

Queen's University  
Occupational Therapy Program

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*Curriculum Document*

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## Background

The Queen's University Occupational Therapy Program has been educating practitioners and scholars since its establishment in 1972. The program has evolved from its early days as a diploma program to its current status as a Master's program that prepares students for entry to practice in a dynamic, evolving and culturally sensitive practice context. The occupational therapy curriculum is designed to be responsive to change in the practice environment, yet grounded in our core vision, mission and beliefs, and supported by a sound theoretical evidence base.

## Vision, Mission & Beliefs of the Occupational Therapy Program

The OT Program is guided by the following vision, mission, program values and beliefs:

### **Program Vision**

To transform individuals, communities and systems through the power of occupation.

### **Program Mission**

Inspire and educate occupational therapy professionals, leaders and scholars to advance knowledge and enable occupation for individuals, groups, communities and populations.

### **Program Values and Beliefs**

1. **Occupation.** We believe occupations have an important influence on health and well-being.
2. **Community.** We value strong relationships with our communities from local to global.
3. **Collaboration.** We see collaboration as fundamental to our work in education, research and practice.
4. **Inclusivity.** We value diversity and seek to support occupational justice for all citizens.
5. **Engagement.** We instill life-long learning through active and engaged approaches to teaching and learning.

The Queen's Occupational Therapy Program is uniquely recognized for its strong focus on communities, from local to global. The Queen's program offers an exceptional student experience on a community-connected campus with integrated and diverse community learning opportunities. The program's vision, mission, values, goals and objectives were developed in consultation with the School of Rehabilitation Therapy and Faculty of Health Sciences and are congruent with the Mission and Goals of each, as well as the broader University's Strategic Framework.

## Curricular Objectives

The OT program has identified 3 central goals that drive curricular content and our teaching approaches:

1. Prepare graduates as experts and leaders in enabling occupation.
2. Create knowledge to advance practice and influence policy.
3. Contribute to developing occupationally just communities.

To attain these goals, we look to more specific learning outcomes for our students. These curricular objectives are foundational competencies that are consistent with the component of the Competencies for Occupational Therapists Canada (ACOTRO, ACOTUP, & CAOT, 2021/2024).

By the end of the MSc(OT) Program, students will:

1. Demonstrate competency in the assessment and intervention of occupational participation. (Occupational Therapy Expertise)
2. Understand the complexities of human occupation and its reciprocal relationship with health and well-being. (Occupational Therapy Expertise)
3. Demonstrate the ability to engage in ethically informed practice. (Excellence in Practice)
4. Demonstrate effective management of professional relationships across diverse populations. (Professional Responsibility)
5. Engage with systems and processes to demonstrate professional and competent practice. (Professional Responsibility)
6. Manage resources and processes to support effective and efficient practice. (Engagement with the Profession)
7. Engage in effective and inclusive communication in diverse settings and sociocultural contexts. (Communication and Collaboration) (Culture, Equity and Justice)
8. Enable and encourage shared decision making. (Communication and Collaboration)
9. Engage in effective collaborative practice. (Communication and Collaboration)
10. Establish sustainable partnerships with individuals, groups and communities. (Communication and Collaboration)
11. Identify, synthesize and apply evidence to inform the science and practice of occupational therapy. (Excellence in Practice)
12. Develop skills and attitudes to support lifelong learning. (Engagement with the Profession)
13. Engage in independent and collaborative critical enquiry to create, share and advance knowledge. (Excellence in Practice)
14. Develop skills to advocate for change. (Professional Responsibility)
15. Collaborate to facilitate and support the occupational participation of individuals, groups, communities and populations. (Culture, Equity and Justice)

## Curriculum Framework

The Integrated Curriculum Framework presented in Figure 1 incorporates the Program’s professional and educational conceptual frameworks. This Framework is based on the program’s vision, mission, goals and objectives, and thus its expression is specific to the unique context of Queen’s and the Kingston region. On the left side of the graphic, the Instructional Framework is evident, broken down by the key educational theory that underscores our teaching strategies. The central prism depicts the core themes that organize our courses.

