

RUSH UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES


OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DOCTORATE PROGRAM

INFORMATION PACKET
ADMISSIONS 2027




CONTACT US

 Armour Academic Center 600 S. Paulina St. Suite AAC 1014 Chicago, IL 60612

 <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/college-health-sciences/academic-programs/occupational-therapy-doctorate-program>

 OT_admissions@rush.edu

 (312) 942-1084

 @rush_otd_2be



Excellence is just the beginning.



Dear Interested Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Rush University entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program. We are excited that you are exploring occupational therapy and considering Rush as part of your professional journey. Our program is approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and holds full accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE).

At Rush, our faculty are deeply committed to preparing occupational therapists who are not only skilled clinicians, but also leaders, advocates, and innovators in the profession. This commitment is reflected in our curriculum and outcomes—and we are proud to share that the Rush OTD program is currently ranked #15 nationally by U.S. News & World Report among occupational therapy programs across the country.

The Rush OTD curriculum is designed to immerse students in clinical learning from the start while fostering strong professional reasoning, scholarship, and community engagement. Students benefit from innovative academic-clinical partnerships, hands-on clinical immersion throughout the curriculum, evidence-informed teaching practices, and a strong emphasis on serving diverse populations. Our teacher-practitioner model ensures that students learn from faculty who are actively engaged in clinical practice, research, and professional leadership.

As part of Rush University, students are uniquely connected to Rush University Medical Center, a nationally recognized academic medical center consistently ranked among the top institutions in the country for quality of care. Rush has been recognized for excellence in patient care, LGBTQ+ healthcare equality, and inclusive workplace practices. This culture of excellence, equity, and innovation extends across education, research, and service—and shapes the learning environment for our OTD students.

Health equity and community engagement are central to the Rush mission. OTD students have meaningful opportunities to engage with the community through organizations such as the Student Occupational Therapy Association, Rush Occupational Therapists in Action, RUCaring, and the Rush Community Initiatives Program (RCSIP), allowing students to apply their skills while making a tangible impact.

Enclosed, you will find additional information about our entry-level OTD program and its accomplishments. Rush has a long history of preparing outstanding occupational therapists, with over 30 years of experience educating entry-level practitioners through our master's and now doctoral programs.

As you continue your application process, we hope you will consider Rush University. Our faculty are passionate about occupational therapy and dedicated to supporting students as they grow into confident, compassionate, and capable practitioners. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions—we would be happy to connect with you.

Sincerely,



Becky Ozelle, DHS, OTR/L, FAOTA
Chair & Program Director



Rush University Medical Center

Choosing a graduate school is an important decision. Applicants are encouraged to find an institution that aligns with their personal values. Rush University System for Health (Rush) is an academic health system whose **mission** is to **improve the health of the individuals and diverse communities it serves** through the integration of **outstanding patient care, education, research, and community partnerships**. Rush comprises Rush University Medical Center, Rush University, Rush Copley Medical Center, Rush Oak Park Hospital, and numerous outpatient care facilities. With more than 2,500 students, Rush University is a health sciences university comprising Rush Medical College, the College of Nursing, and the College of Health Sciences.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to Rush's culture of excellence

We strive to create a learning community where students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds feel welcome and supported and have the opportunity to share their own experiences. We are committed to establishing a climate that:

- Honors and respects our differences
- Delivers fair treatment and equitable access to care, opportunities, and resources for patients, staff, students and faculty
- Actively engages and partners with RUSH's internal and external communities as leaders and decision-makers in the work
- Advances racial justice and equity by dismantling barriers, righting injustices, being actively anti-racist, and promoting equity in health care, in learning, in research, and in our communities

At Rush we understand that increasing health equity and achieving true inclusion means building a healthcare workforce that reflects the makeup of the community. More than 100 Rush leaders serve on diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy teams to address these needs. Some of the initiatives to increase representation and promote justice include:

- **American with Disabilities Act Taskforce**: works to create programming, processes, accessibility, and accommodations to support people with disabilities as patients, faculty, house staff, students, employees, and volunteers.
- Business Diversity ensures that diverse, local vendors and suppliers have an equal opportunity to do business with Rush.
- **LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equity** helps bring the best LGBTQ+ industry practices and culturally competent care to Rush.
- The **Women's Leadership Council** is a collaborative, interprofessional group focusing on gender-related issues across Rush.

