

What is occupational therapy?

It is the only profession that helps people across the lifespan to do the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of daily activities (occupations). Occupational therapy practitioners enable people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health, and prevent – or live better with – injury, illness, or disability.

Common occupational therapy interventions include helping children with disabilities to participate fully in school and social situations, helping people recovering from injury to regain skills, and providing supports for older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes. Occupational therapy services typically include:

- An individual evaluation, during which the client/family and occupational therapist determine the person's goals;
- Customized intervention to improve the person's ability to perform daily activities and reach the goals, and
- An outcomes evaluation to ensure that the goals are being met and/or make changes to the intervention plan.

Occupational therapy practitioners have a holistic perspective in which the focus is on adapting the environment and/or task to fit the person, and the person is an integral part of the therapy team. It is an evidence-based practice deeply rooted in science.

Path to occupational therapy

- Earn a bachelor's degree
- Apply to an occupational therapy program
- Earn a graduate degree in occupational therapy
- Pass the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
- Obtain a license to practice occupational therapy in the state



Arkansas Colleges of Health Education

School of Occupational Therapy (ACHE OT)

Vision

The Arkansas Colleges of Health Education School of Occupational Therapy will be nationally and internationally recognized as a pioneer in innovative occupational therapy education and as a partner in practice and research to meet real world occupational needs.

Mission

To educate highly skilled and compassionate occupational therapy professionals and to prepare them to advocate for those with limited opportunities for occupational engagement.

Our mission is realized by:

- Employing educational experiences that are learner-focused, contextually authentic, and centered on occupation.
- Engaging in collaborative service, leadership, and advocacy with faculty and students in healthcare, educational, and community environments.
- Nurturing and maintaining a community of occupational therapy students, scholars, and professionals who collaborate with communities optimizing the lives of all.
- Fostering the value of healthy living by supporting occupational balance.

Student learning outcomes

1. **Health and well-being through occupation.**
Transform health and well-being through the use of occupation across the lifespan.
2. **Person, environment, occupation interaction.**
Embrace humans as occupational beings who exist within the context of their environments and occupations who desire to create/promote their own opportunities for occupational performance and engagement.
3. **Occupational therapy process.**
Creatively solve occupation-related problems with populations, communities, groups, and individuals so they can live life to the fullest.
4. **Professional engagement and commitment.**
Display a professional identity and investment in the profession necessary for success as an occupational therapy student and practitioner; thereby facilitating social change.
5. **Inquiry and scholarship.**
Appraise, design, and implement ethical scholarship to inform occupational therapy practice and positively influence health, health services, and the healthcare system.
6. **Occupational justice, leadership, and change.**
Inspire, develop, advocate, and lead occupational therapy programming that maximizes equitable occupational engagement and creates change to meet healthcare, community, and educational needs.
7. **Innovation and entrepreneurship.**
Create contemporary programming, products, and businesses for persons, groups, organizations, and communities to promote health, well-being, and participation.

Program overview

- **Type of program:** Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD)
- **Length of program:** 3-year full time (face to face, fieldwork, and capstone experience)
- **Curriculum:** Prepares the student for entry-level occupational therapy practice as a generalist with a broad exposure to practice settings (e.g., schools, hospitals, community, long-term care) and practice areas, including new and emerging areas. The curriculum prepares students to work with a variety of populations including, but not limited to, infants, children, adolescents, adults, and older adults in areas of physical and mental health. Sample courses by year:

Year one: Clinical Anatomy (with donors)
Neuroanatomy and Occupational Performance
Occupational Therapy with Infants, Children and Youth
Leadership, Occupational Justice, and Change, and
Two fieldwork experiences

Year two: Occupational Therapy with Adults
Community-Based Practice and Rural Health
Study of Health, Well-Being and Participation
Optimizing Occupations through Technology
Productive Aging
Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and
Two fieldwork experiences

Year three: Students are immersed into the practice of occupational therapy through Level II Fieldwork and Doctoral Capstone.

