



Occupational therapy

Occupational therapists are allied health professionals who work with people of all ages and abilities to enable them to do the things they want to and need to do, through the use of therapeutic activities and equipment. Occupational therapists have a challenging and rewarding career and can work across a variety of settings.

What is an Occupational Therapist?

Occupational therapists are client-centred health professionals who enable their clients to participate in activities, or occupations, of everyday life. These activities can range from getting dressed, to attending school or work, driving, or participating in hobbies and sports. Occupational therapists achieve this by working with individuals, families and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the activities they want to, need to, or are expected to do. They may adapt the environment, modify the activity, or teach their clients new skills.

Occupational therapists work with clients of all ages, from children to the elderly. Their clients may present with a variety of diagnoses, including developmental disabilities, physical injuries, cognitive impairments, chronic diseases, and mental health needs. Occupational therapists have the ability to work in a variety of different settings, or to specialise in a specific area. Careers in occupational therapy may also lead to teaching, research or management pathways – the choices are endless!

What studies do I need to undertake?

The most common entry point into Occupational Therapy is by completing a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at University, which is a four (4) year undergraduate degree. The alternative entry point is with the completion of a Masters of Occupational Therapy (Post Graduate), which is a two (2) year degree for students with previous tertiary qualifications. There are a number of Universities within NSW and Australia offering these degrees.

To apply for the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy you need to have completed your Higher School Certificate (HSC) or equivalent and have the appropriate Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) (or equivalent). Prerequisites vary between universities and may include Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). Occupational Therapy courses consist of a mix of theory and practical content with onsite clinical placements occurring across every year of your degree and within a variety of clinical fields.



What happens when I finish at University?

Once students graduate, they need to apply for professional registration through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). All Occupational Therapists must renew their registration annually with AHPRA in order to practise in Australia.

If you are interested in a rewarding career in Occupational Therapy, or require more information, you may find the following websites helpful -

Occupational Therapy Australia: <https://www.otaus.com.au/>

Universities Admissions Centre: <https://www.uac.edu.au/>

The following universities offer undergraduate or post-graduate Occupational Therapy courses –

Australian Catholic University (Undergraduate)
www.acu.edu.au

Charles Sturt University (Undergraduate)
www.csu.edu.au

Southern Cross University (Undergraduate)
www.scu.edu.au

University of Canberra (Undergraduate and Post-Graduate)
www.canberra.edu.au

University of Newcastle (Undergraduate)
www.newcastle.edu.au

University of Sydney (Undergraduate and Post Graduate)
www.usyd.edu.au/

Western Sydney University (Undergraduate)
<https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/>