Rush University Student and Faculty Diversity promotes the values of diversity, access, and inclusion by shaping and sustaining a positive multicultural environment for all faculty and students at Rush.

You can find more about diversity at RUSH [here](#).

RUSH OTD PROGRAM



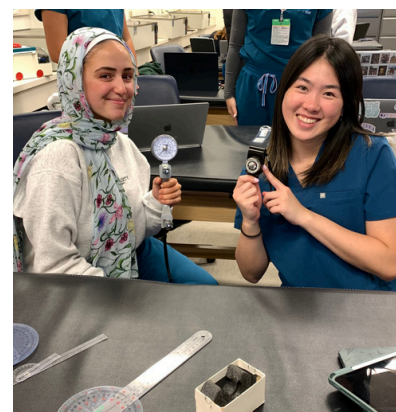
RESEARCH

- Year long group research project guided by faculty and clinicians
- Current students and recent graduates presented internationally and nationally.
- Research track as an option for individualized doctoral capstone



CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

- **Semester 1-3:** Clinical practicum rotations in Rush University Medical Center Clinics and associated clinical and community sites
- **Group leadership experience** in Rush clinics and the community for 6 weeks
- Two 2-week level I fieldwork experiences
- Two 12-week level II fieldwork experiences
- **Semester 8:** Individualized doctoral capstone



WHY RUSH?



CLASS SIZE

Rush's OTD program has a small class size of approximately 36 students



CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Rush's OTD program offers clinical experiences every semester



FACULTY

Close relationship between students and faculty

SERVICE

Rush University values service throughout the campus and community including:

- SOTA events!
- Close knit cohorts!
- Amazing opportunities to go out into the community and represent Rush and OT!



PRACTITIONER-TEACHER-INVESTIGATOR MODEL



- Rush University Medical Center clinicians are integrated into the program
- Faculty engage in clinical practice
- Faculty, clinicians and students engage in research

OUTCOMES

- Rush's OTD program ranked among top 2% by US News Report
- 100% new graduate pass rate on the NBCOT exam with scores consistently above the national average



MODALITIES TRAINING

- Integrated into the curriculum, Rush provides modalities trainings that meets the IL State Practice Act requirements for the use of modalities.
- Saves \$500+ on an additional CEU!

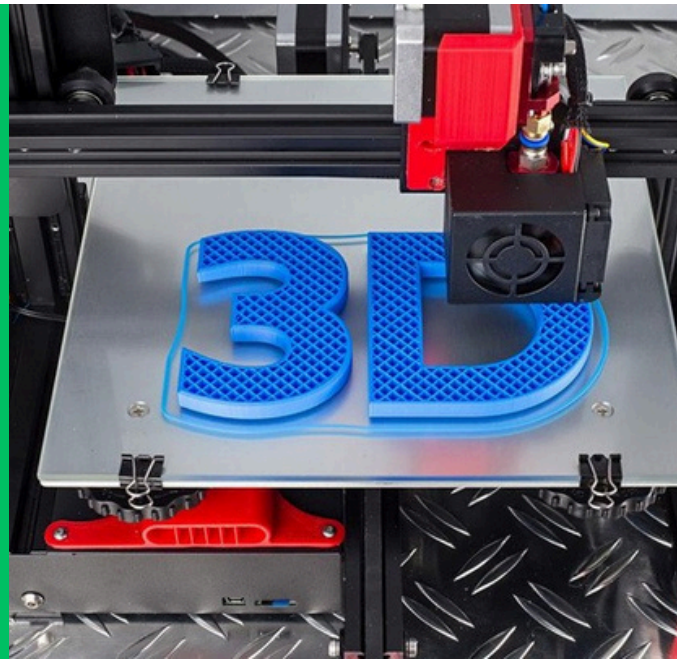




RUSH OTD TECHNOLOGY: 3D PRINTING

#15

OT Program in the Nation
by U.S. News & World Report



COST-EFFECTIVE

3D printed splints are customized, cost-effective, and easily replicated orthoses (Matthews-Brownell & Hall, 2018).