ACHE OT Advantage

You will learn in an authentic learning environment; prepared for contemporary occupational therapy practice. As a transformative practitioner, you will be a change agent equipped to address the occupational needs of society.

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Our Leadership & Faculty

- Experienced occupational therapy educators with a proven track record in accreditation
- Experienced occupational therapy practitioners
- Recognized as leaders in the profession
- Dedicated to the service of others

Our Learning/Teaching Approach

- Authentic learning approach and environment replacing the traditional classroom
- Active and engaging
- Learner-focused; individualized, supportive, and inclusive
- Collaborative and interprofessional

Our Learning /Teaching Resources

- State-of-the-art facilities that support the context-based teaching approach
- Specialized learning environments including Simulation/Standardized Patient Center, applied arts labs, the ACHE Interprofessional Clinic and rehabilitation center on campus
- Research facilities designed and dedicated for occupational therapy scholarship
- Experiential educators serving as fieldwork and doctoral capstone mentors
- Technology to support pioneering educational experiences

Our Community

- Focused on healthcare education
- Located in a community that embraces our students
- Located in a walkable community close to nature trails for walking and biking
- Located in a comfortable, relatively small community affording convenience



Our Focus

- Foster healthy living and well-being through occupation
- Prepare skilled and compassionate occupational therapy professionals
- Cultivate professionals to serve as change agents necessary for contemporary practice

Admission Requirements

The School of Occupational Therapy (ACHE OT) has a limited number of spaces; therefore, the admission process is competitive. The admission process, which reflects ACHE's mission, employs a rigorous review process in order to provide an individualized and holistic evaluation of every application. Each applicant is assessed based on achievements and potential in a broad range of categories. These categories include:

- Shared ideals of the ACHE School of Occupational Therapy mission
- Strength of educational performance and potential for academic success
- Commitment to intellectual and professional engagement

ACHE OT accepts applications annually beginning with the opening of the Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) application cycle. Early application is recommended, as ACHE OT runs on a rolling admission process – we start offering admission early in the cycle. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or hold a permanent residency card. ACHE does not accept international students.

Applicants complete the following requirements to be considered for admission.

1. A bachelor’s degree must be earned by the end of the semester prior to planned ACHE OT enrollment. If courses are in progress at the time of application, the final official transcript showing completion of all coursework and degree conferred must be received no later than 2 months after the start of the program. A bachelor’s degree must be completed through a regionally accredited college/university recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE).
 - All official transcripts, including coursework currently in progress, must be submitted through OTCAS as part of the application verification process (OTCAS available, beginning mid-July).
 - ACHE OT does not have set minimum GPA requirements. Applicants are reviewed through a holistic admission process, taking into consideration all factors indicating an applicant is a fit for the ACHE OT mission. However, applicants should realize competition dictates that most students will have an overall GPA >3.5 and prerequisite GPA >3.0. These standards reflect a greater opportunity for success with the curriculum and national board examination.
2. Complete all prerequisite coursework.*
3. Submit two letters of recommendation from a faculty member, current employer, occupational therapist, or other person knowledgeable of the applicant’s character and abilities. Family members are not permitted.
4. Complete the online application through OTCAS at <http://otcas.liaisoncas.org/students/>; available mid-July.

To be considered for an interview, an applicant must meet all the preceding admission requirements and meet the Technical Standards for Admission and Continued Enrollment located on the ACHE OT website. If the application is found to meet the standards and mission of ACHE OT, an invitation may be extended to the applicant for an interview. In addition to the on-site interview, the applicant will:

- Compose a brief essay on a topic provided
- Engage in dialogue with faculty, staff, and students
- Tour ACHE facilities

* Prerequisite Coursework

Sociology or Anthropology	3 credit hours
Abnormal Psychology	3 credit hours
Lifespan Development/Developmental Psychology†	3 credit hours
Statistics	3 credit hours
Anatomy and Physiology (with lab)	8 credit hours
Medical Terminology	<u>1 credit hour</u>
	21 credit hours

† Must cover entire lifespan.

