

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

SUBJECT: Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) at the University of Michigan-Flint

ACTION REQUESTED: Approval to grant the Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) Degree through the School of Health Professions and Studies at the University of Michigan-Flint

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 2017

The School of Health Professions and Studies at the University of Michigan-Flint proposes to offer an Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) degree. The proposed doctoral program is designed to increase professional level health care degree program offerings at the University of Michigan-Flint; enhance opportunities for inter-professional student learning through offering an OTD program; provide high quality entry-level education in the occupational therapy field; and prepare entry-level occupational therapists who are prepared to provide excellent care to their patients and to become leaders in their field to affect changes that will improve the health and quality of life of their patients.

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a growing field in the area of rehabilitation medicine, due to the aging population, with occupational therapists working in hospitals, out-patient clinics, nursing homes, schools, and private practice. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics projects occupational therapy positions to grow 29% between 2012 and 2022. In addition, the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) predicts an increase demand for occupational therapists in emerging roles of practice such as primary care and an expansion of OT services in the area of mental health, substance abuse, and behavioral health.

The field of occupational therapy is involved in ongoing dialogue regarding the degree level for entry into the profession. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards currently offers two options for entry level degrees, the master (MOT) and the doctorate degree (OTD) primarily because there are only seven accredited OTD programs in the United States. The rationale for proposing the entry-level doctoral program includes: applicant rates have grown the same as the master degree programs; there has been no negative impact to diversity to doctoral level programs in physical therapy and audiology; the addition of the OTD experiential component will promote leadership roles; and the occupational therapy profession will likely require an OTD for entry into the profession at some point in the future.

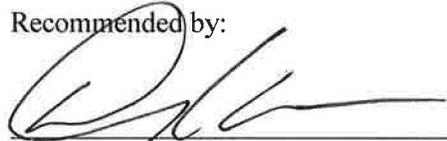
The target enrollment population will be qualified students with undergraduate degrees in health sciences, biology, and psychology and student recruitment will occur at a national, state, and campus level. Once fully implemented, student enrollment patterns will likely replicate those of the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) in terms of in-state/out-state student ratios.

The proposed program will include 110 semester-credit hours spanning over nine semesters to complete (three full calendar years) and includes didactic and laboratory coursework, fieldwork experiences, and a residency/capstone project. The doctoral residency is 16 weeks as required by the Accreditation Council Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). The plans for the proposed program are to commence in Fall 2017 with a cohort of 40 students.

The proposed Occupational Therapy Doctorate degree has been thoroughly reviewed and supported by the School of Health Professions and Studies, the Graduate Board, Academic Assessment Committee, the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee, the Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Budget and Strategic Planning, the provost, and the chancellor. The program has also been approved by the Michigan Association of State Universities, and will be implemented upon approval by the Higher Learning Commission, the Accreditation Council Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), and pending the Board of Regents approval.

Based upon the extensive research and plans that have been undertaken, the University of Michigan-Flint requests approval to grant the Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) degree through the School of Health Professions and Studies at the University of Michigan-Flint, effective September 2017.

Recommended by:



Douglas G. Knerr, Provost and
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Recommendation endorsed by:



Susan E. Borrego, Chancellor
University of Michigan-Flint

May 2016