



Master of Science (MS) in Occupational Therapy Student Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

The faculty and staff welcome you to the Department of Occupational Therapy in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS) at the University of Pittsburgh.

Pitt OT specializes in facilitating your learning through interactive, student-friendly classes and broadening your horizons through study in an internationally renowned academic healthcare center. We are pleased that you have chosen Pitt OT for your professional education.

The purpose of this handbook is to make you aware of the policies, procedures, and expectations of the Department of Occupational Therapy. Therefore, we ask that you read this handbook thoroughly. You are also required to review and be cognizant of the School and University regulations in the [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#) and [University of Pittsburgh Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog](#) (use dropdown menu). If you have any questions regarding any of the information, please ask your Academic Advisor for clarification.

Information in this handbook is subject to change, so you should check the version on the Pitt OT Student Canvas course periodically as it will contain the most updated policies and procedures.

ABOUT PITT OT

Our Mission and Vision

[Department of Occupational Therapy Mission and Vision](#)

Our Philosophy

The beliefs of the faculty of the Department of Occupational Therapy, which comprise the program's philosophy, are consistent with the current published philosophy of the profession.

Philosophically, faculty of the Department of Occupational Therapy share the following beliefs about humans (students, patients/clients/consumers):

- Each person is an open system composed of interrelated structures and functions organized into a coherent whole that interacts with the environment.
- Each person has the capability, right, and responsibility to make choices and has the right to dignity and respect.
- Each person is an active being who has the capability to maintain, grow, and adapt through occupation (purposeful activity).
- When a person's ability to adapt creatively is impaired, dysfunction occurs.

- The occupational therapist uses occupation (purposeful activity) to enhance function through restoration, compensation, and education.
- The occupational therapist uses occupation (purposeful activity) as a primary method of assessment, intervention, and health promotion.

Similarly, the Department of Occupational Therapy faculty share common beliefs regarding how adult students learn:

- Students are active learners.
- Students develop cognitive (thinking) skills in a hierarchical manner, from a simple recall of knowledge (facts) to the complex evaluation of knowledge, and cognitive learning is enhanced when knowledge is organized from simple to complex.
- Students develop psychomotor skills primarily through practice, and skill learning is facilitated when practice is supervised.
- Students develop affective skills primarily through imitation and socialization, and affective learning is facilitated through self-reflection and exposure to competent role models.
- Students require assistance to effectively integrate their developing cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills.
- Students learn in different ways, and hence a variety of teaching methods are needed to facilitate optimal learning.

Our Contact Information

Chair	Juleen Rodakowski	jur17@pitt.edu	412-383-6615	Office 365
Vice Chair of Academic Affairs	Ketki D. Raina	kdr47@pitt.edu	412-383-4690	Office 373
Vice Chair of Department Affairs	Denise Chisholm	dchishol@pitt.edu	412-383-6606	Office 375
MS Program Director	Jennifer S. White	jswhite@pitt.edu	412-383-6621	Office 372
OTD Program Director	Denise Chisholm	dchishol@pitt.edu	412-383-6606	Office 375
OTD Assistant Program Director	Erin L. Mathia	elm194@pitt.edu	412-383-6538	Office 362
Student Services Coordinator	Joyce Broadwick	jrb164@pitt.edu	412-383-6620	

RESOURCES

SHRS Student Resource Hub

A place to find answers to your questions and connect with valuable resources – [Academic Success](#); [Financial Resources](#); [Inclusion](#); [Newly Admitted Students](#); [Policies, Procedures & Handbooks](#); [Professional Development & Student Activities](#); [Student Services & SHRS Registrar](#); [Study Resources](#); [Wellness](#); [SHRS Social Media](#)

Care & Resource Support

[Care Managers](#) – centralized case management team that educates and connects students to a variety of campus and community resources to help them meet their needs

[Care Advocates](#) – a confidential resource for any Pitt student with experiences of identity-based misconduct (violence, discrimination, bias, and/or harassment)

[SHRS Brave Space](#) – a supportive place to meet, study or for leisure; Fifth and Halket, 8th Floor

[Togetherall](#) – a free and anonymous peer-to-peer online community specifically for mental health and well-being concerns; Togetherall is available 24/7; [sign-up](#) with your Pitt email

[Pitt Pantry](#) – serves to increase food security among the Pitt community; food, household items and toiletries at no cost

[Brave Space Pantry](#) – food and resource pantry within SHRS; Fifth and Halket, 8th Floor and Bridgeside Point I, 5th Floor

[Hardship Funding and Assistance](#) – resources for Pitt students facing financial hardship, including emergency funding and meal assistance

[Thriftsburgh](#) – student-run on-campus thrift store; all items in the store are \$10 or less

Disability Resources and Services (DRS)

[DRS](#) – designated department to determine reasonable accommodations and services

Career Services

[Pitt Career Center](#) – in-person and virtual services, and resources

Financial

[Financial Aid](#), 412-624-7488 (option 2) – [Information for Graduate Students](#)
[Student Payment Center](#), 412-624-7520

Graduate and Professional Students

[Pitt Graduate and Professional Studies](#) – resources to help students succeed and engage in the Pitt community

[SHRS Student Services](#) – services and resources for SHRS students

Health & Wellness

[Student Health Services](#), 412-383-1800, Nordenberg Hall – Wellness Center, 119 University Place
[Counseling Center](#), Nordenberg Hall – Wellness Center, 119 University Place, 412-648-7930 [Services](#)

(24-hour Crisis Response, Drop-In Services, Ask a Therapist, Wellness Workshops, Group Counseling, Individual Counseling, Care Coordination, Couples & Relationship Counseling, Gender Affirmation Support Services, Substance Use Services, Outreach, Psychiatry Services at Student Health Services, Connecting with an Off-Campus Provider, Higher Education & Assessment Response Team (HEART), Togetherall Online Peer-to-Peer Support, Peer Support Communities) Ask a Therapist (<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/counseling/outreach/ask-therapist>), a free drop-in service that offers informal, confidential consultation with a clinician from the University of Pittsburgh Counseling Center

[Get Help Now](#) – for Yourself or Someone Else

[Stress Free Zone \(SFZ\)](#) – a space on the 3rd floor of the William Pitt Union where students can learn and regularly practice evidence-based, mind/body stress reduction skills.; SFZ also provides outreach programs

[Resolve](#), 1-888-796-8226 – free, 24-hour, 365-day crisis services for people experiencing a problem, large or small, and need help

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#), call 988 – free emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24/7

[The Crisis Text Line](#), text HOME to 741741 – free text message service for people in crisis 24/7

Housing

[Off-Campus Student Services](#) – services and resources for off-campus housing

Information Technology (IT)

[IT Resources for Students](#) – [Help Desk](#), 412-624-HELP (4357) – tech support from a real person available 24/7 via phone, email, live chat or web request

