

# Post-Professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy

Cohort: pOTD 49 OL



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## Program Description

An aim of Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions (RMU) is to address our national need for high quality occupational therapy services by providing professional education promoting scholarship of practice. Our Post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy (pOTD) program provides meaningful, obtainable, and affordable post-professional education and is available to all students having an entry-level degree in occupational therapy.

The Mission of RMU's Post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy (pOTD) program is to teach and inspire evidence-based practice, leadership and professional development for occupational therapists to be practice-scholars and leaders in health and human service. Coursework promotes reflection on practice in the context of professional trends, use of research, clinical reasoning, program evaluation, best practice, and roles associated with being an occupational therapist such as advocate, educator, clinician, manager and entrepreneur. Learning activities facilitate the development of the occupational therapy practice-scholar who embeds research in his/her everyday practice. Concentration courses highlight advances in science associated with specialty areas of

practice. Upon completion of a majority of coursework, students must successfully generate a Capstone Project, an individualized, culminating scholarly work demonstrating synthesis of curricular content, informing occupational therapy and illustrating application of the best available evidence at the point of care.

The curriculum is based on an analysis and synthesis of evidence associated with a) adult learning theory, blended learning approaches, evidence-based practice, and graduate education, b) national and international trends in occupational therapy and healthcare, population health initiatives, evidence-based practice guidelines and knowledge translation and c) research and official documents, philosophical principles, theoretical perspectives, supporting the practice of occupational therapy. Ultimately, the process and intention of the curriculum aims to create a learning experience that causes or allows students to experience a paradigm shift leading to a transformation of one's perception and practice as an occupational therapist (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). Completion of the curriculum confers the degree of *Doctor of Occupational Therapy (pOTD)* to graduates.

### **Program Length**

Most students complete the program in four semesters over 16 months. All courses are entirely web-based, and web-supported.

### **Degree Outcomes**

RMU's pOTD program is committed to the development of the occupational therapist who can:

#### **1. Utilize Evidence-based Practice**

- Apply the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to make independent judgments about the validity and trustworthiness of research.
- Integrate clinical expertise, best evidence available from systematic research and values and preferences of patients to make healthcare decisions (Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes & Richardson, 1996).
- Synthesize, disseminate, exchange and soundly apply knowledge to improve health, provide more effective health services and products and strengthen the healthcare system (Straus, Tetroe, & Graham, 2009).

#### **2. Demonstrate Practice/Clinical Scholarship**

- Exercise high-level curiosity, critical thinking, continuous learning and reflection to substantiate best practice, outcomes and clinical decisions with reference to: systematic observation, current research, theoretical guidelines, contextual influences, quality improvement data and other forms of evidence.
- Document and disseminate outcomes and improvements for best practice through mechanisms including publication, presentations, consultation, advocacy and leadership (AOTA, 2009).
- Use expertise to anticipate trends, predict needs, create effective clinical products and services, and measure and manage outcomes promoting the profession of occupational therapy (AOTA, 2009; Corcoran, 2008; Crist, 2010).

#### **3. Demonstrate Leadership**

- Use expertise to anticipate trends, predict needs, create effective clinical products and services, and measure and manage outcomes promoting the profession of occupational therapy (AOTA, 2009; Corcoran, 2008; Crist, 2010).
- Influence local, regional, national, and international policy, practice and education through advocacy, consultation, teaching and practice of occupational therapy with individuals, populations and organizations (AOTA, 2006).
- Model ways of thinking and doing to promote the art and science of occupational therapy, enable others to act, challenge the process to promote change, inspire a shared vision of the value of occupational therapy and encourage the hearts of employees, colleagues and students (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).
- Function within an ethical decision-making framework by applying ethical theories and legal standards to decision making regarding healthcare issues.

