

Occupational Therapy

A degree, a career, a passport to the world



OTAGO

POLYTECHNIC

Te Kura Matatini ki Otago

**Occupational
Therapy**



Occupational Therapy – what is it?

Occupational therapy is a health profession concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation. Occupation refers to everything that people do during the course of their life (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 2003).

Occupational therapists work:

- > in schools with children and disabilities
- > with people who have had a head injury
- > in the community with people with mental health concerns
- > in hospitals with older people enabling their return to home
- > enabling people to cope with life changes
- > in rehabilitation settings e.g. after a stroke
- > in the workplace to adapt the physical environment
- > in community settings assisting people to develop life skills
- > in the field of primary health, e.g. falls prevention.





Occupational Therapy

A degree, a career and a passport to the world

Students graduating from this programme are able to apply for registration as an occupational therapist in New Zealand. Workplaces in New Zealand are eager to employ our graduates after completion of the programme. Graduates are able to work in many countries throughout the world; recent graduates have gained employment in Australia and the UK. Some countries require additional postgraduate qualifications.

Occupational therapists can be found working not only with people of all ages with different needs, but in different roles within organisations; they may be team leaders, managers, educators, consultants or researchers. They can be an employee of a government organisation (e.g. hospitals or schools) or a non-government organisation (e.g. community support and education groups), and an increasing number work in private practice.

Graduates can continue their studies by enrolling in:

- > **Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours)**

The Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy also offers the following:

- > **Postgraduate Certificate in Occupational Therapy**
- > **Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Practice in Health (Specialty)**
- > **Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Therapy Practice**
- > **Master of Occupational Therapy.**

See diagram on inside back cover.

Otago Polytechnic reserves the right to alter or amend information, and withdraw programmes without notice. All programmes are subject to change.



Photo credit: courtesy of Tourism Dunedin

Studying in Dunedin

Dunedin is a city that is vibrant, full of energy and opportunities with 20% of its population being students.

Dunedin gives students the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of cultural, sporting and social activities.

Otago Polytechnic is based within the hub of student education facilities, activities and accommodation. It is situated in North Dunedin, just five minutes walk from the city centre.



Photo: courtesy of Hamilton Gardens

Studying in Hamilton

The School of Occupational Therapy is situated on the City Campus of Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec), where the main Wintec library and the Gallagher Hub are also located.

The campus is in the heart of Hamilton's CBD, only a few minutes' walk to major shopping malls, banks, movies, restaurants and the City Transport Centre.

“I really enjoy supporting families to understand and support their children.”

Anna



I am the director of a private community-based practice called reThink Children’s Therapy where I am involved with a variety of people including children, youth and their families. Many of the children and young people I work with come from very complex backgrounds and present with challenging behaviour as well as developmental concerns. The practice focuses on providing diagnosis, assessment and intervention for young people in their home, school and community. The goal is to help families and teachers to understand the developmental needs of the young people they support.

A typical week at reThink Children’s Therapy involves working in the clinic with a team of health professionals to assess and provide diagnosis for children. I also spend

time in the community working one-to-one with children to develop their emotional regulation, self-care, play and social skills. I use my skills as an occupational therapist teaching young people to complete the activities they enjoy and to adapt activities and environments to accommodate for each young person’s needs. I teach the parent/caregiver and teachers about the child’s strengths and difficulties and show them how to modify a game or task to the level the child can achieve. I really enjoy working with families to support and understand their children. I love watching the dynamics between children and their parent/caregiver as a child attempts or achieves a task for the first time.

These stories from our graduates demonstrate some of the non-traditional areas and emerging roles that occupational therapists work in.

According to statistics from the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand approximately 50% of occupational therapists work within District Health Boards, with the other 50% employed in a range of settings such as private practice, schools and non-government organisations.

“I really enjoy the diversity of this role and the challenges it throws my way.”

Emily



I am currently practising as an occupational therapist at New Zealand Aluminium Smelter (NZAS) as Recovery Coordinator. I have been practising for three years. My current role involves working with the employees of NZAS that have suffered injury/illness and because of that are unable to maintain their regular level of functioning within the workplace.

My typical day consists of assessing a person's level of function, which can be both physical and/or cognitive in conjunction with our onsite occupational physician and local GPs. I carry out worksite assessments for clients post-injury in the workplace. I use my OT skills on a daily basis when assessing movement and posture and how these affect a person's ability to complete the full work of their role.

