Welcome Incoming MScOT Students!

We are delighted to offer you admission to the MScOT Program at the University of Toronto and look forward to welcoming you to the exciting academic and co-curricular learning opportunities the University provides. What follows is all the practical information you will need to get you started in our program. We are also holding an Online Open House on Saturday June 6, 2020 to provide additional information about our program and a Q & A with faculty, staff and students. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to ot.studentservices@utoronto.ca by Wednesday June 3, 2020.

Starting Your MScOT Program

We understand this is a stressful time for everyone – a time of many questions, challenges and uncertainties due to the pandemic – and you undoubtedly will be wondering what the Fall term will look like as an incoming student.

Since the start of the pandemic, the priorities of our Department have been the safety and well-being of our students, staff and faculty, the safety and well-being of our wider community and ensuring a high-quality educational experience for you that meets the standards set out by our professional association (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, CAOT) and regulator (College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario, COTO).

To meet these priorities, we have made the difficult decision that all Term 1 courses for our incoming students will be held online. We can confirm that the MScOT Program is starting with initial academic orientation activities planned for September 1, 2020. We are planning for a hybrid educational model in Term 2 (some classes in person and some online) and anticipate notifying you by November 1, 2020 if this is going to change. Ontario’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to evolve as necessary. As soon as public health permits, we will resume in-person activities.

The University of Toronto and our Department have shown themselves to be highly responsive to such changes and able to adapt very quickly. Please be advised that changes to your program, including the manner of delivery of courses, services and possible limits on co-curricular and clinical opportunities, may be necessary. We will be transparent with our decision making if this happens. Thank you in advance for your patience and flexibility during these challenging times as we work together to maintain the standards of excellence that are the hallmark of our OT Program.

Our faculty have built considerable expertise in online teaching beginning in September 2018 when we first welcomed students to our program at two campuses. You can expect a wide variety of educational experiences including small group learning, virtual anatomy labs, recorded and real-time lectures and extensive access to your professors many of whom are world-renowned researchers and educators. There will also be many valuable opportunities for you to interact and collaborate with your peers and to engage in important co-curricular activities to ensure an exceptional student experience. The School of Graduate Studies has posted a Frequently Asked Questions page that you may find helpful.

Our MScOT program remains fully accredited by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. We have strong working relationships with academic and clinical partners in the Faculty of Medicine, the School of Graduate Studies, and our affiliated clinical sites. Students can continue to expect the same level of rigour as we deliver our engaging content using a variety of methods, both virtual and in-person.

Campus Assignment

In your offer of admission notification email, your assigned campus for the duration of the OT program was noted as either UTM (Mississauga Campus) or UTSG (St. George Campus in Toronto). Campus assignment is permanent and students are not permitted to switch campuses while in the OT program. The program is equitable in every way across the two campuses including access to professors, and all resources pertaining to health, accessibility, learning support, and information technology.
**Technology Requirements**

Incoming OT students require access to an entry-level Windows or Mac personal computer, with a basic webcam and microphone, and an internet connection capable of video streaming. The full details of recommended technology requirements are posted to this U of T website. You may take those specifications to a computer retailer to help you find suitable hardware. Most software required in the program will be provided free of charge. It will either be web-based (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate or Microsoft Teams), or accessible via your UTMail+ account, which gives you access to a suite of Microsoft Office applications and cloud storage. Our Program Manager Alim Lalani (ot.studentservices@utoronto.ca) can advise you of compatible hardware options popular with students, or may refer you to our Manager of IT Services (Rob Page) for more complex needs.

**Accessibility Accommodation**

At the earliest possible time, we request that incoming students requiring an accommodation register with Accessibility Services online. Mississauga campus students can register using this link, and St. George campus students can register using this link.

**Academic Orientation**

Our mandatory Academic Orientation is scheduled to begin on Tuesday September 1, 2020. These sessions will be delivered online, through our secure Blackboard Collaborate software platform. A full schedule detailing your Academic Orientation will be sent to you by email in August.

**Schedule for Fall 2020**

Academic classes will begin immediately following orientation activities. Students will continue to have statutory holidays and religious holidays (as applicable) as days off from class, and a reading week mid-way during the fall. Most classes will be scheduled between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday, however, the current situation may mean some academic activities will take place during the evenings, or, on weekends. A full Term 1 schedule will be posted to our website in August.

**Student Life, Extracurricular Activities, and O-Week 2020**

Your OT Student Council will continue to operate normally, with an infrastructure to support both leisure and professional development. Department staff have advised O-Week student leaders (i.e., student-led optional orientation activities) to carefully select activities and events that adhere to public health guidelines. All students will continue to have the opportunity to engage in leadership activities through Department committee work, recruitment events, intramural sports and arts, and research endeavours.

**Fieldwork Education**

We are fortunate to have access to a wide variety of sites for fieldwork courses, and our fieldwork team continues to engage with multiple clinical partners to maintain and create excellent clinical education opportunities for OT students. Given pandemic related issues such as social distancing and possible shortages of personal protective equipment, there is a possibility that fieldwork courses will require adaptation or be temporarily delayed. However, your first fieldwork course,
OCT1183Y is scheduled to begin in June 2021 and we are highly optimistic that there will be minimal disruption, if any, to this course. Regardless, we will ensure that you will still obtain the required 1000 hours of appropriate fieldwork experiences in order to graduate and be licensed as an occupational therapist.

**Mask Fit Testing, Immunizations, CPR and First Aid Training**

Students enrolled in the OT program typically complete the above tasks by the first month of the start of the program. Due to pandemic related issues, we are not requiring mask fit testing, CPR, VSS, or first aid until a later date. This will be communicated to you in the Fieldwork Welcome Letter that will be posted to our website later in June. We do request that you begin completion of your immunizations form as soon as possible to ensure readiness for several days of clinical experiences scheduled in term 2, as some test and immunizations take time to process.

We look forward to welcoming you to the MScOT Program at U of T!