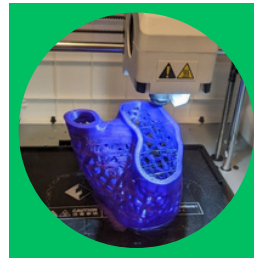
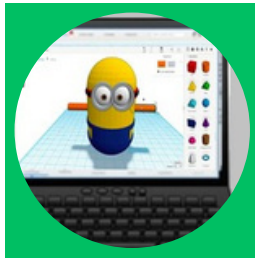
COMFORTABLE

3D printed splints are more aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, and easy to don/doff. They require less time to create (Sari et al., 2019).



COMPLIANCE

3D printed splints demonstrate increased compliance and elicit client-specific needs (Pyatt et al., 2019)



HOW IS IT USED IN PRACTICE?

3D Printing in Healthcare

- Customized implants such as prosthetic implants, dental implants, hearing aids
- Surgical instruments
- Anatomical models
- Bioprinting: printing living tissue using cells as ink

3D Printing in Occupational Therapy

- Custom-made adaptive equipment: jar/can openers, phone folders, door handles, medication box, wheelchair parts
- Individualized orthoses: wrist/hand/finger splints
- Customized prosthetics

OUR CURRICULUM

01

Students learn about activity analysis, an understanding of typical activity demands, and the basis of creating any assistive equipment and orthoses.

02

In the 1st year, students learn about 3D printing and print assistive equipment for community members. Content includes 3D printing basics, procedures, and benefits of using 3D printing!

03

In the 3rd year, students can further their knowledge and skills in 3D printing in capstone projects. The past capstone projects covered 3D-printed orthoses and prosthetics!



312-942-1084



chs_admissions@rush.edu



rushu.rush.edu



DOCTORATE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

#15

OT Program in the Nation
by U.S. News & World Report



INTERACTIVE

Students can explore spatial relationships, distinguish structures by color, adjust speed of motions, and so much more!



VARIETY

The table includes 5 gross anatomy cases, 40 high-resolution regional anatomy cases, and more than 1,600 case study examples.



COLLABORATION

The Anatomage table supports teamwork as students dive into cases and kinesiology, deepening their understanding of the body.

WHAT IS ANATOMAGE?

The Anatomage table is a technologically advanced 3D anatomy visualization and virtual dissection tool for anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology education.

The table allows students to interact with well-preserved digital bodies. The accurate details and rich, interactive content draw students' interest and attention leading to more effective educational outcomes.

ANATOMAGE IN OT

Anatomage tables can support OTs understanding of the human body and its motions. Furthermore, there are a plethora of clinical cases that can be visualized on the tables to further educate practitioners. Other benefits of the table include:

- Review learned materials and look at anatomical structures.
- Isolate muscles to visualize their roles in specific interventions.
- Utilize the 'quiz' feature to self-assess their anatomy knowledge.
- Increase access to donors and increased opportunities to practice and learn.
- Cutting edge technology to meet the needs of diverse student learning preferences

OUR CURRICULUM

01

First year, first semester students will gain foundational knowledge in anatomy, human structure, and movement. The table is utilized in the classroom as an additional learning resource.

02

Students will utilize the Anatomage during Neuroanatomy to better understand the anatomy but also the functional impact of any trauma or disease to areas of the brain.

03

The interventions courses, activity analysis and clinical skills courses also utilize the anatomage to allow students to learn with cutting edge technology



312-942-1084



chs_admissions@rush.edu



rushu.rush.edu

#15 RUSH OTD TECHNOLOGY: *OT Program in the Nation* *by U.S. News & World Report* SOCIAL ROBOTS



SOCIAL ROBOTS CAN:

- IMPROVE SOCIAL SKILLS
- BOOST ENGAGEMENT
- PROMOTE LANGUAGE LEARNING

WHAT ARE SOCIAL ROBOTS?

Social Robots are designed by neuroscientists, technologists, child development specialists, and creative storytellers.

- Interacts with users through conversation to build empathy and social skills
- Uses language processing, compute vision, and AI to update its play-based social-emotional content

SOCIAL ROBOTS IN OT

Social Robots can assist OTs in their daily practice helping clients engage in meaningful play while supporting child development.

- Play-based learning supported by weekly missions and themes
- Conversational chats incorporated throughout the day to encourage practicing appropriate communication skills

OUR CURRICULUM

YEAR 1 Students will have the opportunity to use Social Robots as part of the **Pediatric Curriculum sequence**.

YEAR 2 Students will have the opportunity to use Social Robots within the community during **group dynamics and fieldwork experiences**.