The right side of Figure 1 shows the professional competencies with which our learners emerge. Overall, the Integrated Framework demonstrates how our **Educational Conceptual Framework** informs teaching and learning and supports development of the core and advanced competencies depicted in the **Professional Conceptual Framework**.

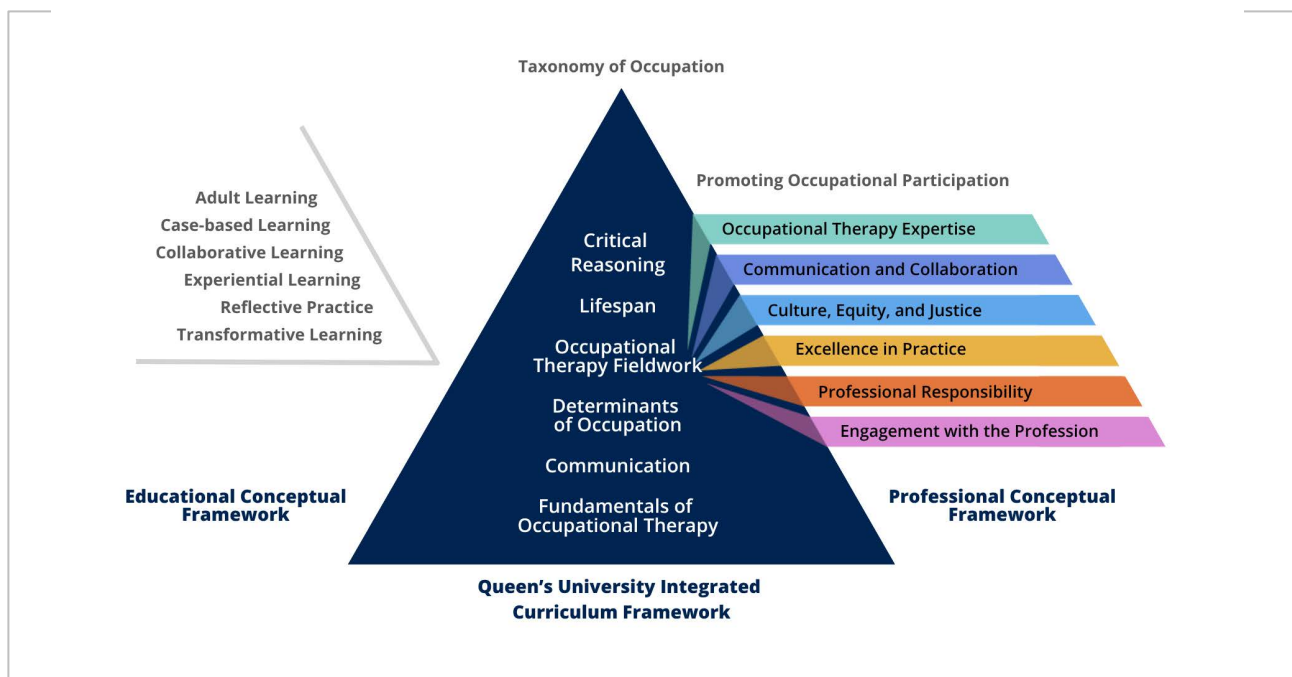
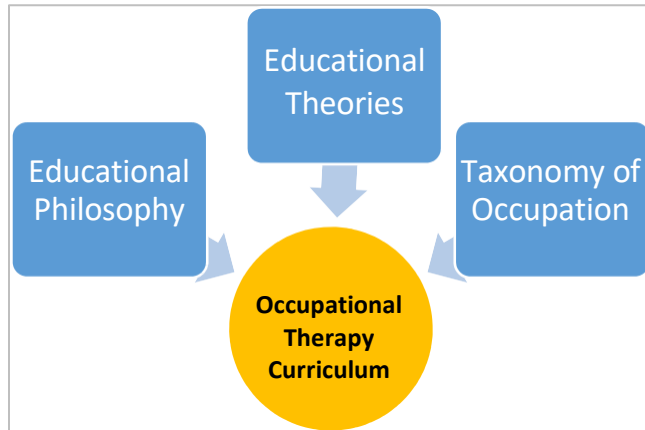