#### **4. Promote Participation in Occupation as the Practice and Outcome of Occupational Therapy**

- Educate about and advocate for the therapeutic use of occupation as a core foundation of the use of occupational therapy in rehabilitation, health promotion, and prevention (AOTA, 2006; AOTA, 2008)
- Demonstrate the ability to seek, appraise and use reliable and valid evaluation and outcome measures documenting participation in occupation and roles (Holm, 2000).
- Incorporate philosophical, theoretical and scientific traditions of occupational therapy into consultation, education, entrepreneurship, advocacy, direct care, program development and quality improvement.

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2006). *AOTA's Centennial Vision: Shaping the future of occupational therapy*. Bethesda, MD: Retrieved from <http://www.aota.org/nonmembers/area16/index.asp>.

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Corcoran, M.A. (2008). Five years in review: Clinical scholarship revisited. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 62, 263-264.

Crist, P. (2010). Adapting research instruction to support the scholarship of practice: Practice-scholar partnerships. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 24(1), 39-55.

Kouzes, J. & Posner, B. (2007). *The Leadership Challenge, 4th edition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Sackett, D. L., Rosenberg, W. M., Gray, J. A., Haynes, R. B., Richardson, W. S. (1996). Evidence based medicine: What it is and what it isn't. *British Medical Journal*, 312, 71-72.

Straus, S. E., Tetroe, J., & Graham, I. D. (2009). *Knowledge translation in health care: Moving from evidence to practice*. West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

## Program Outline

Course Code & Title		Credits
<b>Occupational Therapy Core Courses (9 courses, 21 credits required):</b>		
<i>All courses listed are required:</i>		
	HS 720 Qualitative Research	3
	OTD 710 Evidence-based Practice	3
	OTD 712 Quantitative Inquiry	3
	OTD 714 Capstone Project I	2
	OTD 730 Health & Wellness in Occupational Therapy Practice	2
	OTD 731 Program Development & Evaluation for Community Health & Practice in OT	3
	OTD 732 Capstone Project II	2
	OTD 742 Capstone Project III	3
<b>Occupational Therapy Core Required Credits:</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>Concentration Courses (3-4 courses, 9 credits required):</b>		
Aging	AG 716 Neurodegenerative Disease: Addressing Participation in Occupation	3
	AG 726 Productive Aging	3
	AG 738 Application of Evidence for the Provision of Care for Persons with Dementia	3
Education	HPE 740 Learning Theory & Design	3
	HPE 760 Instructional Strategies for Healthcare Educators	3
	HPE 754 Evidence-Based Assessment in Healthcare Professions Education	3
Hand Therapy	HT 718 Seminar for Upper Extremity Specialists	3
	HT 726 Evidence-Based Concepts of Radiographic Imaging	3
	HT 736 Advanced Concepts in Hand Therapy Evidence-Based Practice	3
Leadership	LD 718 Essentials of Practice Management & Administration	3
	HLA 670 Organizational Behavior & Management in Healthcare	3
	HLA 740 Healthcare Delivery	3
Pediatrics	PED 718 Examining Occupational Therapy's Role with Children & Youth	3
	PED 728 Pediatric Occupational Therapy Service Delivery: School-Based Services, Medical Practice, & the Community	3
	PED 738 Sensory Processing, Social, & Behavioral Disorders: Addressing Participation in Occupation	3
<b>Concentration Courses Required Credits:</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Optional Course (not required):</b>		
	HS 770 Research Practicum <i>Optional course, may be taken as a substitution if a required course is not available, and with Program Director approval. May be repeated up to 4 credits.</i>	(1-2)
<b>Total Program Required Credits:</b>		<b>30</b>

## Program Calendar

Semester	Course	Credits
<b>Semester 1 Summer 2027</b>	HS 720 Qualitative Research	3
	OTD 710 Evidence-Based Practice	3
	OTD 731 Program Development & Evaluation for Community Health & Practice in OT	3
	<b>Semester Total:</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Semester 2 Fall 2027</b>	OTD 714 Capstone Project I**	2
	OTD 712 Quantitative Inquiry**	3
	Concentration Track Course 1	3
	<b>Semester Total:</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Semester 3 Winter 2028</b>	OTD 730 Health & Wellness in Occupational Therapy Practice	2
	OTD 732 Capstone Project II**	2
	Concentration Track Course 2	3
	<b>Semester Total:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Semester 4 Summer 2028</b>	OTD 742 Capstone Project III**	3
	Concentration Track Course(s) 3	3
	<b>Semester Total:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Optional, take in any semester‡</b>	HS 770 Research Practicum ( <i>optional course, may be retaken for maximum of 4 credits</i> )‡	(1-2)
<b>Total Program Required Credits:</b>		<b>30</b>
<i>Four-year deadline for program completion from start of program.</i>		

