OCCT 692	Assistive Technologies for Occupational Engagement
OCCT 592	Introduction to Injury, Illness and Disability	3		OCCT 717	Level I Fieldwork in Psychosocial Occupational Therapy
OCCT 593	Analysis of Human Occupation	1		OCCT 721	Clinical Reasoning in Occupational Therapy
OCCT 594	Theoretical Foundations of Occupational Therapy	3		OCCT 759	Fieldwork Education Seminar
OCCT 617	Therapeutic Process in Occupational Therapy	2		OCCT 782	Professional Development Seminar
Term hours:		17		Term hours:	14
Spring semester					
OCCT 613	Adult Occupational Performance I	3		Year three	
OCCT 614	Pediatric Occupational Performance I	4		Summer semester	
OCCT 615	Level I Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	1		OCCT 760	Level II Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy
OCCT 616	Research Process in Occupational Therapy (satisfies graduate-level statistics prerequisite for Ph.D.; must earn a minimum grade of B to meet Ph.D. admission requirements)	3		(Students would be completing course work for ALHP 702 during the first month of this fieldwork rotation.)	
OCCT 618	Systems, Policy and Management (satisfies ALHP 781)	2		Term hours:	9
OCCT 689	Occupational Therapy Assessment and Evaluation	3		Fall semester	
Students would apply for Ph.D. program after midterm				ALHP 760	Descriptive and Univariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences
Term hours:		16		OCCT 761	Level II Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy
Year two					
Summer semester					
OCCT 693	Occupational Synthesis and Adaptations	2		Term hours:	12
OCCT 780	OTD Leadership Seminar	3		Spring semester	
Term hours:		5		ALHP 761	Health Science Research Design I
Fall semester					
ALHP 712	Instructional Design and Evaluation for Health Sciences	3		ALHP 762	Multivariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences
OCCT 707	Psychosocial Interventions in Occupational Therapy	3		OCCT 783	Doctoral Capstone (satisfies ALPH 792 and ALHP 793)
OCCT 713	Adult Occupational Performance II	4		OCCT 784	Practicum Evaluation and Dissemination
OCCT 714	Pediatric Occupational Performance II	4		(Students graduate in May with O.T.D.)	
OCCT 715	Level I Fieldwork in Occupational Therapy	1		Term hours:	17
Year four					
Summer semester					
Take NBCOT exam					
Fall semester					
ALHP 701	Health Services Delivery Systems	3		ALHP 701	Health Services Delivery Systems
ALHP 763	Health Science Research Design II	3		ALHP 763	Health Science Research Design II
ALHP 765	Data Management for Health Science Research	3		ALHP 765	Data Management for Health Science Research
(Take methods comps)				Term hours:	9
Term hours:		9		Spring semester	
Spring semester				ALHP 708	Health Science Ethics
ALHP 708	Health Science Ethics	3		ALHP 716	Grant Writing for Health Science Research
ALHP 716	Grant Writing for Health Science Research	3		ALHP 890	Dissertation Seminar
ALHP 890	Dissertation Seminar	3			

(Take core comps)

Term hours:	9
-------------	---

Year five and six

ALHP 899	Dissertation Research (minimum required for graduation)	9
----------	---------------------------------------------------------	---

Total Hours	146
--------------------	------------

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual degree is 146.

Contact

Stacey Reynolds, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA
Associate professor, Department of Occupational Therapy
reynoldsse3@vcu.edu
(804) 828-2288

Additional contact

Lauretta Cathers, Ph.D.
Director of the Ph.D. Program, College of Health Professions
s2lasaff@vcu.edu
(804) 827-0922