Figure 1. Integrated Curriculum Framework

## Educational Conceptual Framework

The Queen's Occupational Therapy Educational Conceptual Framework is grounded in three foundational elements: an educational philosophy, educational theories, and a taxonomy of occupation (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Theoretical Foundations**

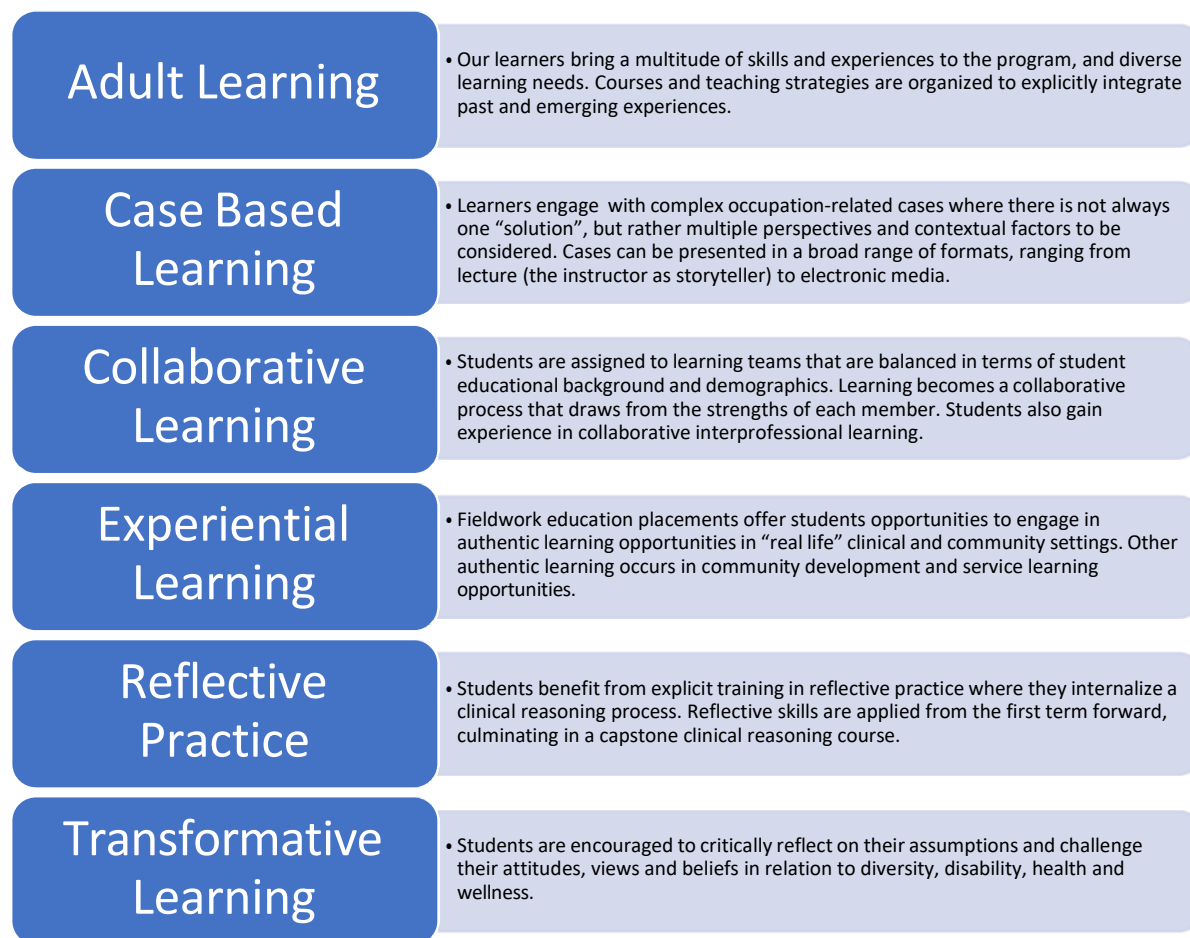
A description of each element and their theoretical backgrounds are outlined below.

