FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE WEEKEND NATURE OF THE PROGRAM.

Is the program considered to be part-time?
No. Although courses are scheduled on weekends, the program involves a full-time graduate load of 9 to 11 credits per semester or 30 credits per year (total = 60 credits).

When are courses held?
The graduate courses are generally scheduled every other weekend. However, Level I and Level II Fieldworks take place Monday through Friday during the regular work week. Level I Fieldworks happen one day a week for 7-11 weeks each trimester. There are two Level II Fieldworks scheduled the last two trimesters of the program. Each of them are 12 weeks long.

Do fieldworks happen on the weekend, too?
No, fieldwork generally happens during the work week. On Level I Fieldworks, students spend one day per week (M-F), and in Level II Fieldworks, students spend 40 hours a week (usually M-F) under the direct mentorship of an occupational therapy in the clinic.

What are the weekends like?
The weekend format is an intense learning experience. The amount of information covered in one weekend is equivalent to what is covered in 4-5 classes in a traditional program. The weekend involves a mixture of lecture and discussion, small group problem solving, and active hands-on practice. Several clinicians, with expertise in a particular area of practice, are usually scheduled to make guest presentations during each weekend.

What are the expectations between class weekends?
A great deal of independent learning and participation in online discussions is necessary between classes. Students are expected to actively participate in online discussions (Blackboard or similar technology), as well as complete assignments including research and observation based papers. Some classes may schedule open labs or practical exams during weekdays/evenings. Level I Fieldwork occurs between class weekends, as well.

What type of student is well-suited for a weekend program?
The program is well suited for the adult learner who is motivated, self-directed and takes charge of his/her own learning. It requires strong self-initiation and the ability to organize, structure, and manage one's learning and time efficiently.

Do students work full time while in the program?
Full time work is not recommended, with a maximum of 25 hours per week suggested.

ABOUT THE COURSES AND CURRICULUM.

What are the fieldwork requirements of the program?
There are two types of fieldwork required in the program - Level I and Level II. The fieldwork experiences are arranged through the Director of Clinical Education, and the majority are scheduled during the week.

- Level I fieldwork: Students are required to spend one day per week (M-F) in an assigned clinic for approximately 7-12 weeks during each fall and spring semester. The Level I practice settings match the lifespan age population being studied each term. Level I fieldwork is expected to be completed simultaneously with the coursework.

- Level II fieldwork: Students must complete a total of 24 weeks of full time Level II fieldwork to graduate from the program and to be eligible for the national exam and state licensure. Level II placements are typically completed at the end of the program in two 12 week full-time, unpaid, fieldwork experiences. Specialty or 3rd fieldwork experiences are offered in focused areas such as hand rehabilitation or pediatric early intervention after the student completes the basic fieldwork experiences. All Level II fieldwork requirements must be completed within 24 months of the completion of coursework unless granted an extension by the Program Director and faculty review committee.
• Occasionally, some fieldwork sites will require criminal background checks, or require students to obtain finger-prints. It is the responsibility of the student to comply with these requirements.

Are there research requirements in the program?
A capstone project is required. Students work in small groups with faculty and/or experienced clinicians in either collaborative research teams or community program development teams. Many projects are clinically oriented and continue from one year to the next. Students meet with their teams monthly throughout the second year. Approximately 10 hours of independent work is required per month; depending on the project, this may include data collection in a clinic or the community.

How long does it take to complete the program?
It takes 5 trimesters of coursework, and 2 semesters of fieldwork. If students stay on track, it takes about 28 months.

...ABOUT PREREQUISITES.

In what sequence should the Mercy-specific science courses be taken?
The following order is suggested:
• BIOL 130/130A and BIOL 131/131A should be taken first, as they are prerequisites for later courses.
• HLSC 302 Pathology for Rehabilitation
• HLSC 303 Human Anatomy with Cadaver (prerequisite for Clinical Kinesiology; previously BIOL 303)
• HLSC 314 Clinical Kinesiology and Applied Physics
• HLSC 410 Applied Neuroscience for the Rehabilitation Professional.

Please note: no more than two science courses can be taken at the same time

Can the prerequisite courses be taken at another college?
General prerequisites can be taken at another College, however students who choose to take these courses elsewhere should submit the course description to the OT Program advisor prior to taking the course to insure the content is equivalent to Mercy’s course. Note that the Developmental Psychology course must cover the entire lifespan including childhood, adolescence, adulthood and geriatrics. Program Specific Prerequisites such as Human Anatomy with Cadaver, Kinesiology, Pathology, and Neuroscience should be taken at Mercy College within the last 5 years. Transfer credit may be given for some of these courses if a competency exam is passed.

What if I repeat a prerequisite course?
The grades of any general prerequisite will be replaced. However, the grade from Mercy specific prerequisites will be averaged together for the application. For example, if a student receives a “C” in an HLSC course, and an “A” when the course is repeated, the grade for the application will be “B.”

...ABOUT APPLICATION.

When should I apply for entry into the September class?
Admissions applications will be accepted between May 15th and July 10th one year prior to the start date of the Graduate OT Program. All materials including references on the college form as well as essays must be submitted by the deadline for consideration of admission. Students are encouraged to submit their applications early.

What kind of GPA do I need to apply and be accepted?
A 3.0 is required for application; however, in recent years the average GPA of admitted students has been 3.6 in the prerequisite courses.

Is volunteer experience required?
Volunteer experience is encouraged, but not required. The Overview of Occupational Therapy Practice course is required, and will help students gain an appreciation of the scope of occupational therapy practice, as well as the diversity of clients and disabilities encountered in the profession. This course has been developed to help students learn more about a career in occupational therapy, and is designed to prepare students to enter the Mercy College Graduate Occupational Therapy Program.
...ABOUT ADMISSION

What is the admission decision based on?
All application portfolios are initially reviewed according to the following categories. Within each category, points are awarded based on the strength of the performance in that particular category.

- Previous degree GPA (3.0 minimum required; 3.4-3.6 highly recommended)
- Prerequisite Average GPA (3.0 minimum; 3.4-3.6 highly recommended)
- Number of Mercy-specific prerequisites completed
- Letters of Reference
- Essay

Once these aspects have been reviewed, select candidates may be invited for an interview, at which time an on-site writing sample is also obtained. The results of the interview and the on-site writing sample are then factored into the results of the initial review.

...MISCELLANEOUS FAQ’S

Do I have to sit for boards?
Graduates of the Occupational Therapy Program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for occupational therapists administered by the National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). After successful completion of this exam, the individual will be an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). If you have been convicted of a felony in your past, it will be important to discuss this as soon as possible, as it could impact your ability to sit for the national board exam.

How do I find a volunteer or paid job in occupational therapy?
Visit the Career Development Center in Room 216 at the Dobbs Ferry Campus or call (914) 674-7660 and ask about the Cooperative Education Program. With the help of a counselor, you can locate a position in an occupational therapy setting and earn 3-6 credits in a related Cooperative Education course.

Are there scholarships available?

- Mercy College also offers graduate assistantships to eligible students. These assistantships provide partial tuition in exchange for a weekly work commitment.
- Students accepted into the Graduate OT Program are eligible to apply for scholarships with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). Students interested in receiving information and an application should call the NYCDOE Office of Related and Contractual Services at 212-374-1081 in January of the year they intend to start the program.
- Some health care facilities offer scholarships that require employment agreements upon graduation.
- The American Occupational Therapy Association also offers scholarships; information may be obtained by calling (301) 652-2682.

Is the program accredited?
Yes. The Occupational Therapy Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220. ACOTE’s phone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA; their web address is www.acoteonline.org and their email is accred@aota.org.