YEAR 3 Social Robots can accompany students in their **capstone projects** to engage in meaningful play and further educate their clients.

312-942-1084

chs_admissions@rush.edu

rushu.rush.edu
rushu.rush.edu



BIONESS INTEGRATED THERAPY SYSTEM (BITS)

The BITS uses audio and touchscreen features to address deficit areas such as hand-eye coordination, depth perception, and memory.



ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

They can help address:

- Vestibular Training
- Cognitive & Physical Endurance
- Depth Perception
- Upper Extremity Difficulties

The populations served include:

- Stroke
- Brain Injury
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Parkinson's Disease
- And more!

WHO WE ARE: FACULTY AND STAFF



Kia “Ashley” Burks, OTD, OTR/L
Assistant Professor
Doctoral Capstone Coordinator
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy

Education

OTD, Rush University
BS, University of Illinois at Chicago

Research Areas

Acute care, equity and inclusion in OT education, trauma-informed care

Kia Ashley Burks, OTD, OTR/L, is an instructor and Doctoral Capstone Coordinator in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Rush University. She has experience in acute care at several major academic medical centers, including her current role as a registry occupational therapist at the University of Chicago. She also serves as a street outreach occupational therapist, providing care to individuals experiencing homelessness. As a student at Rush, she co-founded the Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) chapter and the Rush Occupational Therapists in Action (ROTA) committee, which focuses on promoting anti-racist and equitable practices within the occupational therapy department. Her doctoral work centered on increasing resilience and well-being in underserved families utilizing early intervention services. Since 2018, she has been mentoring high school, undergraduate, graduate students interested in pursuing occupational therapy and has published articles highlighting strategies to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion within occupational therapy education.



Ryan Durkin, OTD, OTR/L, MBA,
ECHM
Assistant Professor
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy
Program Manager, RUSH Older
Adult Home Modification Program

Education

OTD, Boston University
MS, University of Illinois at Chicago
MBA, Elmhurst University
BS, DePaul University

Research Areas

Adults and older adults, inpatient, outpatient, preventative and lifestyle-based programming

Ryan Durkin, OTD, MBA, OTR/L, ECHM, is an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy. Before entering the field of occupational therapy, Dr. Durkin started his career in software engineering, leading international technology teams—an experience that continues to shape his innovative, systems-level approach to practice and education. Dr. Durkin has clinical experience across inpatient, outpatient, and community-based settings, with a special focus on supporting adults and older adults in maintaining independence and quality of life. He teaches Leadership and Advocacy and Self-Care and Professional Transitions, where he helps students develop both professional confidence and sustainable career habits. He also serves as Program Manager of the HUD-funded Rush Older Adult Home Modification Program, an occupational therapist-led, client-centered initiative helping older adults age safely at home on Chicago’s West Side. Dr. Durkin completed his post-professional OTD at Boston University, where he continues to mentor doctoral students.



Bridget Hahn, OTD, OTR/L
Assistant Professor
Director of Admissions
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy

Education

OTD, University of Illinois at Chicago
MS, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
BS, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Research Areas

Occupation-based assessment, knowledge translation, well-being, admissions best-practices

Bridget Hahn, OTD, OTR/L, is an Assistant Professor and Director of Admissions in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Rush University. She brings experience in inpatient and outpatient physical rehabilitation and currently maintains a collaborative primary care capstone mentorship.

Dr. Hahn serves as course instructor for Human Structure and Principles of Movement and OT Process, and lectures throughout the curriculum on occupational therapy theory and Parkinson’s disease intervention. She also integrates wellness and clinician sustainability into the curriculum by teaching yoga-based classes for OT students nearly every term.

Her scholarly interests include occupation-based practice, holistic and inclusive admissions, and clinician well-being. Her service work focuses on strengthening pathways into the profession and promoting healthy aging through experiential, student-led initiatives. She partners with OT students to deliver community balance screenings for older adults and supports admissions professionals nationwide through leadership in state and national professional communities, including her roles with the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association and the AOTA Admissions Community of Practice.

