

**School of Health Sciences  
Occupational Therapy Doctorate Program**

**APPLICATION & ADMISSION PROCESS**

**Purpose:**

To inform you about the specific application and admission requirements for the Occupational Therapy Doctorate Program. Please, read the instructions and information on this document carefully. The application and admissions process has two phases:

1. Early Admission/Regular Admission
2. Enrollment & Confirmation

**Admission Requirements**

The curriculum is designed for students who have a bachelor's degree or are in the process of completing a bachelor's degree from a regionally, nationally, or internationally accredited institution with a cumulative average of at least a 3.0, based on a 4.0 grade point scale.

Applicants must earn a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited university or college by **August 1st** of the year the candidate seeks to be admitted. *Students who are in the process of completing any of the below courses are encouraged to apply. Acceptance into the OTD program may be granted, under the condition that the prerequisite course(s) will be completed before the start of the OTD Program.*

The following courses are a list of the pre-professional course requirements for admission to the doctorate program:

1. At least 9 credit hours of Psychology (including human/lifespan development and abnormal psychology)
2. At least 8 credit hours in Biological Sciences (including general biology, human anatomy and physiology)
3. At least 3 credit hours in a stand-alone mathematically based Statistics Course
4. At least 3 credit hours of Introductory Sociology
5. At least 3 credit hours of English Composition
6. At least 1 credit hour of Medical Terminology

**All above-listed courses must be completed with a minimum grade of a B.**

The acceptance and evaluation of credit for transfer is based on various factors, including: the level, content, quality, comparability, and degree program relevance of the proposed transfer credits; the institution's accreditation; and assessment of course equivalency through evaluation of the transcript. Transfer credits are accepted from Regionally Accredited Institutions for appropriate courses which will pertain to the declared degree at FMU.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications to the program open must be submitted online through either:

- Francis Marion University's Graduate Admissions Portal. Opens Annually on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Cost is \$41.00
- The Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS) website. Opens July 21<sup>st</sup>. Cost starting from \$169.00.

For applications to be accepted, an applicant must:

1. Have earned OR be in the process of earning a bachelor's degree.
2. Pay the non-refundable OTCAS OR FMU Graduate Admission application fee.
3. Submit the following documents in your application:
  - a. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work from accredited institutions.

- b. Three letters of recommendation from former professors and/or professional associates/supervisors who can attest to the academic/clinical potential of the applicant.
- c. Verification forms for at least 15 hours of observation of occupational therapy services within the last year. The form & instructions can be found on the FMU OTD website.
- d. Statement of purpose (1 page max) outlining why you think the FMU OTD program will help you achieve your career goals. Instruction form can be found on the FMU OTD website
- e. Supplemental Essay describing how a personal experience or culmination of personal experiences in your life have shaped and impacted your choice to pursue a career in the field of occupational therapy.
- f. Resume outlining your academic achievements and the professional and personal experiences which illustrate why you will be successful both academically and clinically and what you would bring to the profession.

Additional Requirement, if applicable

- a. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or equivalent, if applicable.
  - applicants who hold a degree from an institution with English instruction or are currently enrolled in an institution based in English Instruction are exempt from this requirement

*Applications are due November 15th each year for Early Admission and April 15th each year for Regular Admission. Applicants will be notified of their admission status upon receipt of all required information.*

**Early Admissions Timeline (priority)**

June 1	FMU Application Opens
July 22	OTCAS Application Opens
<b>November 15th</b>	Early Admission Application & Materials Due Date
Early-December	Interview Offers Start
Early January or Mid-March	Interviews Conducted
late- January or early - April	Admissions Offers Made
Late-August	New Student Orientation & Start of Classes

**Regular Admissions Timeline**

June 1	FMU Application Opens
July 22	OTCAS Application Opens
<b>April 15</b>	Regular Admission Application & Materials Due Date
Late-April	Interview Offers Start
May 6	Interviews Conducted
Late-May	Admissions Offers Made
Late-August	Orientation & Classes Start

**A. Acceptance Process**

Applications for admission to the OTD program are available every year in June, close on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November for Early Admission and on April 15th the following year for Regular Admission. The Program accepts early admission applications on a priority, first-come-first-qualified basis until the specified deadline and then establishes, as needed, a waiting list, ranked by the date and time received, for all applications received by April 15th. Documents received after April 15th may or may not be accepted for any given fall term.

The FMU OTD program subscribes to a holistic review process, which is a flexible, highly individualized process by which balanced consideration is given to the multiple ways in which an applicant may prepare for and demonstrate suitability as a doctoral student and future occupational therapy practitioner. Candidates are evaluated by criteria that are institution-specific, broad based, mission-driven, and applied equitably across the applicant pool to promote diversity. Diversity serves as a driver of educational excellence and a mechanism for graduating students that contribute to healthcare consistent with the program’s mission and vision.

## I. Application Review

1. The OTD Chair/Director and select program faculty review all applications to determine if the application is complete and that the candidate meets all the eligibility requirements for admission to the OTD program.
2. The application is then forwarded to the OTD Admissions Committee.

## II. Pre-Admission Interview Selection & Process

1. All candidates recommended to the Admissions Committee are reviewed. Selected candidates are invited to campus for a pre-admission interview in **January or March (priority admission timeline) or May (regular admission timeline)**.
2. The purpose of pre-admission interview is so that candidates can:
  - a. meet the OTD faculty and staff & tour the School of Health Sciences,
  - b. interview in person with the members of the Admissions Committee, including select community clinicians,
  - c. participate in a group behavioral activity with other candidates,
  - d. determine if the FMU OTD program is a fit.
3. The Admissions Committee reviews each applicant through this pre-admission interview process and makes recommendations for acceptance.