International Students

[Office of International Services](#) – the University's immigration specialist

Resources for International Students (<https://www.gradstudies.pitt.edu/student-life/resources-international-students>)

English Language Resources (<https://www.ois.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/docs/ESL-Resources.pdf>)

Pittsburgh

[Cool Pittsburgh](#) – for people new to Pitt and Pittsburgh – especially graduate and professional students

[Visit Pittsburgh](#) – Things to do, events and festivals, restaurants, sports and more

Safety

[Emergency Notification Service \(ENS\)](#) – provides the Pitt students and employees with critical information in the event of an emergency using voice, text, and email channels; all Pitt students and employees are automatically enrolled to receive ENS alerts at their @pitt.edu email address

[Pitt Police](#), emergency 412-624-2121 – safety resources and training & programs

SafeRider (<https://www.pts.pitt.edu/mobility/shuttle-services/saferider>) – complimentary transportation within the SafeRider travel boundaries from 9 pm to 3 am when special non-emergency needs arise

Rave Guardian App (<https://services.pitt.edu/TDClient/33/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=363>) – an optional companion safety app

Pitt Concern Connection (<https://app.convercent.com/en-us/LandingPage/2d6327d5-9fec-ea11-a974-000d3ab9f296>) – ask a question or report a concern regarding ethical and compliance topics, including Title IX, workplace discrimination, financial controls, and more

Study Skills

[Study Skills Modules](#) – there are 5 modules addressing important aspects of study skills (time management, focus, active studying, exam preparation, and test-taking skills); each module is 10-15 minutes.

[Test Taking Tips](#) – reference guide for taking multiple choice tests.

[Study Skill Tools & Resources](#) – includes Study Smarter, Not Harder Webinars; strategies for time management, note taking & reading analysis, active studying, and test taking; the Succeed at Pitt Toolkit; and external resources.

Transportation

[Mobility](#) – shuttle services, parking, biking, and public transportation (Ready2Ride app: <https://www.pc.pitt.edu/prt-launches-ready2ride-app>)

Veterans Services

[Office of Veterans Services](#) – services and resources for veterans and military-affiliated students

PITT ID

Your Pitt ID provides access to campus buildings and serves as your key to campus life. There are two ways to obtain your Pitt ID:

- **Physical Card** – A traditional photo ID card obtained through Panther Central (<https://www.pc.pitt.edu/pitt-id>).
- **Mobile Panther ID** – A digital credential stored in your mobile wallet (<https://www.pc.pitt.edu/pitt-id/mobile-panther-id>).

Because clinical sites require a photo ID, you must obtain a physical ID card from Panther Central. As a Pitt OT student, you are exempt from the standard one-ID rule, meaning you may also obtain a Mobile Panther ID in addition to your physical card if you choose.

BRIDGESIDE POINT I (BSP)

Students can enter through the main front door or the back door (door closest to the Hot Metal Bridge) using their access badge.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the building or within 35 feet outside of any entrance.

Transportation and Parking

Bridgeside Point I (BSP) is accessible by car, and bus and shuttle services.

BUS: [Pittsburgh Regional Transit](#) bus routes 56, 57, and 58 stop at Technology Drive.

SHUTTLE: [Pitt Shuttle Services](#) transports to/from Oakland and Bridgeside Point. See the [Pitt Shuttle Tracker](#) for routes. There are two shuttle routes:

1. **40A Biotech Center** – picks up/drops off at the BSP
2. **Bridgeside Point II** – picks up/drops off at Bridgeside Point II (3 buildings from BSP)

PARKING: The front parking lot at BSP is for visitors only. Students and employees are not permitted to park in the front parking lot. Unauthorized vehicles may be towed. There are two options for student parking at BSP:

1. **Bridgeside Gated Parking Lot** – BSP management offers monthly parking for purchase at the gated parking lot adjacent to BSP. The entrance to the parking lot is off 2nd Avenue; first left past the Hot Metal Bridge intersection. From the parking lot, enter BSP from the back door. The cost is \$65 per month (amount subject to change) and is paid directly to the BSP management via the Zephyre Parking Management System. See the *Monthly Parking Registration* section of [BSP Onsite Parking website](#) for instructions on how to sign up for the Bridgeside Gated Parking Lot. Once registered, parking is activated to the student's BSP access badge.
2. **Pittsburgh Technology Center Garage** – There is an indoor parking garage located at 401 Technology Drive (~500 ft from BSP). Students can pay hourly rates (\$3 for 0-1 hr, \$4 for 1-2 hrs, \$5 for 2-3 hrs, \$8 for 3-5 hrs, \$10 for 5-10 hrs, \$15 for 10-24 hrs). All amounts are subject to change.

Access Badge

OT students have 24/7 keycard access to the OT Student Lounge and academic spaces (classrooms/labs) in the Department of Occupational Therapy. Security is available at BSP on weekdays during business hours from 7 am to 7 pm, Monday through Friday. In the case of a forgotten badge during Security hours, the student will need to show ID and sign in with the security guard at the main entrance. Replacement badges cost \$25 (amount subject to change). Report any issues with facilities during business hours to the OT Student Services Coordinator. Outside of business hours – report non-emergencies (lighting, heating, housekeeping) to the OT Student Services Coordinator; report emergencies (fire alarm sounding, major leak, no electrical service) to Property Management at 412-385-2626 and Vice Chair of Department Affairs.

Student Use of Space

The OT Student Lounge is a comfortable area open to OT students for gathering, studying, and relaxing between classes. The lounge is equipped with furniture, appliances (refrigerator, microwaves, Keurig), sink, Pitt Print Station (black & white print+copy – see [Pitt IT Computing labs](#) for the list of lab locations, including color print stations), PC station and TV monitor, mobile charging station, whiteboard, bulletin board, office supplies (stapler, 3-hole punch, tape, pencil sharpener). The Department also has a private space that students, faculty, and staff can use for prayer/meditation, to change clothes, and for lactation (Room 388 – entrance is from the main hall near the main suite doors). Room 388 is not to be used as a study or meeting room or for other purposes without prior approval. If you need to use the room and it is not available, please see the OT Student Services Coordinator or a faculty member.

