

**San Jose State University
Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Program**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long is the Master of Science degree program?

A: The program is four academic semesters (two academic years) with two 3-month full-time fieldwork placements. The fieldwork placements are completed after the four semesters of academic work is completed. Following successful completion of the second fieldwork placement, the student graduates with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy and is eligible to sit for the national OT certification.

Q: Do all of my prerequisite courses and volunteer hours need to be completed before I can submit my application?

A: No, volunteer hours and prerequisite courses can be planned or in progress at the time you turn in your application. However, all volunteer hours and prerequisite courses must be completed prior to your entry into the program. When we review your application for admission, we require that at least 4 of the 8 prerequisite courses are completed by the time you apply and the courses have been documented with official transcripts. We require that at least 40 of the volunteer hours have been completed and documented via the "[Evaluation Form for Volunteer Experience](#)". If this documentation is not present your file may be considered incomplete and it may not receive a timely review.

Q: I am wondering if there is a pre-approved list of places to volunteer or if we can choose where we would like to go. I have several places in mind and want to be sure before I start the process.

A: We do not hold volunteer position information since things change so frequently. We recommend contacting the volunteer setting directly to inquire about a potential volunteer position. Some settings where volunteer positions are available include large research hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, private pediatric OT clinics, hand clinics, and school systems. Be sure to give the OT/L or supervisor your "[Evaluation Form for Volunteer Experience](#)" when you begin so that they know what they will need to fill out for you. You want the best volunteer experience recommendation you can get so if you do not feel like you are connecting well you might consider finding another setting. Be sure to have at least 20 hours of supervision from any one OT/L so that the OT/L is able to accurately evaluate your volunteer performance.

Q: Where do you recommend that I complete my volunteer hours?

A: Your volunteer hours supervised by an OT/L can be completed anywhere that employs an occupational therapist. The department has no specific preference about type of facility or program. A good place to start is often at a large hospital near you. Contact the volunteer coordinator and ask to be placed in the occupational therapy department. You may go to more than one facility to complete your volunteer hours but we recommend that you complete at least 30 hours in each site so that your supervisor can provide a more accurate, informed assessment of your potential as an occupational therapist. The OT/L who supervises you in each facility

must complete an "[Evaluation Form for Volunteer Experience](#)". Applicants are also required to complete a minimum of 20 hours at a community agency under the supervision of a community agency supervisor (i.e., teacher, administrator, nurse, social worker, etc.) in addition to completing the 60 hours under the supervision of an OT/L. Examples of community agencies include schools, churches, health care agencies, social-service groups, adult day centers, advocacy groups, community mental health agencies, services for the developmentally disabled, and homeless shelters just to name a few. (Click [here](#) for **updated info during shelter in place.**)

Q: *Who should write my letters of recommendation?*

A: Any person who knows you in an academic or professional context is appropriate. This can include, but is not limited to, professors, instructors, supervisors or employers. Three letters are required and can come from any combination of the above types of individuals; however, at least one letter must come from someone who can speak of your academic abilities. These individuals need not have knowledge of occupational therapy, as they are evaluating your character, academic fitness, and/or professional capabilities. Letters of Recommendation should not come from family or friends.

Q: *How do I know if a course I have taken will meet a specific prerequisite?*

A: For general (introductory) psychology and abnormal psychology, a course with this title that is designated as UC/CSU transferable (if taken at a community college) will meet the requirement. Anatomy and physiology courses must be one term (quarter or semester) each and must each include a laboratory. If taken at a community college these must also be UC/CSU transferable. Statistics courses can be upper or lower division courses in mathematics, psychology, business or other departments and must include descriptive statistics, correlations, and tests of difference (t-tests and Analysis of Variance). A survey (introductory) sociology or cultural anthropology class will meet the anthropology/sociology requirement. For the skills course requirement, almost any studio art course will qualify painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, woodworking, etc. It is preferable to take this course at a community college or 4-year college, but if this is not possible it can also be taken through adult education/parks and recreation programs or private art studios. If you take it at one of these types of facilities, you must provide documentation of the number of hours (it should be approximately 40 hours).

Neuroanatomy/Neuroscience is the only course that cannot be taken at a community college. It can be taken at SJSU either in an [online](#) or on-campus format through [Special Session](#). Check the OT department website. Courses from other institutions must be approved in advance by the occupational therapy department. Send a course syllabus to the graduate admissions coordinator for review. The [graduate admissions assistant](#) also has a list of courses that have been approved as meeting the Neuroanatomy prerequisite.

Q: *The Human Anatomy course I would like to take does not have a human cadaver associated with it. What are my options?*

A: Check all the local community colleges and universities in your area to see if they have a human cadaver lab you can take. If you are still having difficulty finding a Human Anatomy Lab that has a Human Cadaver Associated with the course, consider asking the Human Anatomy Professors in your area for suggestions as to how you might gain the 6+ hours of human cadaver experience/observation. Please contact the [Graduate Admissions Assistant](#) for information about programs that meet this requirement.

Q: I see that you used to accept either the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) or the MAT (Miller Analogies Test).