**Educational Philosophy:** The Queen's Occupational Therapy Program is informed by social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1980; Lave & Wenger, 1991), where knowledge and learning are viewed as inherently social in nature, shaped by personal experiences, values and interactions. The following central beliefs underscore and support our philosophy:

- We believe in the social nature of knowledge construction, and the value that each individual brings to our learning community.
- We believe that experiences enrich the practice of occupational therapy. As such, we draw on the diverse and varied backgrounds of our student body and partners.
- We believe that occupational therapists engage in complex and varied roles in their professional practices to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities who receive occupational therapy services. Thus, we seek to ensure students have exposure to a variety of practice settings, roles and models of practice to develop the core skills to enable occupation.

Our philosophy also aligns with Queen's University's Guiding Philosophy on Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity, and is lived out in our commitment to support of diverse learners.

**Educational Theories:** Six primary educational theories inform our educational approaches and evaluation strategies (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Educational Theory Base**

**Taxonomy of Occupational Therapy:** This framework, developed by McColl (2024), guides the overall structure of our curriculum and ensures an occupation-based curriculum (Hooper et al., 2020). This taxonomy is founded on the potential of occupation to support health and well-being. Basic to this framework is the idea that both individual characteristics (physical, psychological-emotional, cognitive-neurological, and social-cultural) and environmental components contribute to occupational participation. In order to develop the potential of occupation as a means to health and well-being to understand and enable the occupational performance of clients, students require in-depth and critical knowledge of both conceptual models (those that come from the social sciences, and those that are based in occupation) and models of practice – ways of acting therapeutically to change occupations, and ways to change specific human and environmental components.

This Taxonomy has been used to design our course structure and can be seen as two of the foundational pillars in our curriculum: *Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy* and *Determinants of Occupation*. This foundation helps ground the overall curriculum in occupation as a central organizer, and to help students situate other learning related to the curriculum pillars of *Communication, Lifespan, Critical Reasoning and Occupational Therapy Fieldwork* within their core understanding of humans as occupational beings.

## Professional Conceptual Framework

The Professional Conceptual Framework for the Occupational Therapy Program is based on the foundational frameworks established in *Enabling Occupation II* (Townsend & Polatajko, 2013) and in *Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-focused Occupational Therapy* (Egan & Restall, 2022). As with our educational conceptual framework, our professional conceptual framework is founded on the Program's values and beliefs of occupation, community, collaboration, inclusivity, and engagement and the inherent meaning each of these holds in the context of occupational participation.

As an Occupational Therapy Program that is grounded in the notion of occupation, our professional philosophy is built on the Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (ACOTRO, ACOTUP, & CAOT, 2021/2024). Thus, our professional philosophy asserts the value of occupation as a means of individual and social change. The following central beliefs underscore and support our philosophy:

- We believe in the social nature of knowledge construction and the value that each individual brings to our learning community.
- We believe that experiences enrich the practice of occupational therapy. As such, we draw on the diverse and varied backgrounds of our student body and partners.
- We believe that occupational therapists engage in complex and varied roles in their professional practices to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities who receive occupational therapy services. Thus, we seek to ensure students have exposure to a variety of practice settings, roles and models of practice to develop the core skills to promote occupational participation.