General Rules:

- Be respectful of others and lounge area, furniture, and items (please do not remove furniture).
- Be courteous and refrain from disruptive activities (e.g., loud conversations or audio on electronic devices, etc.).
- Clean up after yourself, including the area and appliances (i.e., sink, counters, tables, microwaves, refrigerator, etc.). If a spill occurs on the floor (carpet or tile), please clean up as best as possible and alert the OT Student Services Coordinator of the spill.
- Please use the trash and recycling bins. The recycling bin next to the printer is only for paper that is clean (white or colored printer paper, manilla folders and construction paper; do not place envelopes, notebooks, magazines, newspapers, treated or coated paper, cardboard, or anything with glue or binding). The mixed recycling bin near the bulletin board is for all other recycling.
- The classrooms (Riverside and City View) are available for use, including to eat lunch, when not reserved for class sessions or meetings (please do not eat in the training apartment).
- Appliances and supplies in the OT Student Lounge are for student use. Use of appliances and supplies (i.e., stoves, refrigerators, microwaves, washer/dryer, paper/plastic items, dishes, etc.) in the labs, apartments are for teaching purposes during class and lab sessions, use at other times is not permitted. Use of the Employee Kitchenette is not permitted.
- Signs and announcements may be posted on the whiteboard and bulletin board (please do not post anything on the walls).
- If office supplies need to be refilled, please see the OT Student Services Coordinator.
- Our OT suite is a secure space, please do not prop suite doors open at any time or provide access to people not affiliated with the Department.
- Students are responsible for their own personal items. Shelves and coat hooks located in the hallway adjacent to the OT Student Lounge are for student use. Note: hooks are for light weight items (jackets, umbrellas, etc.), please use the shelves for heavier items (backpacks, etc.)
- Hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, gloves, and masks are available for use and located in the classrooms/laboratories and OT student lounge.
- Equipment, supplies, and materials borrowed from classrooms, labs, apartments, and storage areas must be signed out. See Borrowing Department of Occupational Therapy Materials on the Pitt OT Students Canvas course.
- The Lost and Found for Occupational Therapy is in the OT Student Lounge. Found items can be placed in the Lost and Found bin. Please notify the OT Student Services Coordinator of lost items.
- Students are not permitted to use the Communication Science and Disorders Conference Room 310 located across the hall from the back entrance to the suite.

Pitt/SHRS Information Technology

Students have access to a Pitt Print Station, PC Station and TV monitor, and mobile charging station in the Student Lounge at Bridgeside Point I. See the [University IT Resources for Pitt Students](#) and [SHRS Technology Support Services](#) for information on computing labs, print stations, print quotas, tech support, and more.

Safety – OT Safety Binder, Emergency Situations, and Evacuation

The University is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment.

Please keep in mind that safety and crime prevention are shared responsibilities. Use common sense and good judgment and be watchful and alert. Never hesitate to ask for help. Become familiar with campus resources and use them to help ensure personal safety and contribute to the overall safety of every member of the university community. See Pitt's [Office of Public Safety & Emergency Management](#), [Police Department](#) and [University's Emergency Notification Service \(ENS\)](#) websites for additional information and resources.

Department of OT Safety Binder

Knowledge of health and safety issues is necessary to maintain the health and safety of students, faculty, and clients during all educational activities. Some course activities may require the student to use potentially hazardous equipment and/or materials. Information pertaining to the safe handling of equipment, and, as per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), and infection control, medical emergency, and evacuation procedures are available in the Safety Binders located in all classrooms/laboratories and the OT student lounge. Students must be familiar with the contents of the Safety Binder. While course instructors review safety information prior to using hazardous equipment and/or materials, it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with safety precautions.

Emergency Situations in BSP

1. Call 911 and give your location:
Bridgeside Point I, Suite 350
100 Technology Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Describe the incident.
2. Notify an OT Department staff or faculty member. If emergency occurs outside of business hours, call Vice Chair of Department Affairs (Denise Chisholm) at 412-383-6606 and leave a message with your name, contact telephone number, and description of the incident.
3. Department will notify Property Management (24-hour messaging) at 412-385-2626
4. If you smell smoke or see flames, please pull the fire alarm, dial 911 and follow all above steps.
5. Use stairwell #2 for external building egress and for rescue assistance. Meeting location is in the front parking lot by Evacuation F area.
6. AEDs are located in the 3rd floor hallway and in the BSP lobby.

Evacuation of BSP

- The building is equipped with a fire alarm system which when triggered, either by a pull station being manually pulled or by a smoke detector detecting smoke, a loud audio alarm will sound, and visual strobe lights will flash throughout the entire building.
- Should the fire alarm be triggered, please calmly proceed to the nearest stairwell, and exit the building. The meeting place for each floor of BSP is the parking area in front of the building. Once your Department Administrator gets an "all clear" from the Police, Fire Department or Building Management, you may re-enter the building.
- Please do not try to use the elevators in the event of a fire. When an alarm is triggered, the elevators automatically return to the first floor and remain there until they are reset.
- Learn the location of the fire alarm pull stations and the posted EXIT routes for your location in BSP. The fire alarm pull stations are located in the building corridors.
- If you hear the fire alarm signal, verify that the strobe on your floor is going off; close the door behind you and evacuate the building by following the EXIT signs to the nearest stairwell or exit. Note: Only use a fire extinguisher if the fire is small and you have been trained in the proper use of an extinguisher.
- Meeting location is in the front parking lot by Evacuation F area. Do not reenter the building until the "all clear" signal is given by the Police, Fire Department or Building Management.

REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

The University, SHRS, and Department of Occupational Therapy have regulations, policies and procedures affecting students. University of Pittsburgh students are responsible for being cognizant of the University, School, and Department regulations relevant to their program of study and should refer to the websites and sources listed below for these policies.

University	Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog (use dropdown menu)
SHRS	SHRS Graduate Student Handbook
OT	OT Student Handbook

Institutional Engagement & Wellbeing

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors, as stated in the University's Title IX policies and procedures. Consistent with this, the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics of the American Occupational Therapy Association mandates that occupational therapy practitioners and students demonstrate attitudes and actions of inclusion, equity, participation, safety, and well-being toward persons, groups, and populations with whom they interact, regardless of age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, origin, socioeconomic status, degree of ability, or any other status or attributes. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. See the [Office of Institutional Engagement & Wellbeing website](#) for additional information and policies, procedures, practices and initiatives related to sexual violence prevention and survivor support, disability access, digital accessibility, civil rights & Title IX, and reporting a concern or incident.

Disability Resources and Services (DRS)

[DRS](#), located within the Office of Institutional Engagement & Wellbeing, is the designated department to determine reasonable accommodations and services, under the provisions set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Pitt is committed to promoting equal access to students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. Disability is an important aspect of our community.

Individuals with disabilities are integrated as completely into the University environment as possible. Through an interactive process, DRS works with students who apply for accommodations to provide access to University classes, programs, and activities. Students are responsible for initiating contact and maintaining eligibility for DRS services.

Students with a disability who are or may be requesting an accommodation should contact both the Program Director/Assistant Program Director and DRS – see [Getting Started with DRS](#). DRS will verify the disability and determine reasonable accommodations for the course. The Program Director/Assistant Program Director will work with the student to coordinate accommodations with instructors.

