



The Institute of Health Care was set up specifically to develop courses in Health Care on an academic level. For many years, the University has provided education for future doctors, dentists and pharmacists. However, today it is recognized that health care involves the efforts of a multidisciplinary team of caring professionals who meet, discuss and plan together the health care needs of individuals and specific client groups.

Such a multidisciplinary team includes various professionals such as Nurses, Midwives, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Radiographers, Speech-Language Pathologists, Medical Laboratory Technologists, Environmental Health Officers, Nutritionists, Dieticians, Podiatrists, Dental Technologists and Health Service Managers. All these professionals are responsible for the direct care of the patient or client.

The Institute of Health Care provides the knowledge and skills for the professional carer, so that s/he may contribute to effective decision making and policy setting. The Institute is also involved in continuing updating exercise, thereby keeping professionals abreast with recent developments in health care.

The Profession

Occupational Therapy is a health care profession which is concerned with empowering individuals who have sustained an injury, disease or developmental delay, to achieve their maximal level of independence in daily life activities, by the use of occupation, purposeful activity, exercise, the modification of the environment and education. Occupational therapy is also concerned with health promotion and the prevention of health problems in those individuals who may be at risk.

Occupational therapists work with all age groups starting from birth and continuing to old-age, and in all the different health care areas which can be as diverse as hand-injury clinics, schools and the mental health sector. Intervention is aimed to restore the best possible performance and participation in "occupations", a term which, from the occupational therapy perspective, refers to activities of everyday life which are valued and given meaning by individuals and their culture. Very broadly occupations fall under the categories of work, self-care and leisure.

Intervention relies on a comprehensive assessment which helps to establish the baseline capabilities of the client. Information concerning physical abilities, perceptual, cognitive, psychosocial functioning, environmental aspects and occupational history, is evaluated to enable the therapist to draw up a comprehensive treatment plan.

Occupational therapy intervention may aim to improve the function of the components involved in the carrying out of occupations such as strength, movement,

coordination, endurance, perception and memory; or modify the skills involved in the carrying out of such occupations. Clients may also be guided to adapt their habits, routines and lifestyles in order to help accommodate their level of function. Education of the family, carers or co-workers also forms part of the occupational therapist's job. Another important contribution is the modification of the environment which may involve adjustments to the home, workplace, school or even the community to allow individuals with disabilities to function optimally in their immediate surroundings.

The discipline allows one to bring together a variety of interests from the sphere of medicine, psychology, work activities and art. Therefore, practitioners have to be very eclectic in selecting the appropriate treatment approach from numerous available modalities. This also calls for a high degree of clinical insight in order to help design an intervention plan that best addresses the multi-faceted nature of the client's problems. The occupational therapy profession is ideal for anyone who is interested in helping others achieve competence, balance and self-fulfillment in their daily activities for a better quality of life.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Course Duration

The B.Sc. (Honours) in Occupational Therapy programme is spread over four years of full-time study.

Admissions Requirements

Candidates may apply for admission to the course leading to the Degree of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Occupational Therapy, if they are in possession of the Matriculation Certificate Examination, passes in the Secondary examination Certificate Examinations at Grade 5 or better in Maltese, English Language and Mathematics and satisfy the following Special Course Requirements:

- ◆ an Advanced Level pass at Grade C or better in **Biology**

Furthermore, prior to registering for the course, eligible candidates are also required to undergo a medical fitness test as directed by the Board so as to ascertain that they are fit for the duties related to their proposed studies.

NOTE FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

International applicants must contact the International Office before submitting their application.

Website: <http://www.um.edu.mt/intoff/>

E-mail: intoff@um.edu.mt

Course Description

The degree is made up of a total number of 240 ECTS which are grouped into four main areas of learning as follows:

Applied Sciences

These are study units which constitute the prerequisite knowledge required by the student in order to undertake advanced studies in occupational therapy. This includes knowledge from the biomedical field such as anatomy, physiology, pathology and medicine as well as knowledge from the humanistic sciences of psychology, sociology and psychopathology.

General Studies

This element of the degree includes supportive and pre-clinical studies which complement the studies pertaining to occupational therapy. These units will give the students requisite insight into contemporary social issues, implications of disability, health promotion, academic English, statistics and research.

Occupational Therapy Knowledge and Skills

The knowledge taught in this area forms the core of the occupational therapy discipline and is principally concerned with fostering the development of a professional identity and acquiring the skills in assessment and treatment of the numerous client populations which fall within the domain of concern of this profession. The knowledge and skills taught include:

- ♦ Professional identity and scope of occupational therapy practice
- ♦ The historical perspective: development of occupational therapy profession and the changing professional perspective
- ♦ Theoretical rationales for the major practice settings and client populations
- ♦ Clinical practice skills for the evaluation and treatment of occupational performance areas and components
- ♦ Clinical reasoning
- ♦ Identifying the need for research of issues related to occupational therapy
- ♦ Ethical issues in practice
- ♦ Accountability, outcome measures and documentation
- ♦ Promotion and management of services

Fieldwork

1,200 hours of clinical practice is mandatory for the completion of the course. Clinical hours are spread over a number of fieldwork practice placements which consist of supervised and assessed clinical work. During clinical placements, students are instructed, practice, and have to demonstrate competence in a number of practice skills congruent with the level of their studies.

Special Project

Students are required to produce a special project on an approved subject which will be submitted for appraisal in the final semester of the degree programme.

The information provided reflects the form and structure of the course at the time of publication and is intended for Guidance purposes. The University reserves the right to revise and update its courses.

March 2007