## Curriculum Content & Flow

The following diagrams provide an overview of the Queen's University Occupational Therapy Curriculum. In Figure 4, the top portion of the diagram shows the primary courses offered by thematic area. As the diagram indicates, the curriculum consists of five primary themes: *Fundamentals of Occupational Therapy*; *Determinants of Occupation: Communication*; *Lifespan*; *Critical Reasoning and Occupational Therapy Fieldwork*. Parallel to each of these themes is the practical skill development component of the curriculum, which is integrated with and builds on learning within each theme area. The lower part of the document demonstrates the flow of the curriculum in terms of a temporal sense, showing the sequential and often concurrent progress of academic and fieldwork coursework. The courses that comprise the Occupational Therapy curriculum are presented on the pages that follow.



# Queen's University - School of Rehabilitation Therapy Occupational Therapy Curriculum



## The Academic Curriculum

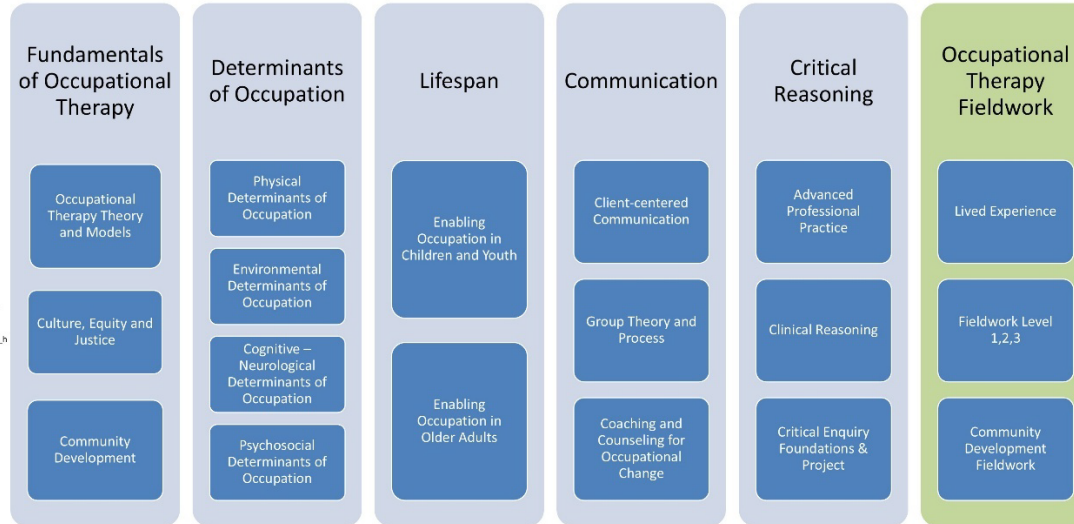


**Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (2021/2024)** provides the professional conceptual framework.

ACOTPRO, ACOTUP, & CADT. (2021/2024). Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada/Référentiel de compétences pour les ergothérapeutes au Canada. Accessed [insert date] at [https://acotro-acore.org/sites/default/files/uploads/ot\\_competency\\_document\\_en\\_hines.pdf](https://acotro-acore.org/sites/default/files/uploads/ot_competency_document_en_hines.pdf)

### Educational Approaches

- Interprofessional education
- Experiential learning
- Transformational learning
- Case based learning
- Reflective practice