A: Beginning with the **October 2016** application period we will NO LONGER accept the MAT (Miller Analogies Test). Students wishing to apply to the program must take the GRE. A Graduate Record Examination (GRE) combined score of 297 on quantitative and verbal score is required (minimum GRE Verbal score of 153 is required and a minimum analytical writing score of 4.5 is desired). ***(Important update [here](#).)***

Note: Have an **official** copy of the GRE sent to [Graduate Admissions & Program Evaluations \(GAPE\)](#) department (SJSU code 4687) **and mail an unofficial copy** to the Department of Occupational Therapy as part of your Application Packet.

Q: How can I get my specific questions answered?

A: You can contact us by sending an email to the [Graduate Admissions Assistant](#) or by calling (408) 924-3094.

If you require a face-to-face advising session, you can schedule one with the graduate assistant or graduate advisor. Advising is also provided at the advising sessions posted on the [website](#). You are also welcome to visit the department; please contact us in advance to arrange. General campus tours are available most days and can be booked [online](#).

Q: What undergraduate major is preferred for entry into the occupational therapy program?

A: We do not prefer any particular undergraduate major. Any major is acceptable. We value a diverse class and select for a variety of academic, work, and life experiences.

Q: Is it necessary to be a California resident to apply to your program?

A: No, students are accepted from throughout the United States as well as internationally. However, non-residents accepted into the program must pay out-of-state tuition. For more information, please check the [Graduate-Admissions](#) website.

Q: I received my college degree outside of the U.S. What do I need to do to apply to your program?

A: Your college/university transcripts must be evaluated by Graduate Studies prior to applying. If your degree program was conducted in a language other than English, you will also need to take an English proficiency exam such as the TOEFL or the IELTS. Go to this [website](#) for more information. You may also want to contact Jessica Hernandez at (408) 924-2406 if you have any questions about your Graduate Studies & Admissions application.

Q: Do students work while attending the program?

A: Many of our students work 1-2 days per week. Classes are held 3-4 days per week and students often work on non-class days. We recommend that you work no more than 15 hours per week during the first year of the program so that you can focus on the demanding coursework. During both years of the program you need to allot additional on-campus time in addition to scheduled classes to work on group projects, participate in practicum assignments, etc.

Q: *What financial aid is available?*

A: The usual loans are available through the [SJSU financial aid office](#). If you plan to apply for financial aid it is important to complete and submit a FAFSA form by the due date (usually early March). The University and OT department also have several scholarships available to students once they have completed at least one semester in the program. Information about these scholarships is provided to all incoming students.

Q: *What is the most important part of the application packet?*

A: Every part of the application packet is carefully reviewed, and each student is evaluated as an individual, but minimum scores must be achieved for the GRE and GPA.

Q: *Why must I apply both to the department and to Graduate Studies?*

A: You must apply to Graduate Studies so that your eligibility to be a graduate student can be evaluated. Graduate Studies must receive your online application to the university, your GRE score, as well as a copy of the official transcript from **every** 2-year and 4-year undergraduate institution you attended in order to evaluate your application. The OT department makes the final decision about whether students are admitted to the occupational therapy Master's program based on the materials listed on the website. After review of your file you will receive an unofficial letter from the department regarding your admission status, followed by an official letter from Graduate Studies.

Q: *Can I get transfer credit or credit for experiential learning for this program?*

A: The program *does not* accept advanced placement, transfer of credit, or credit for experiential learning for this program.

Q: *What other advice do you have for applicants?*

A: Complete your application early! We admit on a rolling basis so it is to your advantage to complete your application file as soon as possible after the admissions period begins. Applications are accepted in the department and in Graduate Studies beginning **October 1**. We can begin reviewing your application as soon as all the documents have been received. The deadline for submitting applications and application materials is on February 1st of each year, though we recommend submitting the application as soon as possible.

Q: *What is the International Experience Requirement?*

A: For students entering the Master's degree program in occupational therapy as of Fall 2015, the occupational therapy department is initiating an international experience requirement. The overall goal for the international experience is to gain cross-cultural and cross-national insight into the political, social, cultural and economic factors that influence the provision of occupational therapy services outside of the U.S. and define the role of occupational therapy within the system of care. Social and occupational justice issues are explored, and the role of the student as a global citizen is emphasized. Several types of international experiences are available, including faculty-led study abroad programs and service trips that can be completed during Winter or Summer sessions. Many of the experiences include opportunities to engage with local people in the provision of occupational therapy services. Most of the experiences are

interdisciplinary, allowing students to work and study with students and providers from a variety of healthcare professions. Time abroad typically ranges from one to three weeks with assignments completed prior to the trip and after returning. Students register for 1-6 units of coursework for the international experience. These courses fulfill requirements for the degree.

Contact the [graduate admissions assistant](#) to check on the status of documents in your file.

NOTE on application submission:

The Department of Occupational Therapy will be using the OTCAS (The Centralized Application Service for Occupational Therapy) application process for the 2015/2016-application period. Instructions for applying to our program can be found here on our department website as well as at [OTCAS](#).