

Degree Programme in Occupational Therapy

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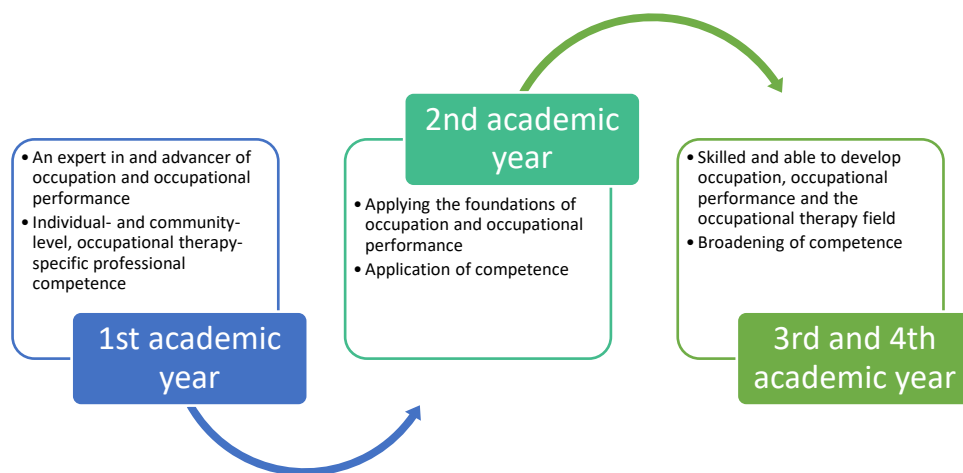
Description of studies

After graduating as an occupational therapist, you will be able to work as an expert in the healthcare, social welfare, sports and rehabilitation systems. You can work as an occupational therapist in a health centre, hospital or rehabilitation department, for example, or establish your own business and work as an independent practitioner. As an occupational therapist, you can work in cooperation with experts in various fields, such as education, environmental design and well-being technology specialists. Additionally, you will acquire the skills needed to develop your profession in areas including internationalization, development and technology at the national and international level.

Occupational therapy studies are structured based on the expectations and skills needs of working life. The total extent of the occupational therapist studies is 210 credits, the completion of which requires about 3.5 years of full-time studying. The studies are divided into two broader study modules: complementary competence (130 ECTS or 2 years) and complementary competence (80 ECTS or 1.5 years).

You will learn the skills and knowledge that are part of core competence during your first academic year. You will become familiar with the knowledge base of occupational therapy and the different phases of the occupational therapy process at the individual and group level. Core competence studies are made up of basic studies, professional studies and skills-advancing practical training, the contents of which are connected to one another in your studies. The first year is focused on the foundations of occupational therapy, and the second year on applying them to occupational therapy work with children, adults and the elderly. The studies also include the language studies as required by section 8 of the government decree on polytechnics (352/2003).

Complementary competence studies are carried out during the last 1.5 years of your studies. In these studies, you will broaden and deepen the occupational therapy skills you have acquired with courses on the development of occupational sciences and occupational therapy (5 ECTS), development and research methods (5 ECTS), a Bachelor's thesis (15 ECTS), elective studies (15 ECTS) and elective practical training and projects (40 ECTS). In the elective practical training and projects, you will deepen your knowledge of the occupational therapy skills areas that interest you most. This way, you will build your competence track.



In occupational therapy studies, the operations are developed by gathering student feedback on the implementation of study units during a feedback day at the end of an academic year and at the end of the studies. When starting a study unit, the student has a chance to affect the implementation in the presentation of the implementation plan. Turku University of Applied Sciences implements an annual student satisfaction survey (student barometer). At the end of the studies, the student fills in an OPALA questionnaire prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and provides feedback covering the entire duration of the studies.

Once you have graduated, you will submit an application for the right to practice as a licensed health care professional to the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira). An occupational therapist a rehabilitation expert with a degree from a higher education institution. A Bachelor's degree provides a chance for further education in the form of a Master's degree or a higher education degree in a university.

Competence goals

In occupational therapy studies, you will learn to interact with customers (individuals or groups) and create a therapeutic and professional therapy relationship. A central part of the special expertise of an occupational therapist is the significance of occupation as the promoter of a client's health and well-being, the therapeutic use of occupation, and client-centred cooperation. Competences include: activity analysis and synthesis, therapeutic relationship, client-centred occupational therapy process, assessment, evaluation and adaptation of occupational environments, and professional consultation and counselling. Occupational therapy is based on a comprehensive evaluation of the client's occupational performance and environment. You will learn to evaluate your customer's individual needs and enable them to participate in their important everyday functions, work, play and leisure time regardless of their illness and disability. You will also acquire the skills needed to utilize technology and modify the environment to support your customer's occupation.