Ideas  
Connections  
Extensions

## Each fieldwork course builds on academic courses

## Clinical Fieldwork

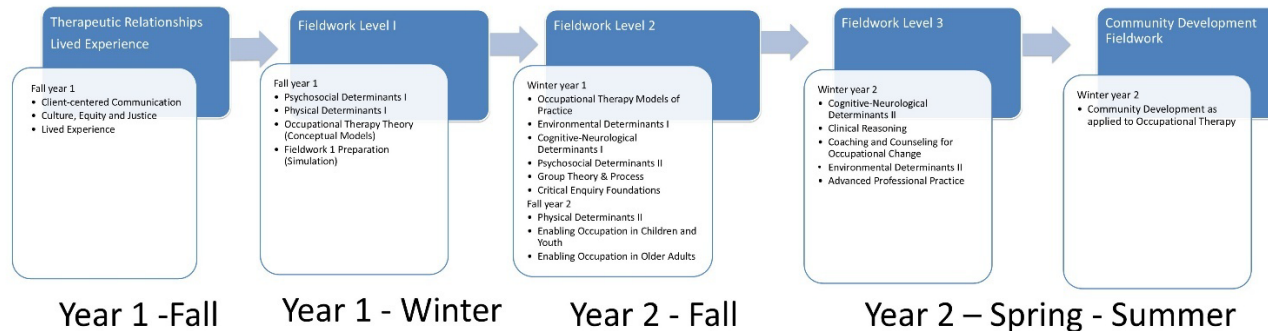


Figure 4: Occupational Therapy Curriculum Overview

Figure 5 presents an integrative map of the connections between the pillars, courses and competencies as outcomes.



**Figure 5. Occupational Therapy Integrated Curriculum Map**

## Courses Comprising the Queen’s Occupational Therapy Curriculum

### Occupational Therapy Year One Course Descriptions – 45 credits

#### **OT 801 – Conceptual Models in Occupational Therapy**

This course introduces students to the central construct of occupation and to both the consequences and determinants of occupation. We will explore the most prominent theoretical models for understanding the relationship between occupation and health, and the factors that affect occupation. The course also covers the historical development of occupational therapy theory, and key theorists over the past 100 years. (4 credit units) Contact Hours: 48

#### **OT 802 – Models of Practice in Occupational Therapy**

This course introduces students to occupational therapy interventions, processes of change, and tools for being an occupational therapist. In addition, students will apply occupational therapy theory to practice situations. (2 credit units) Contact Hours: 24

### **OT 824 Culture Equity and Justice**

This course will guide students to explore the effects of power and privilege on occupational participation and disability, connecting historical context to present-day to envision a more just, equitable future. Students will examine biases and positionality to understand their role as professionals in systems and structures that enable, constrain and/or oppress occupations. (3 credits).

### **OT 825 The Lived Experience**

In this fieldwork course, pairs of first year students meet with a volunteer from the Kingston community who has a disability. The goal of this unique learning relationship is to improve students' understanding of disability and facilitate their embracing the concept of client-centred practice whereby a client's life experiences are acknowledged, and they become partners in the occupational therapy process. (1.5 credit units) Contact Hours: 18

### **OT 846 Occupational Therapy Fieldwork I**

This fieldwork course, completed continuously and offered in a practice setting, will allow the student to focus on generic assessment skills, developing communication skills and application of OT knowledge to the practice setting. Prerequisites: OT 825 and OT 851 or permission of the course coordinator. (8 credit units) Contact Hours: 8 weeks

### **OT 851 Client-Centred Communication**

This course focuses on the development of communication skills within the context of client-centred occupational therapy practice. The critical elements of the therapeutic relationship will be developed through interviewing and assessment strategies. This course will make extensive use of supervised video taping, and interaction with community volunteers through the Clinical Education Centre. In addition, students will gain experience in professional communication skills. (4 credit units) Contact Hours: 48

### **OT 852 Group Theory and Process**

This course will examine group theory, process and application to occupational therapy practice. It will focus on groups both as a means to enabling occupational therapy change and as a means for working effectively in a complex health care system. Laboratory sessions will facilitate the development of effective techniques in group leadership and participation. (3 credit units) Prerequisite: OT 851 or permission of the course coordinator. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 881 Physical Determinants of Occupation I**

This course introduces students to human occupation from the perspective of its anatomical, physiological and biomechanical dimensions. This course will use an integrated case study format to develop understanding of movement of the human body as it relates to occupation. The course will focus on assessment methods used in physical rehabilitation and introduce musculoskeletal conditions as they relate to occupation. Theoretical frameworks and evidence-informed practice approaches and interventions will be addressed in class and weekly lab sessions. (4 credit units) Prerequisite: none. Contact Hours: 48