Education

OTD, Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago
MS, Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago
Masters Certificate, Management in Non-Profit Organizational Leadership, University of Illinois at Chicago
BS, Occupational Therapy, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Research Areas

Fieldwork, neurorehabilitation assessments and interventions, and knowledge translation

Piper Hansen OTD, OTR/L, BCPR is an assistant professor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator in the Department of Occupational Therapy. Clinically, she specializes in the rehabilitation of persons with spinal cord injuries and other neurological conditions. Hansen is actively involved in research and teaching, with a focus on physical disabilities, OT fieldwork outcomes and knowledge translation. She has presented both nationally and internationally and has been published in various peer-reviewed journals on a variety of topics related to neurorehabilitation. Hansen is an active member of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Roster of Accreditation Evaluators and AOTA Roster of Fellowship Reviewers and on the leadership team for the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab Neurological Fellowship.



Piper Hansen OTD, OTR/L, BCPR
Assistant Professor
Academic Fieldwork Coordinator
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy



Lauren M. Little, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Professor
Associate Dean of Research
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy

Education

BA, Political Science, DePaul University
MS, Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago
PhD, Occupational Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Research Areas

Autism, sensory processing, telehealth

Lauren Little, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA serves as Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy and Associate Dean of Research in the College of Health Sciences. Dr. Little has a clinical background in occupational therapy and a PhD in Occupational Science. Dr. Little has conducted research on the efficacy of telehealth for individuals across the lifespan and is active in state and national organizations to promote access to intervention services for under resourced communities.



Steven Taylor, PhD, OTD, OTR/L
Associate Professor
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy

Education

PhD, Rush University
OTD, University of Illinois at Chicago
MS, Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago
BS, Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
BA, Spanish, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Research Areas

Functional cognition, aging, interprofessional team-based care

Dr. Steven J. Taylor is an Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at RUSH University whose work integrates occupational therapy education, interprofessional practice, age-friendly health practices, functional cognition, and telehealth innovation. His current research and grant portfolio emphasizes improving participation, health care access, and healthy aging outcomes for older adults, particularly through telehealth-delivered strategy training and age-friendly programming. This includes his role as Principal Investigator on a pilot award focused on telehealth-delivered strategy training for older adults with subjective cognitive decline and as Co-Principal Investigator on the Home is Where the Heart Is AgeWELL program for healthy aging in place. He has also led and contributed to funded projects focused on telehealth competency training, interprofessional education, and health equity, with corresponding scholarship in telehealth assessment and education. Dr. Taylor serves in teaching and leadership roles across the OT curriculum as Course Director for Health Conditions (OCC 520), Functional Neuroscience and Cognition (OCC 625) and Physical Disabilities II (OCC 613), research advisor across the Evidence-Based Practice sequence, and Course Co-Director for Interprofessional Person-Centered Care (IPE 502), reflecting his strong commitment to preparing occupational therapy learners for evidence-based, collaborative, and client-centered practice.



Becky Ozelie, DHS, OTR/L, FAOTA
Chairperson & Program Director
Associate Professor
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy

Education

DHS, University of Indianapolis

MHS, University of Indianapolis

BS-OT, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

Research Areas

Spinal cord injury and stem cell innovations, occupational therapy fieldwork, student accommodations, education and effectiveness of simulation

Becky Ozelie, DHS, ORT/L, FAOTA is the chairperson, program director and associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy. Clinically, she specializes in the rehabilitation of persons with spinal cord injuries and burns. Ozelie is actively involved in research and teaching, with a focus on physical disabilities, clinical outcomes and use of simulation and innovative technology. She has presented both nationally and internationally and has been published in various peer-reviewed journals on the topics of spinal cord injury, innovative technology and clinical outcomes. Ozelie is an active board member of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and Rush University's Higher Learning Commission Assessment Academy.



Evguenia S. Popova, PhD, OTR/L
Assistant Professor
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy

Education

PhD, University of Illinois at Chicago

MS, University of Illinois at Chicago

BA, University of California, Berkeley

Research Areas

Family- and client-centered care, promotion of occupational engagement and participation, pediatrics and early intervention, social and transformative learning in health care and professional education, Model of Human Occupation and Intentional Relationship Model, supporting resilience in health care providers

Evguenia S. Popova, PhD, MS, OTR/L, is an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy. Popova received her PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences, and her dissertation examined interpersonal aspects of family-centered care in Early Intervention using the Intentional Relationship Model. Popova's scholarship focuses on the clinical application of the Intentional Relationship Model and the Model of Human Occupation to promote person-centered care, active client engagement in the rehabilitation process, and interpersonal resilience among rehabilitation practitioners across interdisciplinary settings. Popova is a practicing occupational therapist with experience in pediatrics, mental health, and community-based occupational therapy practice. Her primary areas of practice are Early Intervention and community-based practice, with close collaboration with Chicago-based organizations, including GiGi's Playhouse Chicago and Lincoln Park Zoo.



