

Accreditation Status

The Messiah University entry-level occupational therapy master's degree program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA and its Web address is www.acoteonline.org.

Mission of the Master of Occupational Therapy Program

The Messiah University Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program advances the profession by developing skilled and compassionate occupational therapy leaders and practitioners who are committed to a life of service and clinical excellence.

Vision of the Master of Occupational Therapy Program

Consistent with the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Vision 2025, the Messiah University MOT program supports an accessible, collaborative, effective occupational therapy profession that builds leaders who influence change and embrace diversity (AOTA, 2019).

The MOT program will cultivate healthy learning environments to prepare future occupational therapy practitioners through community-engaged learning, diverse perspectives, and ethical practice.

Philosophy of the Master of Occupational Therapy Program

The Messiah University MOT program holds the foundational belief that God created all people in God's image, therefore giving all people a profound intrinsic value. With this belief, the Messiah University MOT program seeks to live out the calling of Jesus Christ to love our neighbors as ourselves. With this lens, and through the therapeutic use of self, the Messiah University MOT program affirms the AOTA Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy:

Occupations are activities that bring meaning to the daily lives of individuals, families, communities, and populations and enable them to participate in society. All individuals have an innate need and right to engage in meaningful occupations throughout their lives. Participation in these occupations influences their development, health, and well-being across the lifespan. Thus, participation in meaningful occupations is a determinant of health and leads to adaptation.

Occupations occur within diverse social, physical, cultural, personal, temporal, and virtual contexts. The quality of occupational performance and the experience of each occupation are unique in each situation because of the dynamic relationship among factors intrinsic to the individual, the environment, and contexts in which the occupation occurs, and the characteristics of the occupation.

The focus and outcome of occupational therapy are clients' engagement in meaningful occupations that support their participation in life situations. Occupational therapy practitioners conceptualize occupations as both a means and an end in therapy. That is, there is

therapeutic value in occupational engagement as a change agent, and engagement in occupations is also the ultimate goal of therapy.

Occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupations are fundamental to health promotion and wellness, remediation or restoration, health maintenance, disease and injury prevention, and compensation and adaptation. The use of occupation to promote individual, family, community, and population health is the core of occupational therapy practice, education, research, and advocacy. (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2017)

The Curriculum Design

The curriculum design follows a spiraling, developmental model (Weddle & Sellheim, 2009). Students acquire a basic understanding of foundational skills and then are drawn into a deeper level of understanding and more sophisticated critical thinking as the curriculum progresses through application and mastery phases. To ensure students are prepared to enter practice as a generalist occupational therapist at the end of the curriculum, MOT faculty work together to plan the sequencing, depth, and integration of course content.

Educational Philosophy of the Master of Occupational Therapy Program

The Messiah University MOT program welcomes students from diverse backgrounds with varied undergraduate degrees. We acknowledge that every individual has an equal and intrinsic value as a human being created by God. Additionally, Messiah University MOT program asserts that it is of equal importance to embody compassionate and relational client-centered care as it is to master evidence-based practice.

The educational philosophy of Messiah University's MOT faculty is one that encompasses humanizing andragogy by encouraging students to continue to grow into social, reflective, communicative, and transformational individuals (Battaglia, 2016) who participate in the classroom, community, and other environments around them. The following tenets further define Messiah University's educational philosophy.

Full Development of the Person

The Messiah University faculty honor the lived experience of each student and require a reciprocal, trusting relationship between students and faculty (Salazar, 2013). Students bring their individual experiences, knowledge, and backgrounds to the classroom, allowing them to explore diverse perspectives and thoughts. Through mutual respect and understanding, students develop their own natural abilities and learn to utilize them in combination with foundational skills to engage clients therapeutically. In turn, faculty empower students to take responsibility for their learning through the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Joint Responsibility of Teaching and Learning

At Messiah University, students and faculty share the responsibility of learning. Information is shared between faculty and students through open dialogue with critical evaluation of the material that leads to a better understanding of content (Freire, 2005). Through crucial conversations and professional communication, students deepen their ability to interpret and apply what they have learned, allowing them to recognize their contribution to the learning process.

Outward Facing, Service Focused, Experiential Learning

The Messiah University MOT program values and cultivates servant leaders who put the needs of others ahead of themselves. We educate to foster renewal, enhance function, and provide hope through the holistic approach of occupational therapy.

The Messiah University MOT program draws on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning to place an emphasis on servant leadership and the missional value of the occupational therapy profession through our work with individuals in all settings and all stages of life. Coursework addresses spirituality and cultural/global considerations that complement the program's opportunities for leadership development and participation in community-based learning activities. We believe in demonstrating compassion and Christ's love by acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly (*Holy Bible, New International Version*, 1973, Mic. 6:8) alongside individuals as we partner with them in the journey of life.

Critical Thinking Leading to Intentional Action

Students are educated to become highly skilled at providing occupation-focused services to clients. This is achieved through the cultivation of strong critical thinkers who act intentionally in their professional and personal lives. In developing critical thinking to inform clinical reasoning, faculty expect students to apply foundational skills, theory, and evidence-based practices in today's challenging healthcare environment. Intentionality from a programmatic perspective includes the values of humility, authenticity, compassion, and ethics, infiltrating every avenue of practice.