Academic Standards

The following is the University's letter grade system:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>	<u>Percentile Score</u>		
A+	4.00	97-100		
A	4.00	93-96		
A-	3.75	90-92		
B+	3.25	87-89		
B	3.00	83-86		
B-	2.75	80-82		
C+	2.25	77-79		
C	2.00	73-76	Minimum graduate-level attainment	
C-	1.75	70-72		
D+	1.25	67-69		
D	1.00	63-66		
D-	0.75	60-62		
F	0.00	<60		
				The following grades carry no quality points:
				S Satisfactory (successful) completion of course requirements
				U Unsatisfactory (failing) completion of course requirements
				G Coursework unfinished because of extenuating personal circumstances
				I Incomplete coursework due to the nature of the course or clinical work

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is the numerical indication of a student's academic achievement based on a 4.000 grade point scale. The GPA is the average of the total letter grades earned and is calculated each term

and cumulatively. For courses that have a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) grade, the grade S is counted toward graduation but not the student's GPA. To maintain full graduate status, students must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.000 in the courses that make up their OT curriculum. Students must successfully complete all required coursework and achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.000 to be eligible for graduation.

Students must achieve a grade of C or better (or S) in all letter grade courses in the OT curriculum. Students who receive a grade below a C (or U) in a course must repeat that course and attain a grade of C or better (or S). The grade earned by repeating a course is used in lieu of the grade originally earned. SHRS graduate students are only permitted to repeat a course one additional time after the initial attempt. Failure to receive at least a grade of C (or S) after the second opportunity to complete the course may result in the student being dismissed from the program. When repeating a course, students must officially enroll and pay for the course again. Students are not permitted to register for additional courses until they repeat the course and achieve a passing grade. Needing to repeat a course extends the length of the program beyond the scheduled date for degree completion.

When the cumulative GPA of a student falls below 3.000, the student is automatically placed on academic notice and will receive written notification of this status. To be removed from academic notice, the student must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.000 within their next two terms of enrollment. Failure to do so may result in the student being dismissed from the program.

See the [Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog](#) and the [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#) for additional information on academic regulations, grading policies, and probation, suspension, and dismissal.

Note: Conditions for loan eligibility and many scholarships usually require students to complete a specified number of credits each year and maintain a specified grade point average. Questions about the effect of unsatisfactory academic standing on loans or scholarships should be directed to the [Office of Admissions and Financial Aid](#) or the organization awarding the scholarship.

Statute of Limitations / Leaves of Absence

The purpose of the statute of limitations is to ensure that a graduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh represents mastery of current knowledge in the field of study. All requirements for the MS degree must be completed according to the timeline set by SHRS. This timeline can be found in the [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#). Under special conditions, graduate students may be granted one leave of absence. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance, recommended to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies by the department (Program Director), and approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. If approved, the time of the leave shall not count against the total time allowed for the degree being sought by the student. Readmission following an approved leave of absence is a formality. See the [Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog](#) and the [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#) for additional information and details.

Academic Conduct and Integrity

Students are expected to comply with the [University's Academic Integrity Guidelines](#), SHRS Academic Integrity Policy (see [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#)), and the canons of ethics of the student's discipline ([AOTA 2025 Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics](#)).

Academic Advising

Students are assigned an Academic Advisor who is an OT faculty member. Good academic advising supports quality education. Academic advising provides students with the opportunity to discuss their academic performance and progress, work habits, professional development, and educational experience. Students meet with your Academic Advisor at least once per term, however, students, or Academic Advisors, can request additional advisement sessions.

Communication

Students should stay in regular communication with their academic advisor and faculty members. Faculty and staff are expected to respond to students in a timely manner and students are expected to respond to faculty and staff in a timely manner. See the SHRS Policy on Failure to Communicate in the HYPERLINK

"<https://pitt.sharepoint.com/sites/shrsstudentresources/SitePages/Registrar-Handbooks.aspx>" [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#).

OT students are strongly encouraged to:

- Check their Pitt email daily, including terms when they are on preceptorships

- Inform their academic advisor, instructors, and/or program director/assistant program director of difficulties that may impact their academic standing
- Seek help as needed from their advisor, instructors, and/or program director/assistant program director

All correspondence between faculty/staff and students must be conducted using University of Pittsburgh e-mail accounts. No personal e-mail accounts are to be used. Therefore, students should ensure accessibility to their University e-mail account. Students should contact the [University Technology Help Desk](#) for questions and access issues related to their e-mail account.

Personal Information and Updates

Students are required to keep their personal information up to date with the University, SHRS, and the Department. It is important to notify all appropriate department of information changes immediately (e.g., name, address, telephone, etc.). See the [Personal Information page](#) on the Pitt website for more information.

Social Media

Social media is rapidly expanding, and new outlets are created every day. Because social media can cross traditional boundaries between professional and personal relationships, it is essential that students remain aware and vigilant regarding the social media ethical challenges facing health professionals, clients, patients, and students to assure that personal, professional and university reputations are protected. Students who publish information on social media sites are expected to demonstrate professionalism when doing so and adhere to the [SHRS Social Media Policy](#). Additionally, see the [University's Safety Tips for Social Networking page](#).

Student Complaint Process

The Department of Occupational Therapy adheres to the University's [Guidelines on Academic Integrity](#) and Student and Faculty Obligations and Hearing Procedures and SHRS policies and procedures regarding grievances and complaints. See Ombudsperson in the [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#).

The Department strives to maintain good working relationships and a supportive learning environment and encourages open and honest dialogue about concerns. Pending the nature of the concern, students may discuss the matter with their instructor(s), Academic Advisor, and/or Program Director/Assistant Program Director. Additionally, students may also share their concern with their Class Liaisons, who are chosen by their peers, and serve as the communication link between students and faculty in representing issues common to the OT student body. For course related concerns, students are encouraged to speak directly with the instructor to explain their concern and seek clarification or resolution. If the initial discussion doesn't lead to a satisfactory outcome or the student feels they are not able to direct the particular concern to the instructor, the student may seek assistance from their Academic Advisor, Program Director/Assistant Program Director, Vice Chair of Academic Affairs, and/or Department Chair. It is the responsibility of the faculty to meet in a timely and professional manner with the student to discuss the concern and consider reasonable solutions that would remedy the situation consistent with Department, School, and University policies. If such discussions do not prevent or resolve the concern, additional actions may be taken, and the concern can be expressed to the SHRS Ombudsperson and/or the SHRS Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

If the student is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, a written appeal may be made to the SHRS Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and/or the SHRS Dean; the appeal must be made within 3 weeks of receipt of the Chair's response. The Associate Dean's/Dean's response to the complaint will be communicated to the student within 3 weeks of the appeal. The Associate Dean/Dean's decision is final.

The Chair/Associate Dean/Dean will maintain a written record of a complaint, including the nature of the complaint, the steps taken to resolve the complaint, the final decision, and any external actions initiated by the student. This record will be confidential and will be held for 8 years.

Academic and Professional References

Students must submit a signed [Waiver](#) to each individual faculty/staff member who they request to provide a written or oral reference for application for scholarships, fellowships, or professional employment. Under the Buckley Amendment, records and information pertaining to a student's academic performance is confidential. By submitting a [Waiver](#), the student is permitting the faculty/staff member to provide an academic or professional reference.