For me “occupation” is a very loaded word. When it comes to working at a place like NZAS it is imperative you have a good understanding of the word and what it means to YOU. For me it's belonging and doing – without this understanding I would not be able to work with my clients as they face occupational disruption or loss and what this does to their sense of belonging and doing.

I really enjoy the diversity of this role and the challenges it throws my way! I would really encourage anyone who is practical, inventive and a people person to consider a career in occupational therapy.

“This job really allows me to use my skills in a meaningful way.”

Dave



I am employed as an occupational therapist at a school that provides education and therapy to students aged from 5 to 21 who have complex needs. The main focus for occupational therapy is development of skills allowing for as independent a future as possible and engagement in meaningful roles. Within this we look at sensory processing, behaviour, access and environmental adaptation, task analysis and modification, wheelchairs, seating, assistive technology, life-skills and advocating for students.

This job really allows me to use my skills in a meaningful way. Here this means helping the students become who they want to be despite the challenges they face.

The most exciting example of this is a student with a severe head injury who is now using technology to communicate and control his environment. He has been actively participating in DJing at a barn dance, digital photography and cooking using only the movement of his eyebrow. Now that opportunities are open to him we get to see his true teenage behaviour, it's fantastic.

“I love working with people of all cultures, ethnicities and religious backgrounds and supporting people to achieve their dreams.”

Jarrah



I work for the New Zealand Red Cross as the Dunedin Pathways to Employment Team Leader, we support people from a refugee background into employment, further education and training. I have predominantly worked in the mental health, youth mental health and former refugee resettlement fields. I have also worked in vocational rehabilitation and my degree has allowed me to travel and work in Europe.

At the Red Cross we support people to understand kiwi workplace culture, assess people's transferable skills and support people to develop their careers. We talk to businesses about the benefits of hiring someone from a refugee background; promote opportunities for social and educational participation for people with low levels of English and educate the public and other organisations about resettlement and ways they can help.

I love working with people of all cultures, ethnicities and religious backgrounds and supporting people to achieve their dreams. I love seeing people move into work and begin to feel self-sufficient again and begin to rebuild their lives in a new country. One of the best aspects is seeing kiwi workplaces and teams support new workers to settle into their jobs and work together in a multicultural environment.

“As an occupational therapist, you become a person who understands the joys of living a life that is rich due to the people who surround you, the things you do and the places you experience them in.”

Carolyn



If you are looking for a career that gives you the opportunity to enrich people's lives supporting them to do the things they want or need to and you like to solve problems creatively, then occupational therapy is for you!

I have been working for Community Living since 2011, our team works with clients from the age of 15 who have an intellectual disability and an accompanying physical disability. I work with families/whanau, support staff, service providers, other community health professionals, and community organisations.

I enjoy my role – there is never what you would consider 'a typical day.' For example, I could be working with a teenager to adapt an activity they enjoy but have difficulty with, or an 85-year-old living in a supported home, who is struggling with their independence in everyday activities.

The range of ages and abilities that our clients have is another factor that I value within my role. I love being out in the community working in people's own homes, to support them to participate in activities that have meaning for them. I also value having the time and space to learn about a client alongside the people who know them best. I advocate for people in the community who are vulnerable and are often left out of life. In my opinion this takes real courage!

“I really enjoy time working directly with clients and identifying creative ways to overcome barriers to doing what is important to them.”

Helen



I am a new graduate in my first job working in private practice for Active+, a rehabilitation service provider. I work with clients aged 18 and over who have had a variety of injuries that require rehabilitation

A typical day includes coordinating and delivering services for clients, liaising with the Accident Compensation Corporation, and writing reports. I really enjoy time working directly with clients. My initial work often starts with finding ways to motivate them. This involves listening to the client's concerns and developing goals together, which have meaning and purpose for them. My work with Active+ involves a wide variety of clients, environments, contracts, and colleagues. My work is wide-ranging and fast-paced, which I enjoy. The diversity means I have

developed my organisational and communication skills. My greatest satisfaction is hearing clients express hope for the future, actively planning and working towards goals.

My Occupational Therapy degree really prepared me for this role, providing fieldwork experiences and doing assignments that were relevant to this area. I decided to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Occupational Therapy straight after finishing my degree. It was difficult combining work and study, but I'm glad to have done it and it has increased my confidence and knowledge.

The Bachelor of Occupational Therapy programme

The Bachelor of Occupational Therapy is a three-year degree programme which is accredited by the New Zealand Occupational Therapy Board and the World Federation of Occupational Therapists.