Ricardo D. Ramirez, OTD, OTR/L
Assistant Professor
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy

Education

OTD, University of Illinois at Chicago
MS, University of Illinois at Chicago
BA, University of Illinois at Chicago

Research Areas

Mental health, integrative care, working with Latine communities, LGBTQ+ healthcare, oncology, student outreach and mentoring

Ricardo (Richie) D. Ramirez, OTD, OTR/L, QMHP is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Rush University and a practicing occupational therapist with expertise in adult and adolescent inpatient psychiatry. He earned his post-professional OTD from the University of Illinois at Chicago, where his doctoral work examined occupational participation among Latino families affected by cancer.

Dr. Ramirez leads a pro bono telehealth faculty practice serving under/uninsured LGBTQ+ young adults and has additional clinical experience in acute care. He teaches mental health, sociocultural aspects of care, and oncology-related content in the Rush OTD program. Grounded in occupational justice, his scholarship focuses on supporting historically minoritized populations and advancing mental health occupational therapy practice.

He serves as faculty advisor for SOTA and co-advisor for Rush's COTAD chapter, Rush Occupational Therapists in Action (ROTA), and holds leadership roles with The 2SLGBTQIA+ Network in Occupational Therapy, AOTA's Mental Health Special Interest Section, and the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association's Pre-OT Mentorship Program.

Education

BA, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Michelle serves as the Program Administrative Manager for the Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) Program. She brings more than 20 years of experience working in inpatient psychiatric settings in collaboration with occupational therapists, including her role as a Milieu Coordinator. Her professional background includes interdisciplinary collaboration with occupational therapy and nursing teams to implement treatment plans for children and adolescents with sensory processing needs. During her 14 years on Rush's child and adolescent psychiatric unit (4 Kellogg), she contributed to the development and implementation of adolescent programming grounded in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

In her current role, Michelle oversees the admissions process, supports student clinical placements, and provides comprehensive administrative and programmatic support. Through her extensive clinical experience, she has developed a strong appreciation for the field of occupational therapy and is committed to supporting faculty, students, and applicants within the Rush OTD Program.



Michelle McFall-Johnsen, BA
Program Administrative Manager
Fieldwork Assistant
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy



Education

PhD, University of Illinois at Chicago

BS, Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago

BS, Psychology, University of Idaho

Research Areas

Health equity and health care access of people with disability, exploring OTs' knowledge and understanding of disability and how these influence and impact clinical interventions

Laura VanPuymbrouck, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA is an Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Rush University and an occupational therapist with more than 30 years of clinical experience across the continuum of physical rehabilitation, including acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, home health, community-based services, and private practice.

Her scholarship sits at the intersection of occupational therapy, disability studies, and health systems research, with a sustained focus on disability equity, healthcare access, provider bias, and disability-inclusive education. Her doctoral research examined how people with disabilities develop identities as self-advocates within healthcare systems, informing ongoing work on self-advocacy, health literacy, and structural barriers to care.

Dr. VanPuymbrouck has served as a principal investigator and co-investigator on federally and foundation-funded projects and is currently a co-principal investigator on an RRF Foundation for Aging funded study examining occupational therapy's role in supporting older adults transitioning from homelessness to housing. She is widely published, actively engaged in disability advocacy, a Fellow of AOTA, and a founding member of the OT+DS Network.

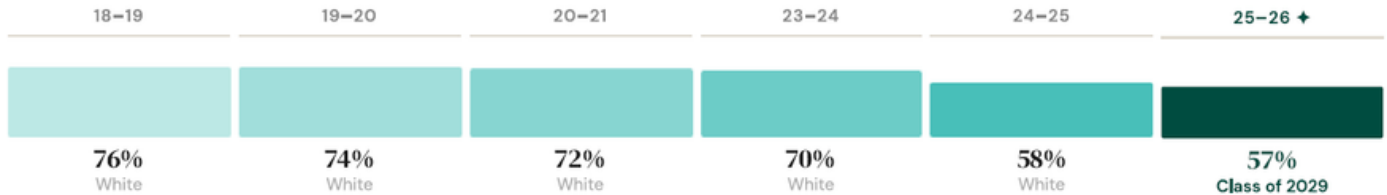
**Laura VanPuymbrouck, PhD,
OTR/L, FAOTA**

**Associate Professor
College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational
Therapy**

WHO WE ARE

We believe transparency about our organization's demographic makeup is essential in helping applicants make informed decisions. Here, we provide current trends based on available data.