These basic requirements must be taken for credit and passed at a college or university accredited by a regional accrediting body that is recognized by the USDE. All prerequisite coursework must be completed within 10 years of application. Advanced placement for prerequisite coursework, credit for experiential learning, and prerequisite work experience is not accepted.

Transfer Students & Transfer Credits

ACHE OT accepts transfer applicants in rare circumstances, and this is determined on a case-by-case basis. The following are minimal requirements: a) transfer applicants must be currently enrolled in an accredited occupational therapy program, b) transfer applicants must be passing all courses at the time of transfer and be in good standing with their current occupational therapy program, c) transfer applicants must provide a written statement outlining reasons for the request for transfer to the ACHE OT dean and must be eligible for continuing or readmission at the current occupational therapy program, d) transfer applicants must have a letter of recommendation from the dean, vice dean or senior associate deans of the prior college attended. Decisions regarding transfer are made by the dean in consultation with the ACHE OT admissions and curriculum committees and will be based on factors including academic record, circumstances leading to the transfer request, available space, and admission standards.

There is no automatic transfer of graduate credit; students must seek approval for course transfer credit. Course(s) being reviewed for transfer of credit must: a) be from a USDE approved institution, b) reflect the content and instructional delivery comparable to the ACHE OT course(s), c) course must be taken within the past 3 years with an earned grade of no less than a "B". Meeting the minimum guidelines does not ensure course(s) will be accepted for transfer credit. The ACHE OT dean has the final decision. Students wishing to transfer credits should be prepared to submit course syllabi. Course(s)/credit(s) will be reviewed by ACHE OT Curriculum Committee, with the dean making the final determination based on committee recommendation. Arkansas Colleges of Health Education (ACHE) transcripts will reflect the cumulative credit hours transferred from the previous graduate school.

Schedule a Visit

Our beautiful campus is something best experienced in person; therefore, we encourage visits! If you are interested in scheduling a visit or would like more information on our developing program, please call 479-401-6024 or send us a message admissions.ot@achehealth.edu

The School of Occupational Therapy makes its home in the new, 66,000 square-foot College of Health Sciences building located on the Arkansas Colleges of Health Education campus in Fort Smith, Arkansas. This state-of-the-art building features interprofessional learning spaces like the Live & Learn, Pediatric, and Neurology Labs that mirror "real world" practice. Students will enjoy all of the learning environments, the quiet study rooms, and so much more! With our campus police officers, students can feel safe accessing the building 24 hours a day.

- Interprofessional on-site clinic – students evaluate and treat patients alongside faculty from occupational and physical therapy.
- Live and learn area – designed to look and feel like a home environment; preparing students to help patients function in their home and community, independently.
- Pediatric area – a colorful and playful environment that affords students the opportunity to explore the role of occupational therapy with infants, children, adolescents, and their families.
- Splinting and modalities area – students engage in safe and effective use of physical agent modalities and splinting as preparatory measures to improve occupational performance of our patients. This area resembles outpatient and hand therapy clinics.
- Other learning areas are designed for interprofessional education and hands-on learning.
- 20 group study rooms equipped with monitors
- 24-hour building access
- 2 study areas (open areas)
- Access to outstanding technologies and support

In addition to these facilities, students from the School of Occupational Therapy will use the state-of-the-art anatomy lab, simulation lab, and standardized patient area, all housed on campus as well as the ACHE Research Institute Health and Wellness Center minutes away.

ACCREDITATION STATEMENT:

DOCTORAL-DEGREE-LEVEL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM (Program with Preaccreditation Status)

The entry-level occupational therapy doctoral degree program has applied for accreditation and has been granted Preaccreditation Status by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E, Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is www.acoteonline.org. The program must complete an on-site evaluation and be granted Accreditation Status before its graduates will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapist administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). In addition, all states require licensure in order to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT Certification Examination. Note that a felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.

Students must complete Level II fieldwork and experiential requirements within 24 months following completion of the didactic portion of the program.