An occupational therapist bases the assessment and therapy on evidence-based methods. The accumulation and fast change of information requires good information seeking skills, as well

as skills to evaluate the validity and applicability of information. Information seeking and research skill studies provide the student with extensive cognitive abilities and skills to work in professional expert duties, and the skills to follow the development of the field and keep up to date. The innovation competences specified by Turku University of Applied Sciences for individual, community and network levels are a central component of studies and are evaluated cross-sectionally in all study units.

Occupational therapist (Bachelor's degree) studies are based on the legislation concerning universities of applied sciences and professional work, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF, www.minedu.fi/OPM) and the degree regulations and strategy of Turku University of Applied Sciences, whose pedagogic approach is innovation pedagogy. National (Arene, Ministry of Education and Culture) and international (ENOTHE, WFOT) skill descriptions, among other things, have been utilized in their preparation.

Learning methods

Turku University of Applied Sciences' pedagogical policy is innovation pedagogy. In innovation pedagogy, learning is built on social-constructive thought in which the learner builds up new information by utilizing their prior skills and working with others. In occupational therapy studies, innovation pedagogy is implemented in a variety of ways. The goal is to support you in developing your own way of learning and thinking so that you can acquire methods to develop and innovate in working life. Individual, interpersonal and networking skills are closely connected to innovation pedagogy.

In the studies, students play an active role. They study and learn by reading, observing, discussing with classmates, teachers and practical training supervisors, as well as through a wide range of tasks. The learning methods include various active methods such as activating lectures, case-work projects, games, videos, peer teaching, competitions, panel discussions, poster walks, learning cafés, aquarium discussions, brainstorming sessions, etc. In the different study modules, the student becomes familiar with customer work with different kinds of people. Genuine interactions with customers are necessary for the growth of expertise.

The teacher plays a participating, supportive role, meaning that learning is bidirectional. Occupational therapy studies place a strong emphasis on community orientation and co-teaching. Practical training carried out with groups of students at various levels of studies and joint study planning and coaching from teachers are good practices employed in the degree.

A central feature of the studies is cooperation with working life at different stages of studies in ways appropriate for the level in question. Each academic year includes cooperation with working life, which supports the student in applying knowledge, as well as in networking and taking an entrepreneurial approach to their work. In the early stages of studies, this cooperation takes the form of small-scale projects and interactive mentoring. Towards the end of their studies, students carry out practical training and work as development partners in working life, developing and implementing new

methods and ways of working. Alongside working life partners, students' good theoretical knowledge and strong familiarity with the methods of the field prepare them for working life. Support through interaction is important for the development of students' professional identity and their ability to encounter customers. Students' high level of motivation and genuine interest in the field, as well as their responsibility for their own development, are important cornerstones of occupational therapy studies.

Complementary competence (3rd and 4th semester) involves multiprofessional, multidisciplinary and international research and development activities focusing on project-based learning. Working in projects also prepares you for entrepreneurship, when you, as part of a team, take responsibility for your part in achieving the project's goals. As a project leader, you gain leadership experience. Multiprofessional studies support you in conceptualizing the skills and role of an occupational therapist as an expert. Through your own electives, you can also participate in the business side of studies, where an entrepreneurial approach is a requirement.

Assessment

In occupational therapy studies, the most important goal of assessments is to guide and support learning and to promote professional growth. Based on the assessment the student receives feedback on their skills and progress in relation to the competence goals. The assessment guides and develops skills and is directed at both the learning process and the skills. In addition to assessments from teachers, the student's reflections, self-assessment and classmate's peer assessment are important parts of the assessment. In accordance with the degree regulations, the assessment is primarily numeric (1–5). The teacher of the study unit is in charge of the study unit's assessment. The student's personal goals concretize the identification of the strengths and development areas of one's own skills.

Internationality

The quality of occupational therapy studies is assessed regularly by the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) to ensure that the studies fulfil the international requirements set for them. Occupational therapy studies at Turku University of Applied Sciences are also part of the European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE). Students and teachers have the opportunity to participate in this network actively. The study programme also has several international cooperation partners that enable student and teacher exchanges as well as practical training. International experts work as teachers in various study units. Students and teachers also have opportunities to participate in international projects. The study materials used in the studies are primarily in English, and the language of international studies is English.