FAQs for Applicants to the MWU OT Program

What are the benefits of the MWU OTD program versus a master’s program?
- Our Program is designed to prepare graduates to become practice leaders in their workplaces, whether they work in traditional healthcare settings or emerging community-based settings. Our OTD program consists of advanced coursework focused on program development, advocacy, leadership, administration and management, and education that go beyond the skills necessary for entry-level practice.

What makes the MWU OT Program unique compared to other OTD programs?
- The Midwestern University OT Program is unique in several ways. We have 14 core faculty, all of whom teach, mentor students, engage in research, and serve as occupational therapists within a variety of settings. We have a close mentorship model (1 faculty to 4 students per cohort) and students are supported in their coursework, research projects, and capstone experiences by the mentor and other faculty. Our curriculum is strongly occupation-focused, and we utilize a wide variety of authentic experiences for students to learn the skills and critical reasoning to become an OT, such as fieldwork, standardized patient experiences, and lab sessions in many courses. The Program collaborates with hundreds of partners for fieldwork, experiential learning, and internship opportunities.

What is the accreditation status of the MWU Program?
- We were awarded Candidacy status by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) in August 2016. We will submit our full self-study documents to ACOTE by March, 2019, and an on-site visit from ACOTE will take place in the fall of 2019. After this on-site visit, we will be notified of our accreditation status by January, 2020.

How do I apply?
- You can apply online through the Centralized Application Service for Occupational Therapy (OTCAS) at www.otcas.org. There is not a separate application for Midwestern University. OTCAS usually becomes available during the middle of the summer (approximately mid-July) and you may apply to our program up until February 1. We have rolling admissions, so we encourage you to submit your application as early as possible.

What is the minimum GPA required for admission?
- You are required to have a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale. Grades of C or better are required for prerequisite coursework; grades of C- are not acceptable. The average GPA of our applicants is 3.6.

Do I need to take the GRE?
- No, GRE scores are not required to apply.

What prerequisite courses do I need to take?
- You can view all required prerequisite courses, and all other application requirements, at https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/il_occupational_therapy/admission/apply.html#requirements.
Do I have to complete all of the prerequisite courses before I submit my application?
- You do not have to have your prerequisites completed prior to applying to the program. All of your courses must be complete before matriculation into the program.

Does it matter when I completed my prerequisites or when I obtained my baccalaureate degree?
- It does not matter how recently you earned your degree. In fact, we encourage people to apply who are considering a career change, or may be returning to graduate school after an absence. However, it is required that the Anatomy and Physiology courses have been completed within the previous five years.

What are the undergraduate majors of your students?
- There is no specific major required for our program, as long as all of the prerequisite courses are completed. Our students have baccalaureate degrees in all areas, with the most common being psychology, kinesiology, and exercise science. We encourage students from diverse academic backgrounds to apply; many of our students majored in areas such as business, art, and English.

What are the most important qualifications that you look for in an applicant?
- We look for applicants who are well-rounded and have a strong history of academic excellence, a commitment to service, and experience in leadership roles. We look for applicants who are person-centered and who are sensitive to individuals or groups who experience disability, social stigma, or limited access to healthcare.

Are there certain settings you prefer my OT observations to be in? How many hours of observations do I need?
- We do not require a certain number or type of OT observations. We prefer applicants to observe or experience OT in diverse settings to ensure that the applicant understands the variety of settings and practice within OT. We also encourage applicants to consider opportunities to observe in other healthcare and social service fields where they will encounter diverse populations.

Can I visit the MWU OT Program? Are there open houses?
- The Admissions Department offers regular campus visits as well as twice-yearly healthcare career events for potential applicants. Contact the Admissions Department by phone at 630-515-6171, or 800-458-6253, or by email at admisnil@midwestern.edu for more information.

What is the expected timeline after I apply?
- We utilize rolling admissions: our Admissions Committee reviews incoming applications on an on-going basis. Starting in the fall, we invite the strongest applicants to participate in individual interviews on campus. Interview sessions are scheduled each month. After an interview, applicants will receive a decision within approximately three weeks.

How many students does Midwestern accept each year?
- We admit 50 students each year, with classes beginning in the Fall Quarter.
What is the length of your program?

- Midwestern University is on the quarter system. Our program is 11 quarters long over 33 months. Cohorts start in the fall quarter of their first year and graduate at the end of the spring quarter of their third year.

What are the costs of tuition?

- Information on current tuition and fees is available at [https://www.midwestern.edu/course_catalog_home/downers_grove_il_campus/downers_grove_overview/student_financial_services/downers_grove_tuition_and_fees_.html](https://www.midwestern.edu/course_catalog_home/downers_grove_il_campus/downers_grove_overview/student_financial_services/downers_grove_tuition_and_fees_.html).

Are there scholarship opportunities?

- Midwestern University has various scholarships available that can be viewed at [https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/student_financial_services/scholarships.html#General%20Scholarships](https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/student_financial_services/scholarships.html#General%20Scholarships).
- There are two opportunities specific to Midwestern University OT students:
  - The Therapeutic Use of Self (TUOS) OT Scholarship is awarded each year to one student demonstrating a commitment to pediatric OT practice and the incorporation of TUOS into practice.
  - The Midwestern University OT Program has a unique training opportunity called “Tiered Occupational Therapy: Preparing Scholars to Work in School Mental Health,” that is funded through the Department of Education. Students who apply for and are accepted into this program receive a stipend to offset their tuition. For more information, please contact Lisa Mahaffey, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA – TOT Project Director, at lmahaf@midwestern.edu.
- Additional scholarships are available through public agencies and private foundations/organizations.

How do MWU’s OT courses align with today's practice?

- Our courses are designed to reflect the most recent available evidence and practice trends. Our faculty maintain their professional qualifications by attending professional development courses and conferences, maintaining their memberships in their state and national professional associations, and taking on leadership roles within the profession. By doing so, they can ensure that the content they include in courses reflect best-practice recommendations and evidence.
What are the classes I would take, and when would I take them?

- You can see the curriculum map, which includes course names and the overall course schedule, at:

What does a typical day look like?
- Block schedules vary by quarter, but generally, students are in class on Mondays through Fridays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with an hour break for lunch.

What is MWU student life like?
- Outside of classes, there are various opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, which can be viewed at
  https://www.midwestern.edu/downers_grove_campus/student_services/student_activities_office.html#GenInterestOrgs.
- If eligible, students also have the opportunity to participate in part-time employment through various Federal Work Study positions available.

What percentage of MWU OT graduates pass the exam on the first attempt?
- While the first-attempt pass rates are not made available by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT), overall new-graduate pass rates of our MSOT graduates have consistently been 100% from 2013-2017.

In what settings do recent graduates practice?
- Our graduates obtain jobs in all areas of OT practice. Some of these settings include hospitals, outpatient rehabilitation clinics, schools, skilled nursing facilities, community-based mental health, home health, and early intervention.

What is the salary of recent graduates?
- While the salary figures of recent MWU graduates are not available, the median annual salary of occupational therapists was $83,200 in May, 2017 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapists.htm).
- Another report shares that the average salary of entry-level occupational therapists is $62,187 (Pay Scale, Inc., Retrieved from https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Occupational_Therapist_(OT)/Hourly_Rate/5a17fd1f/Entry-Level).