If a student needs a written reference, in addition to the [Waiver](#), they are asked to draft a letter in a Word file for the faculty/staff member. The faculty/staff member will use the draft as a starting point for their written

reference for the student. Additionally, the student should provide the faculty/staff member with the following if applicable to what they are applying for – resume, list of experiences/skills, link or copy of criteria, timeline, essay, application, etc. Note: If a student is requesting a reference from more than one faculty/staff member, they need to tailor each draft letter specific to the faculty/staff member – that is, make the drafts different.

Audio Recording, Video Recording and Photographic Imaging of Course Activities and Materials

Class sessions (to the extent possible) will be recorded so that students can view a recording if absent or for study purposes. Links to recorded sessions will be available through Canvas.

Students may not audio or video record or take a photographic image of course lectures, discussions, activities, and/or materials without the advance written permission of the instructor. If a student wants to request permission to record or take images they must submit the request in writing to the instructor prior to the start of the class session. Acceptance of the request (i.e., permission to record or image) will be determined by the instructor. Any approved recordings or images can be used solely for the individual student's own private use.

Attendance and Punctuality

A class, like any workplace, depends on instructors and students being present. Class sessions are the primary opportunity for instructors and students to create knowledge together and practice skills. Regular attendance and promptness are work habits that facilitate learning and teaching. As with any job, failure to show up for work or being late for work reflects poorly on one's performance. At the same time, exceptional circumstances do sometimes arise, and employers understand this. For that reason, the OT program permits a reasonable number of "Program Time Off (PTO)" excused absences.

Class. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, arrive prior to the scheduled start time, and be prepared to begin on time. Attendance is taken at each class session. If a student is unable to attend a class, they need to complete the Absence Notification Survey to notify their instructor(s) of their absence. Students need to complete the Absence Notification Survey as early as possible but no later than prior to the start of class on the day of their absence for their absence to be considered an excused absence. Proactive communication with Academic Advisors and the Program Director/Assistant Program Director is strongly encouraged for any anticipated personal events that may or will result in a possible absence. Students are permitted up to 2 "Program Time Off (PTO)" excused absences for each course. Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences. Not completing the Absence Notification Survey for an absence is considered an unexcused absence. If absences and/or lateness to class become a concern it will be addressed with the student by the Instructor, Academic Advisor, and/or Program Director/Assistant Program Director. Note: absences due to a religious observance are not included within the 2 PTO limit – see University Holidays below for additional information regarding religious observances.

Preceptorships (for MS students). Students are expected to attend all scheduled clinical and preceptorship days, arrive prior to the scheduled start time, and be prepared to begin on time. Attendance during preceptorships is monitored by the instructor for clinical preceptorships and the faculty mentor for research preceptorships. The student's preceptorship hours may include daylight, evening, and/or weekend work hours. Any anticipated absences due to extreme circumstances (e.g., illness, funeral, etc.) must be approved by the instructor or faculty mentor. Students are to contact the instructor/faculty mentor to discuss any anticipated absences prior to discussing the situation with the supervisors at their preceptorship sites.

University Holidays. University offices are closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Spring Holiday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, the day before Christmas, and Christmas Day. The University attempts to recognize religious observances of members of the University community in instances where those observances may conflict with University activities. Examples of such occasions are Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Muharram, Diwali, and Good Friday, but other days of religious observance may also conflict with scheduled academic activities. On such dates, course instructors will work with students to allow for missed class for reasons of religious observations. It is the student's responsibility to notify the course instructor of an absence due to a religious observance by completing the Absence Notification Survey well in advance of the known religious observance (e.g., at the start of the term).

University-wide Closure and Class Cancellation. Only by authorization of the Chancellor shall the University be officially closed. Students are urged to use their own discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to class. If personal health or safety is an issue in that decision, responsible judgment should be used. For the full policy see [University-wide Closure and Class Cancellation Policy](#)

Disaster Preparedness. In the event of a disaster, such as flooding, fire, or health pandemic, the University of Pittsburgh will post information for faculty, staff and students on the [University's website home page](#). The Department of Occupational Therapy will distribute information and instructions for occupational therapy students through recorded messages on the Department voicemail (412-383-6620) and through email (University of Pittsburgh accounts only). Students will be responsible for maintaining open lines of communication with course instructors and completing all required work as instructed.

Course Assignments, Examinations, and Quizzes

Students are to turn in assignments on their due dates and are to take examinations/quizzes at the scheduled time. Completion of assignments in a timely manner facilitates learning and instruction. All students completing quizzes and examinations at the scheduled time eliminates sharing of information with students who have not taken the quiz/examination. It also prevents the instructor from having to do extra work to develop a second test or monitor another test. In other words, it is fair to students and instructors.

Assignments. The due dates for assignments are listed in the syllabus and/or identified by the course instructor. Turning in assignments late, that is, after their due dates, is taken into account in the final course grade. For example, points may be deducted from the participation and work habits component of the final course grade and/or from other components as specified by the instructor. All assignments, whether they are to be graded or not, must be submitted. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete any missed in-class assignments prior to the next class.

Examinations/Quizzes. Dates of examinations/quizzes are listed in the syllabus. Students are expected to take all examinations/quizzes on the dates listed, so plan accordingly. Make up examinations/quizzes will only be scheduled under extreme circumstances. If an extreme circumstance prevents the student from taking the examination/quiz on the scheduled day at the scheduled time, the student may request an alternate examination/quiz date through the Absence Notification Survey. The student will be notified in writing if an exception is to be made. Students are encouraged to submit requests as soon as they are aware there may be an extreme circumstance.

Participation and Work Habits

In addition to knowledge and skills, professional education socializes students to the personal, interpersonal, and interprofessional work habits expected of occupational therapy practitioners, managers, and contributors.

Students are expected to demonstrate positive participation and work habits in all interactions with their peers and faculty, staff, practitioners, clients, and community members to promote shared supportive learning environments, including but not limited to class sessions, fieldwork, and the doctoral capstone.

Work habits include:

- Clinical/Professional Reasoning
- Communication
- Confidence
- Engagement
- Integrity
- Interpersonal Skills
- Professionalism
- Teamwork
- Time Management

Participation and work habits are evaluated by instructors. Concerns or problems are typically addressed with the student by the individual instructor but may also be brought to the attention of the student's Academic Advisor so that additional support and/or resources can be provided.

To maintain a supportive shared learning environment, students are expected to refrain from "distracting behaviors" when class is in session. Examples of distracting behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Using a cell phone (including text messaging)
- Using a laptop for tasks unrelated to class notation
- Conversing during lectures
- Not being ready to begin class on time
- Arriving late and/or leaving early
- Sleeping/putting head down on table

- Eating, drinking or chewing gum in an audible manner

The [SHRS Impaired Student Policy](#) details the expected professional behaviors of SHRS students in classroom, clinical and research settings. Safety is the first concern of the university, school, and department as related to the use or impairment from substances or chemicals.