This programme involves students in a stimulating array of courses.

Year 1

Students focus on three key components of occupational therapy: people, environments and occupation. They are introduced to Occupational Therapy profession, and to the knowledge that informs occupational therapy.

Year 2

The knowledge and the skills being developed from Year 1 are applied to people, environments and occupations.

Year 3

Students continue to develop their professional reasoning, considering the complexities of Occupational Therapy practice.

The Bachelor of Occupational Therapy programme is delivered to students from two campuses – Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin and Wintec in Hamilton, using the same learning methods.

Fieldwork comprises approximately one third of the Bachelor's programme. Students are placed throughout New Zealand during their fieldwork where they are supervised by occupational therapists to develop their occupational therapy practice skills.

Entry criteria

NCEA Level 3 including:

- > 14 credits at **Level 3 or above** in three NZQA approved university entrance subjects, **and**
- > Literacy – 10 credits at **Level 2 or above**, made up of:
 - > 5 credits in reading and 5 credits in writing, **and**
- > Numeracy – 10 credits at **Level 1 or above**, made up of:
 - > Specified achievement standards available through a range of subjects **OR**
- > Package of three numeracy unit standards (26623, 26626, 26627 – **all** three required)
- **OR** you can demonstrate equivalence to the above academic entry criteria with
 - (a) a qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) equalling at least 60 credits completed in one year
OR
 - (b) successful completion of university courses/units equalling at least 50 per cent of a first-year student workload completed in one year.
- **International students** will be individually assessed to ensure they meet degree-level entry requirements.
- **If English is not your first language**, you must also demonstrate English language skills equivalent to an IELTS overall band score (academic) of 6.5, with no band score less than 6.5.

Additional Criteria

- > You must submit a cover letter which outlines the skills and knowledge you currently have that you feel will be of benefit to you in this career. Please also include details of any current study you are enrolled in this year.
- > You must provide a Level 2 First Aid Certificate and a medical examination report.
- > You must submit recommendations of suitability from two referees who are not family members or friends (e.g. family friends or personal friends).
- > All applicants who are accepted must have a health declaration, provide immunisation status and complete the requirements of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 (includes police vetting).

Provisional entry

An applicant who does not meet all of the entry criteria may be given provisional entry to Year 1 at the discretion of the Head of College.

Fieldwork placements

Fieldwork placements give you the chance to experience occupational therapy practice. It is one of the most enriching and challenging aspects of the occupational therapy degree.

Fieldwork placements are organised by the fieldwork team.

Fieldwork schedule

Over the three years of the programme the school will send you on fieldwork placements **throughout** New Zealand. Students are required to complete a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised fieldwork to meet WFOT regulations. The current distribution of fieldwork hours is:

Placement No.	Hours per week	Weeks	Total	Location
1	35	4	140	Anywhere within NZ
2	6.5	14	90	Dunedin or Hamilton
3	35	8	280	Anywhere within NZ
4	35	8	280	Anywhere within NZ
5	17.5	8	140	Dunedin or Hamilton
Class based fieldwork			112	
		Total hours	1042	

Otago Polytechnic's School of Occupational Therapy attempts to ensure students have clinical experience in a wide range of settings. These may include hospital, community, education, voluntary and justice. Other criteria include a mix between rural and urban placements, acute and long term settings, and a variety of different age groups, from preschool to older people.

It is the responsibility of the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy, not the student, to set up and negotiate the timing of student placements.

Travel

The Dunedin and Hamilton geographical areas are unable to offer the required clinical settings for all of a student's fieldwork placements.

You will therefore be **required to complete placements outside the Dunedin and Hamilton areas**. You must be prepared to travel to a placement anywhere in New Zealand. Students need to budget for these placements. Expenses that are the responsibility of the student are:

- > Travel to and from the placement (either by plane, car or public transport)
- > Accommodation while on placement (plus all meals, and daily transport to and from placement workplace)

Other expenses for placement

You may also have to continue to pay rent for your accommodation in Dunedin or Hamilton while on placement, and you may not be able to earn any extra money while you are away. Some halls of residence may offer a small reduction to your accommodation fees while you are on placement.

Placements are usually allocated four to six weeks before their scheduled start date. Prompt booking of travel and travel insurance is recommended to decrease costs. Travel insurance and flexi fares should be taken out as placements may sometimes need to be changed.