\*\*Course includes pre-requisite and/or co-requisite requirement(s). Refer to course description below.

‡Research Practicum course credits may be substituted for another course, with Program Director's approval. May be repeated up to 4 credits.

## Concentration Track Courses

Course Sequence	Course Code & Title
<b>Aging*</b>	
1	AG 716 Neurodegenerative Disease: Addressing Participation in Occupation
2	AG 726 Productive Aging
3	AG 738 Application of Evidence for the Provision of Care for Persons with Dementia
<b>Education*</b>	
1	HPE 740 Learning Theory & Design
2	HPE 760 Instructional Strategies for Healthcare Educators
3	HPE 754 Evidence-Based Assessment in Healthcare Professions Education
<b>Hand Therapy*</b>	
1	HT 718 Seminar for Upper Extremity Specialists
2	HT 726 Evidence-Based Concepts of Radiographic Imaging
3	HT 736 Advanced Concepts in Hand Therapy Evidence-Based Practice
<b>Leadership*</b>	
1	LD 718 Essentials of Practice Management & Administration
2	HLA 670 Organizational Behavior & Management in Healthcare
3	HLA 740 Healthcare Delivery
<b>Pediatrics*</b>	
1	PED 718 Examining Occupational Therapy's Role with Children & Youth
2	PED 728 Pediatric Occupational Therapy Service Delivery: School-Based Services, Medical Practice, & the Community
3	PED 738 Sensory Processing, Social, & Behavioral Disorders: Addressing Participation in Occupation

\*Concentration tracks are offered contingent upon enrollment. Cohort may not offer all tracks.

## Course Descriptions

### **Occupational Therapy Core Courses:**

**HS 720      Qualitative Research      (3 credits; Online)**

This course introduces the student to qualitative research methods and their applications to problems and phenomena in healthcare. Emphasis is placed on the appropriate use and differences of qualitative methods, their philosophical underpinnings, and application to clinical issues.

**HS 770      Research Practicum      (1-2 credits; Online)**

Faculty-directed clinical, basic, or applied research practicum, which may include but not limited to review of literature preparation, human subjects committee proposal development, data collection, and presentation/manuscript preparation. Graded Pass/Fail. *(Optional course. May be taken in substitution for another course, with Program Director's approval. May be repeated up to 4 credits.)*

**OTD 710      Evidence-based Practice      (3 credits; Online)**

This course equips occupational therapists with the knowledge and skills to critically appraise clinical research and apply evidence-based practice. Students will learn effective literature search strategies, research evaluation, and scientific writing using APA format. Key topics include evidence-based practice processes, literature search methods, research rigor and appraisal, scientific writing and presentation, and the integration of evidence into clinical practice. Through lectures, writing and presentation assignments, and clinical case analysis, students will learn to formulate clinical questions, efficiently search databases, appraise evidence, and apply findings to occupational therapy practice.