Expectations for Appearance

In the interest of personal safety, health, professionalism, consideration for others, and to maintain a shared supportive learning environment, it is the policy of SHRS and the Department of Occupational Therapy that students, faculty, and staff adhere to basic standards of dress and grooming while attending classes and fieldwork/capstone/preceptorship experiences. Failure to comply with expectations for appearance are viewed as a work habit concern (professionalism). See SHRS Expectations for Appearance in the [SHRS Graduate Student Handbook](#).

Classroom/Laboratory.

- Casual dress is appropriate attire for classroom and laboratory settings, however, when community members (e.g., clients, guest speakers) are present students are expected to present with a professional appearance (i.e., business casual clothing).
- Clothing should be clean and free of offensive messages; excessive skin exposure; and exposed undergarments (upper and lower).
- Hygiene that is supportive of a shared learning environment (i.e., maintain personal hygiene; minimize body odors such as smoke; avoid wearing excessive fragrances such as perfume or cologne).
- Individual course instructors may request alternate clothing in certain instances to fully participate in class or lab activities (e.g., shoes with closed heel and toe).

Clinical Experiences (i.e., fieldwork, capstone, preceptorship).

- Clothing in clinical and community sites is determined by the facility. Students are expected to learn the facility dress code prior to the start of the fieldwork/capstone experience and abide by it. Some sites have specific uniform requirements, and some require business casual attire. Business casual is slacks/pants; skirts of at least knee length; collared shirt; blouse/shirt/top/sweater with at least short sleeves; foot coverings; hard soled shoes with closed heel and toe. Clothing should be clean and worn in such a way as to prevent undergarments (upper and lower) from showing, including when moving or bending.
- A University of Pittsburgh (or facility) photo identification badge (or name pin if approved by the site) must be worn at all times. Name badges and name pins are provided by the Department of Occupational Therapy. Replacement name badges cost \$5 and name pins cost \$15 (amounts subject to change).
- In general, sites require staff and students to abide by the following to maintain infection control and safety:
 - i. Hair should be clean and pulled back with small simple hair accessories, so hair does not come in contact with the client. Note: some sites may have policies related to hair color of an unnatural tone (e.g., green, blue, pink, purple, etc.)
 - ii. Facial hair should be clean and groomed. Note: some sites may have policies related to facial hair (e.g., fit testing for N95 masks).
 - iii. Wearing jewelry (including, but not limited to dangling earrings/hoops, pins, buttons, and other adornments) is discouraged during direct patient contact. Note: some sites may have policies related to jewelry (e.g., facial/oral piercings).
 - iv. Makeup should be kept at a minimum. Cologne and perfume are not recommended as many clients are sensitive to scents (including, but not limited to scented hair sprays, lotions, etc.). Smelling of smoke is not permitted.
 - v. Nails should be groomed and kept to a length that is not detrimental to client safety or infection control. When having direct contact with clients, natural nail tips should be less than 1/4 inch past the tip of the finger and artificial fingernails or extenders (including, but not limited to, acrylic nails, overlaps, tips, bondings, extensions, tapes, inlays, and wraps) should not be worn.
 - vi. Footwear must be clean; closed heel and closed toe; leather or vinyl; in good condition; and worn with foot coverings (hosiery or socks). If athletic shoes are permitted by the site, they should be clean, in good condition, and **ONLY** used for work purposes.

ABOUT PITT MS IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT) PROGRAM

Contact Information

MS Program Director	Jennifer S. White	jwhite@pitt.edu	412-383-6621	Office 372
Student Services Coordinator	Joyce Broadwick	jrb164@pitt.edu	412-383-6620	

The post-professional MS program is designed for occupational therapists with a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy. The program is intended for occupational therapists, educated in the United States or internationally, who are seeking advanced knowledge and skills.

Curriculum Design

The design for the MS curriculum is based on the interaction of concepts from the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organization (WHO), 2001), and three primary roles expected of entry-level occupational therapists – practitioner, manager, contributor. The matrix formed by ICF concepts, and the primary roles serves as an organizer for the relationship between the courses in our curriculum and the content within courses.

World Health Organization. (2001). *International classification of functioning, disability and health*. Geneva: Author.

The vertical axis of our curriculum matrix is formed by the following **ICF concepts** (WHO, 2001, pp. 8, 10):

- Environmental factors make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives.
- Participation is involvement in a life situation.
- Participation restrictions are problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations.
- Activity is the execution of a task or action by an individual.
- Activity limitations are difficulties an individual may have in executing activities.
- Body functions are the physiological functions of body systems (including psychological functions).
- Body structures are anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs and their components.
- Impairments are problems in body function or structure such as significant deviation or loss.
- Functioning indicates non-problematic aspects of health and health-related states.
- Disability indicates impairment, activity limitations or participation restrictions.

The horizontal axis of our curriculum matrix is formed by the three **primary roles** expected of an entry-level occupational therapist.

Role of Practitioner:

The occupational therapy practitioner, based on outcomes that are meaningful to clients, uses evaluation data to formulate and implement interventions to establish, restore, maintain, or enhance functional and structural integrity, activity, and participation in lifestyles that are optimally independent, productive, and satisfying to clients. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- Establish therapeutic relationships with clients and caregivers, and professional relationships with colleagues consistent with the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics;
- Screen and evaluate client's participation and participation restrictions, activity and activity limitations, functional and structural integrity and impairments, psychosocial factors, and occupational environment; document the findings and accurately interpret the results;
- Formulate, implement, and document occupation-based intervention, using current best evidence, to enhance functioning and reduce or prevent disability; and,
- Develop and implement a transition plan in collaboration with clients in preparation for the discontinuation of occupational therapy services when appropriate.

Role of Manager:

The occupational therapy manager plans, organizes, implements, staffs, directs, and evaluates occupational therapy services; coordinates these functions with other health, education, and work-related services; and promotes understanding of occupational therapy services. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- Use data when making resource and program management decisions and apply management principles and strategies to direct occupational therapy services; and,
- Relate the roles and functions of occupational therapy to other health care services and describe the

influence of external factors, such as demographic trends, public laws, health care policies, and reimbursement policies on health care services and implement methods to effect change.

Role of Contributor:

The occupational therapy contributor has a professional responsibility to recognize and influence health care within the context of world, national, state, community, and work environments. Contributors participate in the development and application of a scholarly body of knowledge within occupational therapy practice. A graduate will demonstrate the ability to:

- Recognize, integrate, and discuss issues pertaining to public health and occupational therapy practices, and articulate and implement methods to effect change.
- Find, analyze, and integrate scholarly works from both occupational therapy and other appropriate sources; and,
- Design, implement, and disseminate beginning level research/program development projects as well as articulate the basics of grant writing.