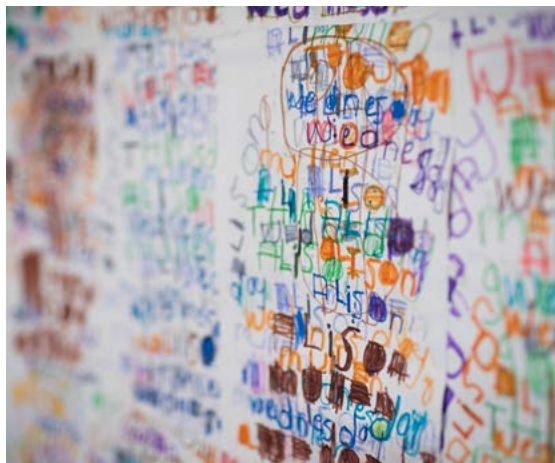
A uniform is required for some fieldwork settings. The approximate cost of the uniform is \$45. Further details about uniforms will be provided in the first week of Year 1.

Driver's licence

Having a full driver's licence is important. Without a full licence your placement options and future employment prospects will be reduced. We recommend that you proceed to a full driver's licence as quickly as possible.

Overseas placements

A small number of students may complete an overseas placement.



Programme Structure: Sample Calendar

The Bachelor of Occupational Therapy is an applied pre-registration degree completed over three years of full-time study. The academic semester is organised as outlined in the table below.

KEY	Academic courses
	Fieldwork – note that some FW hours are also completed within academic courses.

YEAR 1 – Level 5

Semester 1 (weeks)															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Foundations of Occupational Therapy – 15 credits												Fieldwork 1 15 credits			
Professional Practice – 15 credits															
Human Body and Movement – 30 credits (15 per sem)															

Semester 2 (weeks)															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Fieldwork 2 – 15 credits															
Building Cultural Competency in Practice – 15 credits															
Human Body and Movement (continued) – 30 credits (15 per semester)															
Human Mind and Behaviour – 15 credits															

YEAR 2 – Level 6

Semester 1 (weeks)															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Applied Professional Practice – 30 credits															
Occ Therapy: Theory in Practice 15 credits								Informing Practice: Person 15 credits							

Semester 2 (weeks)															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Informing Practice: Environment 15 credits								Fieldwork 3 30 credits							
Informing Practice: Occupation 15 credits															

YEAR 3 – Level 7

Semester 1 (weeks)															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Professional Reasoning 15 credits		Complexity in Practice: Person – 15 credits												Professional Reasoning (cont.)	
		Complexity in Practice: Occupation – 15 credits													
		Complexity in Practice: Environment – 15 credits													

Semester 2 (weeks)															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Fieldwork 4 30 credits								Fieldwork 5 – 15 credits							
								Elective: Transition Showcase or Transition Negotiated Learning 15 credits							

About blended learning

Whether you choose to study in Dunedin or Hamilton, the learning experience is similar.

The programme is taught through “blended learning”. Students access learning resources online, as well as engaging in on-campus face-to-face learning activities which can include real-life scenarios, personal research, groups and community experiences.

Blended learning enables you to access a range of learning materials when and where it suits you.

Managing your own learning, identifying and using opportunities to further your learning inside and outside the classroom environments are important skills needed to be successful in this programme.

How can you
prepare for being a
self-directed learner?

To ensure you are prepared for managing your own learning there are some key strategies.

Know how you learn best

Do you learn best by listening, writing or doing?
What strategies do you use to enhance your learning style?

Apply time management strategies

You will be expected to manage your own time and complete tasks/activities prior to attending class as this will integrate and consolidate your in-class learning. There are many useful tips online on how to manage your time – know and apply the strategies that fit with your preferred learning style. Plan out your study using a diary (electronic or hard copy) or a study plan.

Computer Requirements

You will have access to shared computers at the Dunedin and Hamilton campuses, but ideally you should have your own computer – a laptop with a broadband connection is recommended. IT support staff are available to assist. If it has been some time since you have used a computer, it is recommended that you attend an introductory computing course as preparation for entry into the programme.