**OTD 712      Quantitative Inquiry      (3 credits; Online)**

This course provides an overview of research design from the perspective of the hierarchy of levels of evidence. Students will examine common designs of studies in terms of problem statements, question formulation, methodological features, and significance of findings for application in practice. The course will prepare students to judge evidence based on: 1) reliability and validity of diagnostic tests, standardized assessments and outcome measures 2) effectiveness of clinical interventions for a client; population or organization; 3) natural history of health-related conditions; and 4) risk of harm from select preventative and therapeutic interventions. Quantitative article critiques will be conducted to strengthen students' abilities to analyze the relationship between research question and study design to facilitate understanding of how evidence informs practice.  
*Prerequisites: OTD 710, HS 720*

**OTD 714      Capstone Project I      (2 credits; Online)**

This course launches students towards the initiation of the Capstone Project. Constructs examined in this course build upon foundational courses and challenge students to demonstrate commitment to being/becoming practice-scholars. Through continued scholarly discourse, self-reflection, and examination of knowledge translation/transfer as

a consequence of evidence-based practice, students formulate the proposal for the Capstone Project. Instructor reviews parameters for: options for project, expected rigor, deliverables, impact of project on healthcare and occupational therapy and the process to optimize successful completion. Students conclude course with approval of project proposal by the Program Director or Designee. *Graded pass/fail. Prerequisites: OTD 710, HS 720*

**OTD 730 Health & Wellness in Occupational Therapy Practice (2 credits; Online)**

Building on prior courses reflecting evidence-based practice and occupational therapy principles and practice, this course emphasizes principles of public and community-based practice through occupation. The course exposes students to research associated with emerging roles for occupational therapists in health promotion, prevention, and primary healthcare. Students are challenged to conceptualize how occupational therapy can meet growing societal needs in the context of population health issues and initiatives, and occupational justice framework, and models of behavior change. *Prerequisites: OTD 710, OTD 712, HS 720*

**OTD 731 Program Development & Evaluation for Community Health & Practice in Occupational Therapy (3 credits; Online)**

Building on prior courses reflecting evidence-based practice and occupational therapy principles and practice, this course emphasizes the learning and application of needs assessment, program development and program evaluation principles. The course will provide an opportunity for the learner to conduct a needs assessment and design and develop occupation-based programs for groups, and populations related to primary health care, health promotion or community-based programs. Mechanisms of program development such as feasibility study, proposal preparation, grant writing, and business planning will be reviewed along with topics associated with reimbursement, basic survey design, and program evaluation. Students will choose a program approach and target population; appraise the state of the evidence in the selected realm, and generate an evidence-based executive summary of a program that promotes the profession of occupational therapy as contributing to meeting the designated population's occupational needs.

**OTD 732 Capstone Project II (2 credits; Online)**

This course continues the student towards the implementation of the Capstone Project proposal. The instructors/mentors' students through the parameters of the established capstone proposal including the type of project, expected rigor, implementation strategy and process, deliverables, impact of project on healthcare and occupational therapy and the process to optimize successful completion in OTD 742. Supervision and mentorship related to the implementation of development, data gathering, and clinical scholarship are provided. Students conclude course and proceed to OTD 742 with approval of project proposal by the Graduate Program Director or Designee. *Graded pass/fail. Prerequisites: OTD 710, OTD 712, OTD 714, HS 720*

**OTD 742 Capstone Project****(3 credits; Online)**

Students complete a Capstone Project reflecting the synthesis and application of evidence-based practice and occupational therapy principles learned within the RMUoHP Post-Professional OTD curriculum. The Capstone Project demonstrates achievement of GPD-approved\*, student-generated learning outcomes and a product of practice/clinical scholarship that informs occupational therapy practice. The quality of the Capstone Project shall meet high standards for professional presentation and illustrate application of best available evidence and integration of curricular content. The course requires students to engage with peers online for constructive feedback and accountability. Students submit and present a summation of the Capstone Project in the form of a “virtual” professional poster according to parameters outlined during class to peers and instructors by end of course. Students conclude the course with final reflections upon the learning process. *Graded pass/fail. Prerequisites: OTD 710, OTD 712, OTD 714, OTD 732, HS 720*



## **Concentration Track in Education**

**Robert Krueger, PhD, OTR/L**

*Concentration Track Director*

The pOTD Education track leads the student to a focus on education and learning in an academic setting. Doctoral candidates will explore the dimensions of adult learning, instructional design principles, and pedagogical methodology. Graduates in this concentration track will be prepared to enter a variety of academic fields and contribute to the occupational therapy profession's growing need for doctoral educators.