### **OT 882 Psychosocial Determinants of Occupation I**

This course introduces students to human occupation from the perspective of its psychological, emotional and social dimensions. This course will use a case study format to develop understanding of the person-level foundations and environmental conditions that enable occupational performance and are relevant to

psychosocial practice. Theoretical frameworks and evidence-informed practice approaches and interventions will be addressed in class and weekly lab sessions. (3 credit units) Contact Hours: 36

**OT 883 Cognitive-Neurological Determinants of Occupation I**

This course emphasizes the neuro-physiological organization of motor behaviour, sensory-motor integration, and the dynamic nature of the central nervous system and will provide a foundation for evaluating occupational performance with a focus on evaluation and intervention approaches for cognitive-perceptual and motor control problems for adults at three levels: impairment, strategy and function. Attention will be given to secondary motor performance problems. (4 credit units)

Prerequisite: OT 881. Contact Hours: 48

**OT 884 Psychosocial Determinants of Occupation II**

This course builds on attitudes, knowledge and skills developed in psychosocial dimensions of occupation I. Students will learn theoretical frameworks, practice approaches and evidence-informed interventions relevant to complex psychosocial issues within a range of specific occupational therapy practice contexts. Weekly labs will provide the opportunity for further skill development. (4 credit units)

Prerequisite: OT 882. Contact Hours: 48

**OT 886 Environmental Determinants of Occupation I**

This course provides students with foundational knowledge about environmental factors influencing occupational performance and participation in occupations. First, we examine the physical, social and institutional environments and occupational therapy approaches for assessment and intervention. Then we explore various contexts across the lifespan, including home, school, work, and community. (Lecture + lab). Contact Hours: 36

**OT 897 Critical Enquiry Foundations**

This course prepares students for the completion of OT-898 by examining world views, research designs, criteria for study quality, and evidence-based practice. Students develop skills to pose clinical questions, systematically search the literature, appraise scientific articles, and use research to inform rehabilitation practice. (3 credit units) Prerequisite: Registration in the occupational therapy program. Contact Hours: 36

**OT 898 Critical Enquiry Project (spans both years, commences mid-May year-one)**

Students will work with a faculty supervisor to complete a critical enquiry project. The project will enable students to apply critical inquiry skills by participation in an area of clinical investigation and to examine the relevance of findings to clinical practice. (6 credit units applied at completion) Prerequisite: OT 897 or permission of the course coordinator.

## Occupational Therapy Year Two Course Descriptions – 56 credits

### **OT 826 Enabling Occupation in Children and Youth**

This course provides students with the foundational knowledge to identify factors influencing performance and participation for children and adolescents. Evaluation and intervention approaches at the level of impairment, activity limitations, and participation restrictions will be explored by considering the context of service provision systems and the diverse roles of Occupational Therapy practitioners in collaboration with families and inter-professional service providers. (Lecture + lab) (4 credit units) Prerequisites: OT 881, OT 883, OT 882, OT 884. Contact Hours: 48

### **OT 827 Enabling Occupation in Older Adults**

This course provides students with the foundational knowledge necessary to identify factors influencing performance and participation of older adults. Evaluation and intervention approaches at the level of impairment, activity limitation, and participation will be explored by considering the diverse roles of occupational therapy practitioners in collaboration with families and inter-professional service providers across a range of service provision contexts. (3 credit units) Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 847 Occupational Therapy Fieldwork II**

This fieldwork course, completed continuously and offered in a practice setting, will allow students increased independence in working with clients including assessment, intervention and application of OT knowledge. Prerequisites: OT 846 or permission of the course coordinator. (8 credit units) Contact Hours: 8 weeks