Students enrolled in the programme will need daily access to:

- > computer capable of running the following software, accessing the internet and playing audio and video files (i.e. has a sound card with speakers or headphones).
- > An Internet connection – you will need a broadband connection to take full advantage of video and audio resources provided.
- > An Internet Browser (e.g. latest versions of Firefox, IE, Chrome). Media player software for playing common audio and video files either as a standalone software (e.g. iTunes, QuickTime, VLC media player) or plug-ins to your internet browser (e.g. Flash). Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 7 or above) for displaying PDF files.
- > A word processing programme – the latest Microsoft Word programme can be installed via a link in your OP student email account free of charge for the duration of your study
- > Students should also be comfortable with using the computer and digital media, including – basic file management, email and word processing skills, YouTube and social media sites.



Registration as an occupational therapist

On completion of your degree, you are required to apply to the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (OTBNZ) for registration to practise as an occupational therapist in New Zealand. We bring your attention to the following requirement for students for whom English is a second language (includes international, permanent residents, and New Zealanders for whom English is a second language).

It is a requirement of OTBNZ for occupational therapists to practise in New Zealand, to have an excellent command of the English language to enable them to communicate effectively with clients and other health professionals.

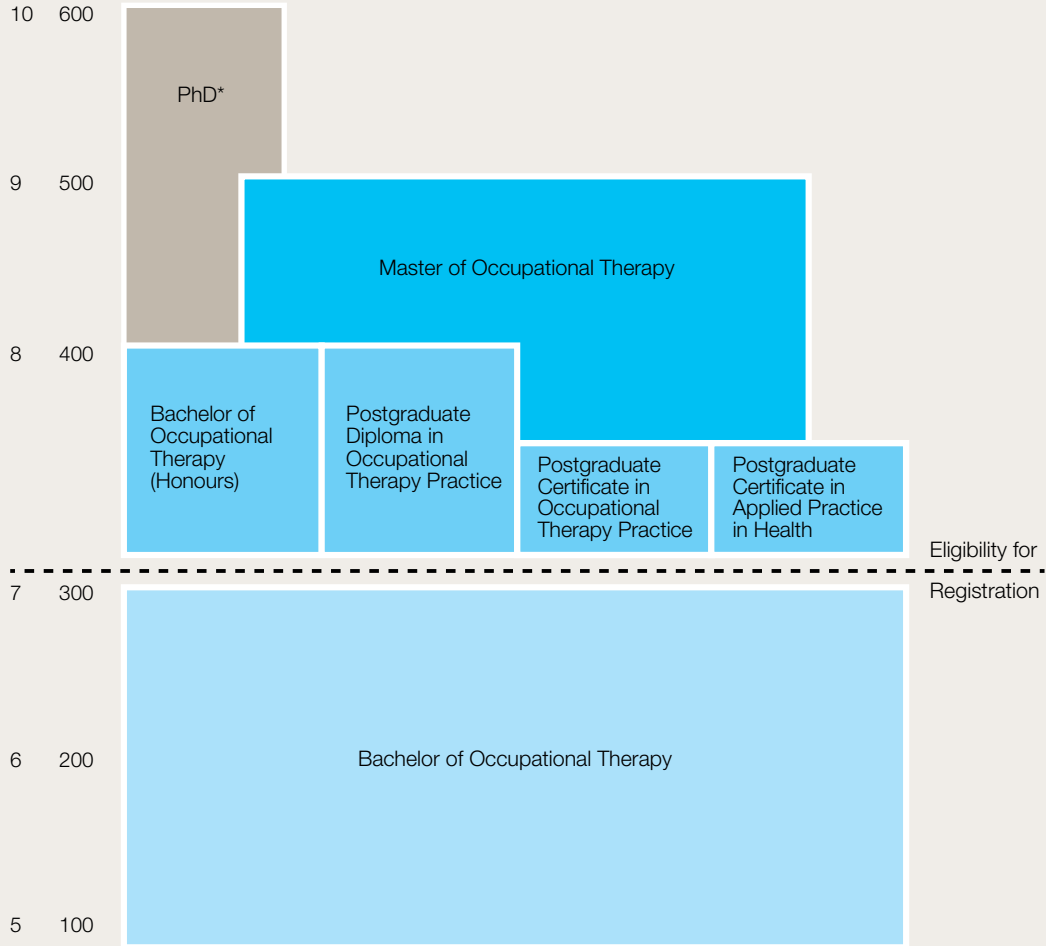
If English is not your first language, you must demonstrate English language skills equivalent to an IELTS overall band score (academic) of 7.0, with no band score less than 7.0.



**For further information
please visit www.otboard.org.nz**

Structure of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

NZQA Levels



**Otago Polytechnic provides a pathway that enables you to apply to complete a PhD at another institution.*



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