## III. Notification of Acceptance

1. Full/Conditional offers of acceptance are received by successful candidates in **late January or late March (early admission timeline) or late May (regular admission timeline)**.
  - a. Conditional offers of acceptance indicate that a student has successfully completed the application and admissions process; however, have yet to complete a prerequisite course requirement.
  - b. The terms of the conditional offer of acceptance must be met by **August 1st** of the year the candidate seeks to enroll as a student in the program.
2. Thirty (30) students are accepted during each admission cycle.
  - a. FMU has been recognized as a Military Friendly School.
    - i. To access information about Veteran benefits, applicants can meet with Francis Marion University's VA School Certifying Official (SCO), who is located in the Office of the Registrar in the Stokes Administration Building and can be reached at 843-661-1174. The SCO is the direct point of contact for veterans and their dependents. If you would like to make an appointment, please schedule online at <https://calendly.com/fmuvetsedubenefits/30min>. Making an appointment will ensure that you will be seen by our VA School Certifying Official to determine Veteran eligibility before applying. Visit the FMU website at (<https://www.fmarion.edu/veterans/>) to view detailed information on Veteran Education Benefits.

## **ENROLLMENT CONFIRMATION**

When all 30 seats for a cohort are accepted, the remaining candidates will be placed on a waiting list and will receive notification of her/his admission status. In some cases, qualified candidates may be considered in the applicant pool for the next cohort available.

### I. Confirmation of Acceptance

1. Enrollment Packets will be sent out via email to successful candidates
  - a. The student must indicate their intent to enroll in the OTD program by signing the *Acceptance of Enrollment Form* and *Accreditation Disclosure Form*. This will reserve their seat in the next cohort of the OTD program.

- i. **The Acceptance of Enrollment Form and Accreditation Disclosure Form must be returned to the program by June 15<sup>th</sup>.**
- b. The student must pay the designated enrollment fee set forth by the Registrar to confirm enrollment in the OTD Program by **June 30<sup>th</sup>**.
- c. Accepted students review the *Technical Skills and Essential Requirements Form* when declaring acceptance. This document describes the essential physical, cognitive, psychological, and emotional abilities that an applicant needs to successfully perform the roles, tasks, and responsibilities of an occupational therapy. Accepted students are responsible for reviewing these guidelines to ensure that they can meet the demands and rigors of this health profession.

## II. Accepted Student Requirements

1. Confirmed students must complete the following requirements **no later than the first day of class** with documentation submitted directly to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator:
  - a. Physical Examination – Including vision and hearing. Must not be older than one year. A Physical Exam Form is available on the OTD Blackboard Site
  - b. Completion of all immunization and communicable disease screenings, including:
    - Two-Step Tuberculosis PPD
    - Tetanus vaccination or booster within the last 5 years
    - MMR vaccine (Measles/Mumps/Rubella) or an MMR titer
    - Varicella titer
    - Hepatitis B vaccination
  - c. Certification in CPR: current American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support BLS or BCLS (adult, child, and infant)
  - d. Background Check - A background check containing misdemeanor and/or felony conviction(s) related to violence or abuse are grounds for rescinding your admission into the program. Testing positive on the drug screen, or evidence of tampering with a specimen, will disqualify a student from participation in the program and from the clinical assignment. In addition, certain criminal activity, as evident by a criminal background check may also disqualify a student from clinical participation. ***Please be aware that failure to participate in clinical assignments based on either the drug screen or criminal background check will result in dismissal from the Occupational Therapy Doctorate Program.*** FMU does not accept the responsibility for holding or forwarding background checks. It is the student's responsibility to provide the report for the clinical site if needed.
  - e. Drug Screen - mandatory 12 panel urine – This test must include methadone and be completed within 30 days PRIOR to the student's start date in the program. Screens not in compliance with this guideline will NOT be accepted and your admission into the program will be rescinded.
  - f. Certification in HIPPA, OSHA and AIDS/HIV precautions (to be completed by January and prior to the student's first level I fieldwork rotation).
2. Minimum Technology Requirements for Distance Learning
  - a. Some courses may be offered through Distance Education to accommodate for the placement location of fieldwork and capstone experiences. Students must meet the technical requirements of the OTD program and the University.
    - i. A computer (desktop/laptop) or mobile device (smartphone/tablet) that is less than 5 years old
    - ii. Speakers/headphones/earbuds for listening to audio or videos presented in courses

- iii. Webcam for interacting in course activities that require video feedback from students (such as VoiceThread), video test proctoring (such as Respondus Monitor), or other third-party tools
  - iv. Required Software - Internet Browsers, such as Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome, are preferred. Microsoft Office (includes Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint); students have free access to install the suite on their computers.
  - v. Internet Connection - Internet access is required. The Internet is available on campus to students.
3. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the national certification exam and attain state licensure.
- a. If applicable, students are required to disclose a conviction or history of felonies
  - b. Students with a history of felonies and who are considering entering an occupational therapy educational program can have their background reviewed by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) prior to actually applying to the program by requesting an *Early Determination Review* at <https://www.nbcot.org/Students/Services>. The fee for this review is \$225.