Curriculum Matrix: ICF x Primary Roles. The table below demonstrates how the roles of practitioner, manager, and contributor interact with the ICF concepts to create the framework used by the University of Pittsburgh OT program to plan, implement, and evaluate the program.

		ROLES		
		Practitioner	Manager	Contributor
International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)	Environment Factors	Analyzes the influence of the environment on impairments, activities and participation and adapts environment and/or recommends changes.	Plans, establishes and manages organizational, educational and community environments.	Uses research evidence to identify & influence health within multiple environments. Advocates for the needs of consumers served by OT.
	Participation / Participation Restriction	Evaluates and intervenes for factors that enable or restrict full participation of consumers of OT services.	Considers social, economic, political, legislative and policy issues to plan, establish and manage service delivery systems that promote participation of OT consumers and populations with disabilities.	Uses & designs research to examine factors that enable full participation of individuals and populations and disseminates findings to consumer, professional, regulatory and health policy groups.
	Activities / Activity Limitations	Analyzes everyday activities and occupations. Evaluates and intervenes for factors that enable or limit expected, required, or desired activities/ occupations of consumers of OT services.	Plans, establishes, and manages resources and service delivery systems that reduce activity limitations & promote activities for OT consumers and populations with disabilities.	Uses and designs research to examine factors that enable activities and occupations of individuals and populations, and disseminates findings to consumer, professional, regulatory and health policy groups.
	Body Functions & Structures / Impairment	Evaluates and intervenes for factors that influence optimum health as well as deviations and loss of functions/structures.	Plans, establishes, and manages resources and service delivery systems that reduce impairments and promote healthy function of body functions/ structures for OT consumers and populations with disabilities.	Uses and designs research to examine factors that prevent deviations & loss of functions/structures to promote health of individuals and populations, and disseminates findings to consumer, professional, regulatory and health policy groups.

Essential Skills / Technical Standards

Students in the MS program must possess [essential skills](#) (sensorimotor, process, social interaction) to perform all educational (classroom and laboratory) and clinical and research preceptorships tasks in an accurate, safe and efficient manner, to the satisfaction of the faculty, with or without reasonable accommodation. We ask that students review the [essential skills](#) for the MS program carefully. Students are encouraged to contact the University's [Disability Resources & Services](#) to discuss any accommodations they may need.

Curriculum*

Each student will be advised by the Program Director (PD) who will oversee the development, implementation and grading of Comprehensive Examinations necessary to complete the program. The MS program will provide didactic coursework as well as opportunities for research preceptorships under the guidance of faculty or clinical preceptorships across varying clinical settings.

The program requires the completion of 30 credits for the Clinical, Research and Research with Scholarly Project plan of studies.

The following are typical plans of study for students enrolled in the Master of Science (MS) Program in Occupational Therapy (OT).

Program Catalog and Course Descriptions

Clinical Plan of Study (30 credits, 2 terms)		
Term 1 ▪ Fall ▪ 15 credits	Term 2 ▪ Spring ▪ 15 credits	
OT 2207 – Principles of Assessment** OT 2221 – Developmental Theory and Practice** <u>OR</u> OT 2222 Productive Aging Theory and Practice** OT 2224 – Management of Occupational Therapy Practice OT 2241 – Clinical Preceptorship 1** OT 3010 – Evidence Interpretation for Implementation OT 3206 – Advanced Theory and Practice**	OT 2210 – Psychosocial/Cognitive Theory and Practice OT 2213 – Occupational Therapy and the Health System OT 2242 – Clinical Preceptorship 2** OT 2248 – Professional Reasoning in Occupational Therapy OT 2249 – Special Topics in Occupational Therapy: Clinical OT 3200 – Evidence-Based Protocols and Practice Guidelines	*Curriculum is subject to change. **Course includes laboratory or experiential component.
Research Plan of Study (30 credits, 2 terms)		
Term 1 ▪ Fall ▪ 15 credits	Term 2 ▪ Spring ▪ 15 credits	
HRS 2927 – Statistical Methods for Health Science Research 1 OT 2221 – Developmental Theory and Practice** <u>OR</u> OT 2222 – Productive Aging Theory and Practice** OT 2245 – Special Topics in Occupational Therapy: Research OT 2246 – Research Preceptorship 1 OT 3010 – Evidence Interpretation for Implementation OT 3206 – Advanced Theory and Practice**	OT 2210 – Psychosocial/Cognitive Theory and Practice OT 2213 – Occupational Therapy and the Health System OT 2247 – Research Preceptorship 2 OT 3100 – Evidence Analysis and Synthesis OT 3200 – Evidence-Based Protocols and Practice Guidelines	*Curriculum is subject to change. **Course includes laboratory or experiential component.
Research with Scholarly Project Plan of Study (30 credits, 3 terms)		
Term 1 ▪ Fall ▪ 12 credits	Term 2 ▪ Spring ▪ 15 credits	Term 3 Summer – 3 credits
Leadership I HRS 2927 – Statistical Methods for Health Science Research 1 OT 3206 – Advanced Theory and Practice** <u>OR</u> OT 2221 – Developmental** Theory and Practice <u>OR</u> OT 2222 – Productive Aging Theory and Practice** OT 2245 – Special Topics in Occupational Therapy: Research OT 2246 – Research Preceptorship 1 OT 3010 – Evidence Interpretation for Implementation	Leadership II OT 2210 – Psychosocial/Cognitive Theory and Practice OT 2213 – Occupational Therapy and the Health System OT 2251 – Scholarly Project OT 3100 – Evidence Analysis and Synthesis OT 3200 – Evidence-Based Protocols and Practice Guidelines	OT 2251 – Scholarly Project *Curriculum is subject to change. **Course includes laboratory or experiential component.
Comprehensive Examination: Each student must successfully complete a Comprehensive Examination in Spring Term. This examination is used to determine mastery of the core content in the curriculum.		

- Admission to the MS program is only available on a full-time basis
- For all courses in the MS program, students receive a letter grade, except for Preceptorship courses (OT 22241, OT 2242, OT 2246, and OT 2247) and OT 2245, OT 2249, and OT 2251 which have a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) grade.
- A GPA of at least 3.000 is required in the MS program to graduate.
- A misdemeanor or felony charge or conviction may affect a student's ability to complete clinical preceptorship courses.

Tuition and Fees

Fall and spring terms are billed at the full-time per term tuition rate and summer terms are billed at the part-time per-credit rate. See [Financial Information](#) in the University Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog, [Graduate Tuition](#) for tuition rates and University fees for the SHRS MS program for Pennsylvania Residents and Out-of-State Residents, and [Cost of Attendance](#) for the estimated total cost of attendance for the MS program. Tuition and fees are subject to change.