### **OT 853 Coaching and Counseling for Occupational Change**

This half course consists of both theoretical background preparation and practical experiential learning opportunities to introduce occupational therapy students to selected talk-based interventions available for enabling occupational fulfilment and change (coaching, counseling and psychotherapy). Prerequisites: OT 851 or permission of the course coordinator. (3 credit units) Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 861 Community Development in Occupational Therapy**

This course critically examines the theoretical foundations and processes of working with communities through community development in order to enable occupation at the community level. Theories of community development, the process of engaging with communities, and skills required for community development will be explored as they pertain to occupational therapy. This course lays the theoretical foundation for the community development fieldwork placement, OT 862. (3 credit units) Prerequisites: OT 842, OT 851, OT 852 or permission of the course coordinator. Co-requisite: OT 862 or permission of the course coordinator. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 862 Applied Community Development**

This fieldwork course, completed continuously, will provide the opportunity for students to explore the process of working with communities to enable occupation and to create inclusive communities and environments. (6 credit units) Prerequisite: OT 847 or permission of the course coordinator. Contact Hours: 5 weeks

### **OT 871 Advanced Clinical Reasoning**

This course provides opportunities for students to develop advanced clinical reasoning skills applicable to all areas of occupational therapy practice. Based on the occupational therapy process, students will develop skills of critical thinking and inquiry. (3 credit units) Prerequisites: all first-year courses and all second-year fall-term courses or permission of the course coordinator. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 875 Advanced Professional Practice**

This course is designed to provide students with opportunities to acquire an advanced understanding of the roles, rights and responsibilities incumbent with becoming an Occupational Therapist. Particular attention will be given to the legal and ethical parameters of practice, professional contributions and responsibilities within complex and changing environments and career development as advanced healthcare professionals. Course content is designed to be responsive to the shifting practice environment and offer students an opportunity to synthesize learning from other courses within the curriculum. (3 credit units) Prerequisites: all first-year courses or permission of the course coordinator. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 877 Occupational Therapy Fieldwork III**

This fieldwork course, completed continuously and offered in a practice setting, will allow students to consolidate OT knowledge and skills. The focus of this final fieldwork placement is for the student to maximize independence in the areas of assessment, intervention, programming and evaluation. Prerequisites: OT 847 or permission of the course coordinator. (8 credit units) Contact Hours: 8 weeks

### **OT 885 Physical Determinants of Occupation II**

This course analyzes human occupation from the perspective of its anatomical, physiological and biomechanical dimensions. The course will focus on intervention methods used in physical rehabilitation to enable occupation in musculoskeletal conditions. The course is designed to build on concepts introduced in OT 881 and will use an integrated case study format to further develop an understanding of movement of the human body as it relates to occupation. Theoretical frameworks and evidence-informed practice approaches and interventions will be addressed in class and weekly lab sessions. (3 credit units) Prerequisite: OT 881. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 887 Environmental Determinants of Occupation II**

This course builds on knowledge and skills developed in Environmental Determinants of Occupation I (OT 886). Students will gain in-depth knowledge of assessment and evidence-informed interventions relevant to environmental issues and assistive technology within a range of diverse occupational therapy practice contexts, including inter-professional collaboration. Prerequisite: OT 886 or permission of the course coordinator. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 889 Cognitive-Neurological Determinants of Occupation II**

This course builds on attitudes, knowledge and skills developed in Cognitive-Neurological Determinants of Occupation I. Students will practice evaluations, and evidence-informed interventions relevant to complex cognitive-neurological issues within a range of neurological impairments in adults. Weekly labs will provide the opportunity for further skill developments. (3 credit units) Prerequisite: OT 883. Contact Hours: 36

### **OT 898 Critical Enquiry Project (spans both years, commences mid-May year-one)**

Students will work with a faculty supervisor to complete a critical enquiry project. The project will enable students to apply critical inquiry skills by participation in an area of clinical investigation and to examine the relevance of findings to clinical practice. (6 credit units applied at completion) Prerequisite: OT-897 or permission of the course coordinator.

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