Learning in Community

Community is a foundational value of Messiah University (Messiah University, 2020). Learning communities blend theory and practice to create a collaborative environment that encourages students' active involvement in learning. Research indicates learning communities can improve student persistence and academic achievement (MacGregor et al. 2002; Tinto, 1998). The MOT program utilizes a cohort model that is intentionally designed to create an active and collaborative learning environment in which students connect with their network of peers and faculty, who provide ongoing support in and out of the classroom. Learning communities within Messiah University's MOT program often take the form of small group work and group fieldwork. These opportunities encourage collaboration and consensus-building, facilitate dynamic self-understanding, provide opportunities for diversity exploration, and the enhancement of leadership and communication skills.

Curricular Threads and Program Learning Objectives

Upon completion of their degree, graduates will:

Informed by Theory, Driven by Evidence

1. Apply theory and evidence to implement the occupational therapy process for safe and effective practice.
2. Appraise and apply scholarly activities to support evidence-based practice and the profession's body of knowledge.

Professional Therapeutic Engagement

3. Articulate the unique, intrinsic worth of each client, designed in the image of God and deserving of compassion and care.

Occupation-based

4. Explain the value of engagement in occupation as integral to the health and well-being of individuals, groups, and populations.

Faith and Vocation

5. Articulate the connection between personal faith to service and leadership essential for personal and professional growth.

Ethical and Professional Practice

6. Apply ethical principles to complex problem-solving and decision-making.
7. Utilize the skills of a safe and competent practitioner as defined by the standards of practice.

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

8. Develop and deliver equitable occupational therapy services that promote the well-being of all individuals, groups, and populations.

Level II Fieldwork Overview and Relationship to Curriculum Design

“The goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapists. Level II fieldwork must be integral to the program’s curriculum design and must include an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation and research, administration, and management of occupational therapy services. It is recommended that the student be exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings” (ACOTE, 2018). Level II fieldwork is the culminating educational experience for the occupational therapy student. Level II fieldwork experiences are designed to require the students to integrate the entirety of the didactic curriculum at a more advanced level after all didactic coursework is complete.

Level II Fieldwork Supervision

Fieldwork supervision can occur as several different models including 1:1 (one student per one FWE) or collaborative models of 2:1 (two students per one FWE) or 1:2 (one student per two FWEs). The FWE(s) should be on site and available at all times while the student is actively engaged with clients. When the FWE is sick or on vacation, a substitute FWE on site should be identified. It is expected that supervision begins as direct, in line of site supervision at the start of the fieldwork and then decreases to less direct supervision as appropriate for the setting, the severity of the client’s condition, and the ability of the student to support progression toward entry-level competence. Adherence to facility or reimbursement guidelines may also dictate the level of supervision during the provision of services. (C.1.13)

For traditional sites, Level II students must be supervised by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist who has a minimum of 1 year full-time (or its equivalent) of practice experience subsequent to initial certification and who is adequately prepared to serve as a FWE. (C.1.11) For nontraditional sites where OT services do not exist, the OT supervisor must be licensed for a minimum of three years (C.1.14). OT supervisors in a nontraditional setting must provide a minimum of 8 hours of direct supervision each week and must be available via phone or video call during all working hours. An onsite supervisor of another profession must be assigned when the OT supervisor is off site.

Level II Fieldwork Forms and Communication

Prior to the start of Level II fieldwork, the AFWC will collect site-specific objectives and verify supervisor licensure information from the site to verify up to date licensure. During fieldwork, students will submit their time logs on Exxat weekly and will require approval by their FWE. At midterm and at the end of fieldwork, FWEs will complete an evaluation of student performance (FWPE). At midterm, students will

complete a self-graded FWPE and a midterm feedback form to be shared with the AFWC. At the end of fieldwork, students will complete the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) on Exxat. The student's evaluation of the site will be visible to future students for their reference on Exxat.

On Level II Fieldwork, students are expected to communicate with the AFWC regarding absences or concerns. The AFWC will communicate with students via email/phone call as needed and on Flipgrid Discussion Posts. The AFWC will contact supervisors at the beginning of fieldwork, at midterm, at the end of fieldwork, and more often as needed. The AFWC will conduct a midterm via in person or by phone call/video conference depending on the site's preference.

Level II Fieldwork Grading Policy

Level II Fieldwork courses (OCCU 622 and OCCU 632) will be graded as Pass/Fail. The grade will be determined by the AFWC and entered with the Registrar's Office after review of the evaluation completed by the FWE and upon satisfactory completion of all assignments related to the Level II experience. The Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) from AOTA will be used to grade student performance on Level II Fieldwork (C.1.15). The FWPE will be sent to FWEs via email and will be completed on Formstack. The completed FWPEs will be downloaded and saved in the electronic student record. To pass the FWPE, students must receive a 111 or higher on the final evaluation and a "3" or above on items #1-3 and no scores of a 1.

If at midterm, a student's performance in the Level II fieldwork experience is not meeting the fieldwork site's expectations, the AFWC will initiate a remediation plan. The remediation plan will be completed by the AFWC, FWE, and student and will dictate areas of concern, the desired outcome, measurements of success, processes/procedures/strategies for success, and a target date for completion. If the goals of the remediation plan are not met by the target date, the student may fail OCCU 622 or OCC 632.

If a student fails OCCU 622 or OCC 632, they may only repeat one Level II fieldwork course and will be put on academic probation. If a student fails OCCU 622 or OCCU 632 more than once or both OCCU 622 and OCCU 632, the student will be dismissed from the program.

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