### Education Course Descriptions:

**HPE 740      Learning Theory & Design      (3 credits; Online)**

This course incorporates a learner centered approach to course development and instructional delivery based on the best evidence of how people learn. Students will demonstrate both traditional and innovative instructional techniques and strategies for teaching in didactic settings based upon the evidence-base of best teaching practices.

**HPE 754      Evidence-Based Assessment in Healthcare      (3 credits; Online)**  
**Professions Education**

This course explores contemporary, evidence-based models and techniques for assessing student classroom and clinical performance, instructor effectiveness, and overall educational program quality. Emphasizing a unique and modern approach to programmatic assessment, students will design and implement comprehensive assessment plans, interpret diverse data sources, and develop strategies for continuous improvement. Through a focus on programmatic assessment, students will learn to create cohesive, longitudinal assessment systems that provide insight into educational effectiveness.

**HPE 760      Instructional Strategies for Healthcare Educators      (3 credits; Online)**

This course provides a comprehensive exploration of instructional strategies and technologies essential for effective teaching in healthcare education, covering online, blended, and traditional classroom environments. Emphasis is placed on the design and delivery of low and high fidelity, simulation-based, and mixed media resources that support dynamic and interactive learning experiences. Students will examine best practices in course design and instructional delivery, engaging with current instructional technologies.

## **Concentration Track in Leadership**

**Ellen Hudgins, OTD, OTR/L**  
*Concentration Track Director*

The pOTD Leadership track is designed for those advanced occupational therapy practitioners who seek to influence the profession from a leadership and practice management perspective. The program explores leadership theories, organizational development, and financial management strategies, emphasizing an evidence-based philosophy with a reflection on key professional trends.

### Leadership Track Course Descriptions:

**LD 718      Essentials of Practice Management & Administration      (3 credits; Online)**

This course will allow the student to explore the foundations associated with designing, promoting, and leading a healthcare organization. The course will offer instruction regarding the following principles: financial planning; budgeting, marketing/branding; strategic planning, space designing, and core principles associated with developing and or leading a healthcare organization. The student will utilize current best evidence and clinical practice guidelines in establishing business planning principles for owning or operating a healthcare organization. Students will engage in critical reasoning within forum discussions and through the development of an executive business summary.

**HLA 670      Organizational Behavior & Management in Healthcare      (3 credits; Online)**

This course provides future healthcare leaders with the essential knowledge and competencies to analyze, manage, and optimize organizational performance within complex systems. The curriculum translates foundational theories of organizational dynamics and design into practical strategies for achieving operational excellence, focusing on the structures and systems that drive behavior and results. Specific topics include governance, strategic management and marketing, human resources management, recruiting, training, process improvement, management theory, and employee wellbeing. The course provides students with knowledge about how the best healthcare provider organizations respond to their environment, foster innovation, deliver high quality, cost-effective healthcare, and how they make and implement decisions about future activities.

**HLA 740      Healthcare Delivery      (3 credits; Online)**

This course will train healthcare leaders to implement or teach principles of delivering better healthcare at lower costs through improving clinical and non-clinical processes. This course will introduce methods and tools for conducting quality improvement projects. Also discussed will be methods of health services research, teams and teamwork, outcome measurement, & medical informatics. A key learning experience of this course will be developing and implementing a quality improvement project.

## ***Concentration Track in Hand Therapy***

**Kristin Biggins, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, CLT**  
*Concentration Track Director*

The pOTD Hand Therapy track prepares graduates for an advanced level of evidence-based practice specific to the upper extremities. Occupational hand therapy focuses on the treatment of orthopedic conditions to optimize arm and hand use. Doctoral candidates will prepare to provide an advanced level of client-centered, occupation-based therapy designed to restore function and well-being.

