MSc in
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

FACT FILE

MODE OF STUDY
Full-time: One year – two taught days a week
Part-time: Three years – one taught day a week (Tuesdays in Year One, Wednesdays in Year Two and dissertation in year three)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
Relevant Diploma or first degree in Occupational Therapy. Professional experience is desirable.

ENQUIRIES
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This course is for occupational therapists wanting to continue their professional development and develop evidence-based practice. Each module can be tailored to your own areas of interest and specialism.

If you want to deepen your understanding of the value of occupational therapy, this Master’s may be for you. It has been acknowledged internationally that we need to be able to show the benefits of our special approach to health and everyday living through research. Master’s level study is essential if you want to gain the skills to evaluate your interventions, build professional confidence and seek out (and develop) existing theories which inform your practice.

The School of Health Sciences and Social Care is one of the largest schools in the University, and attracts funding from a range of national and international sources. School research and teaching is recognised by the Government as being amongst the top University Health and Social Schools in the country.

The School’s postgraduate courses emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary and integrated education for professionals.
MSc in Occupational Therapy

The Master of Science degree in Occupational Therapy prepares participants to become proficient in evaluating and questioning their specific practice and facilitating advanced understanding of occupational therapy. This was the first campus-based degree of this kind in the UK.

This advanced academic course is one of the few in the UK specialising in occupational therapy, and it has been especially designed to meet your needs as a practising therapist, helping you to gain more ‘mastery’ in your chosen area of occupational therapy.

The programme has been praised by the university validating committees as a model master’s degree for professional practitioners, for it brings theory to the workplace. Based on a sound approach to adult education, the course invites students to bring issues from practice to analyse in class. Each module is designed to gradually develop the skills of reflective practice and scientific evaluation.

Key features:
- Encourages a theoretical underpinning of occupation, occupational therapy and research.
- Nationally recognised for excellence in teaching and research.
- Meets the needs of occupational therapists who wish to enhance their current practice in their workplace.
- Provides academic learning experiences in a supportive environment.
- A modular programme that can be studied full-time, part-time or as an associate student. (Associate enrolment: studying a one off-module this is very appropriate for continuing professional development.)
- Facilitates reflective practice.
- Develops research competencies for using and developing evidence-based practice.

This course will broaden and deepen your knowledge and understanding of the value of occupational therapy in today’s changing world. Each module’s content is embedded in practice and overall the programme aims to develop your skills in analysing evidence, implementing and evaluating occupational therapy research.

Course details

The course does not further clinical skills, or lead to registration from the UK professional governing bodies, but rather focuses on developing the practitioner’s ability to conduct and evaluate occupational therapy research and practice. Following the completion of the taught modules of the programme, students are expected to undertake a research project for the dissertation relevant to Occupational Therapy.

The course consists of seven taught modules plus the dissertation. It is CATS rated at M level. The taught modules are 15 and 30 credits and the dissertation is 60 credits. The taught modules are delivered over the two, 12 week teaching terms on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The course can be completed in either Full time (2 days/week) over one full academic year or Part time (1 day/week) over the two years and then a further year to complete the dissertation.

- The Art of Professional Practice
- Occupational Science
- Evidence-based Occupational Therapy (evaluating evidence from the literature in your field)
- Research Methods (Exploring the need for research, the range of research methods and designs.)
- Optional Modules (select from a range of modules from the School, for example: Occupational Therapy in Mental Health, Occupational Therapy for Active Ageing, Occupational Therapy for Children, Young People and Families, Neurorehabilitation Science, Functional assessment of challenging behaviours across the lifespan, Communicating and Utilising Evidence in Practice).
- Research design (proposal development)
This is an in-depth study of occupational therapy or occupational science that reflects your interests and your specialism. We have a very large staff team that is highly skilled in post graduate research supervision.

The dissertation is the major element of a Master’s Degree. It provides you with the opportunity to integrate and apply the concepts and principles developed throughout the course within your own particular area of work. It encourages exploration and investigation of your own particular area of interest and expertise, and it is intended that the topics selected will reflect the negotiated needs for development in your own clinical area. The time allocated will consist of library-based, tutorial and practical work, and you are expected to work towards completing the requirements of the dissertation in your own time. Full time students shall normally submit the dissertation by the end of the academic year following completion of the taught modules; for part time students this would normally be within one academic year of completion of taught modules.

What support will I get from the University for my dissertation?

You will be allocated a supervisor who will provide 10 hours of support during your time on the dissertation. Supervisors can be accessed by telephone, email, and through face-to-face tutorial. The University also runs an optional week of seminars in May of each year.

In terms of capacity to enhance personal development, the MSc in Occupational Therapy gained the top position out of Brunel University’s 85 post graduate taught programmes in the 2009 National Student Survey. We are very fortunate to be able to provide this high quality programme as Brunel has one of the largest occupational therapy staff groups in the world so the expertise is there to teach and supervise research at Masters and Doctoral levels.

Your service will benefit. Every module assignment can be focussed on a topic you or your manager want to investigate. The assignments are practically useful; write an evidenced based protocol or care pathway for your clients, plan how to improve the effectiveness of your service, evaluate and debate research in order to decide if the evidence is worth incorporating into practice, reflect on how central occupational engagement is for enhancing the health of your clients, or take a topic you want to focus on and study it with your manager or tutorial support.

We are now in a more competitive job market where postgraduate qualifications are highly valued. Postgraduate study is commonly part of the band 7 post requirements in the UK. We recognise that it can be a daunting prospect to begin a Masters alongside a very busy workload. However once started students find the experience inspiring and they move from strength to strength.

You don’t have to do the part time or full time course. If you are already in the UK you can do just one or two modules on our MSc Occupational therapy. You will be on your way to post graduate study and this will give you a chance to test the water. You can do a second module if you choose. If you then want to continue you will be given exemption for the modules done, less the fees and you will have already reduced the taught workload from seven to five modules.

Frequently asked questions

I have a PGDip from another university. Do I have to do all seven modules and the dissertation in order to get an MSc?

No, we will give you advanced credit through our APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) scheme as long as your prior learning is in the last five years and relevant. You can claim up to 50% in advanced taught credits towards your award at Brunel.

How can I justify this programme to my managers, who will fund only professional development that is directly relevant to my work?

The programme is student centered and professionally focused. Student evaluations each year demonstrate the direct application of the programme to wide range of student’s professional roles and responsibilities.
Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this brochure and the University will take all reasonable action to deliver these services in accordance with the descriptions set out in it. However, the University reserves the right to vary these services, using all reasonable efforts to offer a suitable alternative. All costs, rates and prices stated in this brochure are subject to amendment and should be taken as a guide only.