

Approved by the Board of Trustees
July 23, 2020

Board Meeting
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ELIMINATE THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY,
COLLEGE OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES AND THE GRADUATE COLLEGE,
CHICAGO

Action: Eliminate the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy, College of Applied Health Sciences and the Graduate College

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Chicago Senate, College of Applied Health Sciences, and the Graduate College recommends the elimination of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy.

The M.S. in Occupational Therapy is a 23-month, entry-level degree that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education[®] (ACOTE[®]). Program graduates are eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the occupational therapist, administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, and apply for licensure after successful completion of the exam. The degree requires a minimum of 72 hours of didactic and clinical education. The elimination of the M.S. in Occupational Therapy is being submitted simultaneously with an item to establish the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD): Entry-level degree, herein referred to as the entry-level OTD.

The decision to transition from the entry-level master's degree to the entry-level OTD was based on several factors. In the field of occupational therapy, there is a growing number of entry-level OTD programs. Between September 2016 and January 2020, the number of programs increased from 40 to 169. Many of the new entry-level OTD programs are replacing master's programs within their institutions, in part because of a 2017 ACOTE® decision to require a single point of entry for occupational therapy at the doctoral level. While ACOTE® reversed this decision in 2019, allowing occupational therapy graduates to enter the profession with either an entry-level master's or an entry-level doctoral degree, the momentum to develop entry-level OTD programs continues. Two private universities in Illinois (Rush and Midwestern) have already converted their entry-level master's degrees to OTDs, and there is currently no public university option in the state for the entry-level OTD. The last M.S. class will be admitted in Fall 2021, and the entry-level OTD would begin in Fall 2022. Additional factors leading to the present proposal include changes in ACOTE® educational standards and the increased complexity of occupational therapy practice.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respect with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.