### Hand Therapy Course Descriptions:

**HT 718 Seminar for Upper Extremity Specialists (3 credits; Online)**

This course will require students to examine current and emerging best practices for addressing participation in occupation for individuals with musculoskeletal and neurological disorders involving the upper quadrant. This course requires students to explore the role of occupational/hand therapy on transitioning from a reductionist model to promoting meaningful activity and participation. Students will adopt language from the ICF to incorporate treatment of body structures and function to promote activities and participation while considering individual and societal perspectives of participation. Students will share research and clinical expertise on hand therapy related interventions including orthosis management for tendon injury, nerve injury, fractures, degenerative diseases and movement disorders. Students will engage in critical reasoning within forum discussions, analyzing intervention strategies, electronic presentations and development of a client-based case study. Students will be indoctrinated in evidenced based practice, clinical practice guidelines and utilization of technology in hand therapy.

**HT 726 Evidence-Based Concepts of Radiographic Imaging (3 credits; Online)**

This course will provide fundamental principles of radiographic imaging procedures while challenging the student to address occupational-based strategies for clinical decision-making. Students will broaden their knowledge and acquire skills to recognize common normal and abnormal radiographic findings of the upper quadrant. The student will develop skills to approach imaging studies from a scientific and occupation-based prospective. Students will integrate the diagnostic utility of imaging procedures related to activities and participation.

**HT 736 Advanced Concepts in Hand Therapy (3 credits; Online)**  
**Evidence-Based Practice**

This course examines the best evidence for client-centered care practices in upper quadrant rehabilitation. Students will appraise literature pertaining to upper quadrant outcome measures, diagnostic testing and prognosis, and intervention strategies to assist in determining the best practices in hand therapy, with an emphasis on neuromuscular and musculoskeletal disorders. This course promotes application of theoretical concepts

in support of Vision 2025 and critical reasoning through class discussions, scholarly papers, and recorded and live presentations.

## **Concentration Track in Pediatrics**

**Latoya Henry, OTD, OTR/L**  
*Concentration Track Director*

The pOTD Pediatric track prepares students for a future in neonatal, early intervention, or school-based practice. Doctoral candidates will consider the unique occupational needs of infants, children, and youth, as well as the principles of physical, sensory, and cognitive impairment. This post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy focus will prepare graduates for success in a variety of settings, including clinics, schools, and private practices.

### Pediatrics Course Descriptions:

**PED 718      Examining Occupational Therapy's Role      (3 credits; Online)**  
**with Children & Youth**

This course offers students the opportunity to explore and analyze evidence associated with current and emerging areas of occupational therapy practice addressing the occupational performance needs of children and youth. This course will analyze the current Pediatric Frames of References and best evidence available to guide occupational therapists in the evaluation and intervention process to provide contemporary and innovative occupational therapy services to children and youth in diverse environments. During this course, students will have the opportunity to develop a professional presentation and write a case study treatment plan.

**PED 728      Pediatric Occupational Therapy Service Delivery:      (3 credits; Online)**  
**School-Based Services, Medical Practices, & the Community**

This new course will explore the environmental context of occupational therapy services for children and youth. Students will discuss laws governing occupational therapy services in both school-based and medical/private practice settings. Students will utilize evidence-based practice and relevant clinical practice guidelines within the setting discussed and analyze outcome effectiveness of occupational therapy services. Students will use critical reasoning to compare and contrast service delivery systems including early intervention, school-based services, medical practices, and community service delivery. A program service evaluation or client-based case study will allow students to synthesize new learning.

**PED 738      Sensory Processing, Social, & Behavioral      (3 credits; Online)**  
**Disorders: Addressing Participation in Occupation**

This course requires students to explore the role of occupational therapy on promoting participation in occupation for children with sensory processing, social, and behavioral

needs. Focus will be on analysis of current diagnostic criteria and critically questioning and appraising the state of current and emerging evidence on assessments, outcome measures and intervention to promote best practices for children and youth. Diagnoses covered within this course include sensory processing disorder, autism, ADHD, and anxiety. Students will engage in critical reasoning within forum discussions, analyzing intervention strategies, and developing a client-based case study.

## Faculty

### **Program Leadership**

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