Registering for Classes

The [University Academic Regulations](#) are in the Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog.

OT students are “block” registered each term by the Registrar with the approval of their Academic Advisor/Program Director. Registration follows the [MS curriculum](#).

Restrictions can be placed by a variety of University offices. If a student has a restriction, they will be referred to the appropriate office to resolve the matter before registration can be completed. Types of restrictions include academic, missing data, disciplinary, and financial.

Pitt OT Students Course in Canvas

The Pitt OT Students course in Canvas provides relevant information for students, including information for the term (absence notification survey, textbooks and materials, parking, shuttle, advising, resources, class liaison survey, borrowing materials from the department, etc.), required documents, student handbook, SHRS Student Resource Hub, OT professional resources, advising, opportunities (jobs, fellowships, events, etc.), and student organizations. See [myPitt](#) to access Canvas and the Pitt OT Students course.

Class Schedule

The class schedule for each term is posted in the cohort’s Outlook calendar.

Clinical and Research Preceptorship

The MS in Occupational Therapy program offers clinical and research preceptorships.

Clinical preceptorships provides a structured exposure to the U.S. health care system. Students are exposed to occupational therapy practice in various health care settings (e.g., acute and inpatient rehabilitation hospitals, outpatient clinics) under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist. To participate in clinical education activities (preceptorships), students must sign the [SHRS Clinical Placement Agreement](#). See the [Guidelines for Clinical Preceptorships](#).

Research preceptorships provide exposure to clinical research in the field of occupational therapy. Students are exposed to occupational therapy research in a variety of areas (e.g., pediatrics, neurology, geriatrics, health systems). See the [Guidelines for Research with Scholarship Project Preceptorships](#).

For all preceptorship experiences, in addition to the site mentor, students are assigned a faculty mentor who guides them through the preceptorship. The student and faculty mentor meet prior to the start of the preceptorship to discuss goals for the preceptorship, a plan of action for achieving the goals, and the evaluation process. The student and faculty mentor meet throughout the preceptorship to discuss the student's progress. Students find the preceptorships to be rewarding experiences that advance their clinical or research skills and career development.

Required Documents

To protect the health and safety of all Pitt community members, including clients and to meet the requirements of the University, SHRS, and fieldwork and capstone sites students must complete the following documentation. Students receive detailed instructions on how and when to complete and submit each required document. Completion of the required documents by the due dates is the responsibility of each student. Students may not participate in client interactions in the classroom or preceptorships without completion of all required documents by the due dates. Failure to comply can delay graduation from the OT program. All required documents are maintained on a secure platform by the Department. Documents are provided to sites in accordance with the [SHRS Clinical Placement Agreement](#).

Document	Year 1
Initial Health Appraisal	X

Document	Year 1
COVID-19 Vaccination Card (or exemption)	X
Personal Health Insurance Card	X
Drug Screen	X
Flu Vaccine	X
Act 33 – PA Child Abuse Clearance	X
Act 34 – PA Background Check (Criminal History Record Check)	X
Act 73 – DHS Fingerprint-based Background Check	X
Bloodborne Pathogen Training	X
COVID-19 Introduction Education Module (Wolff Module)	X
CPR/AED Certification	X
First On The Scene (FOTS)	X
Academic Integrity Modules	X
Act 126 – Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse	X
UPMC Information Privacy and Security Awareness Training	X
CITI: Biomedical Course	X
CITI: Responsible Conduct of Research	X
CITI: Conflicts of Interest	X
CITI: GCP – Social and Behavioral Research Best Practices	X
CITI: Privacy and Information Security	X
Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Overview Training	X

Note: Required documents are subject to change and specific preceptorship sites may require additional documentation. MS students are responsible for the costs associated with completing required documents.

Department of Occupational Therapy Honors for MS Students

Department of Occupational Therapy Chair's List. Established in 2024. The Chair's List recognizes student academic achievement in the MS program. Students receive a letter from the Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy and may purchase a specialty cord to wear for graduation ceremonies. Eligibility and criteria:

- Cumulative GPA equal to or greater than 3.75 and a Satisfactory (S) grade in all courses with an S/U grade at the end of the program.

Commencement / Graduation

MS students are invited to participate in the [SHRS Graduation Ceremony](#). Academic regalia is required to participate. Per the University of Pittsburgh regalia colors, MS students wear yellow hoods.

Employment Options for International Students

F-1 and J-1 visa students can work on-campus (defined as: in a Pitt owned/leased building, paid by Pitt, and working for Pitt) up to 20 hours per week while classes are in session and over 20 hours per week during official university breaks.

F-1 visa students may be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization after being enrolled full-time in classes for one full academic year. OPT is typically authorized for 12 months and the employment must be directly related to the major field of study as listed on the I-20.

J-1 visa students may be eligible for Academic Training (AT) authorization that may occur during the academic program or after graduation.

Please see the [Office of International Services \(OIS\)](#) website or email ois@pitt.edu for more information.

Certification

If a student did not earn an entry-level master's/doctoral degree in occupational therapy from a U.S.-accredited college/university, after successful completion of the MS program, students will complete the Occupational Therapist Eligibility Determination (OTED®) process through the [National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy \(NBCOT®\)](#). The OTED process evaluates the student's bachelor and master's curriculum to determine if the student's combined bachelor's and master's education meets the eligibility requirements to apply for the OTR certification exam. Education must be deemed comparable to current U.S. entry-level educational standards to become eligible to take the OTR certification exam.

After successful completion of this examination, the individual will be an occupational therapist, registered (OTR). Candidates applying for the NBCOT® Certification Examination must answer questions regarding good moral character (e.g., whether he/she has ever been charged or convicted of a felony; had any professional license, registration, or certification revoked, suspended, or subject to probationary conditions; been found to have committed negligence, malpractice, reckless, or willful misconduct; been suspended and/or expelled from a college/university). In addition, all states require licensure to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the OTR certification examination. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the OTR certification examination or attain state licensure. Additionally, certification and licensure requirements include inquiries as to whether the applicant has been convicted of a misdemeanor, a felony, or a felonious or illegal act including those associated with alcohol and/or substance abuse.

Licensure and State Regulations

Occupational therapy is regulated in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Different states have various types of regulation, including but not limited to licensure. The major purpose of regulation is to protect consumers in a state or jurisdiction from unqualified or unscrupulous practitioners.

OT students/graduates should contact the relevant state licensing agency to obtain the necessary information and/or an application. Each state differs in its procedures; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT® Certification Examination (or pending results). Many states offer a Limited Permit or Temporary License to practice prior to successful completion of the certification examination or while a licensure application is being processed. Many states also inquire as to whether the applicant has been convicted of or plead guilty or nolo contendere to a crime (e.g., misdemeanor, felony, or illegal act associated with alcohol/substance abuse) or have charges pending and unresolved. A felony conviction may prevent a graduate from obtaining state licensure.