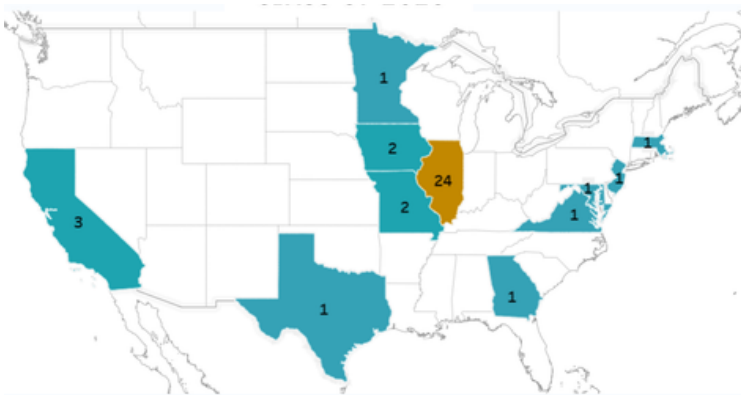
DIVERSITY TREND — % WHITE ENROLLED BY COHORT YEAR



A meaningful shift over seven years. The proportion of White students has declined from 76% (2018-19) to 57% in the incoming Class of 2029, reflecting sustained progress toward a cohort that better reflects the communities Rush serves.

RUSH OT CLASS OF 2028

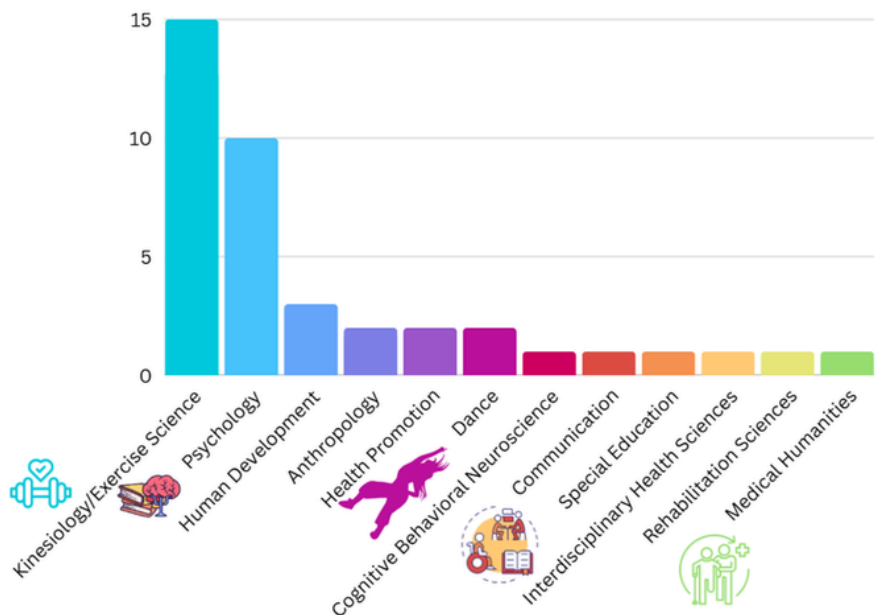
Home State



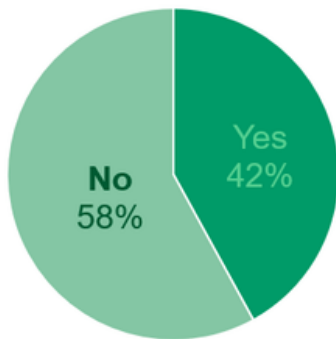
Family Birth Country:

- 76% (n=32) – Parents were born in the U.S.
- 17% (n=7) – Neither parents were born in the U.S.
- 7% (n=3) – One parent born in the U.S.

Undergraduate Degrees



Gap Year



RUSH OTD Outcomes

Occupational Therapy Program Accreditation

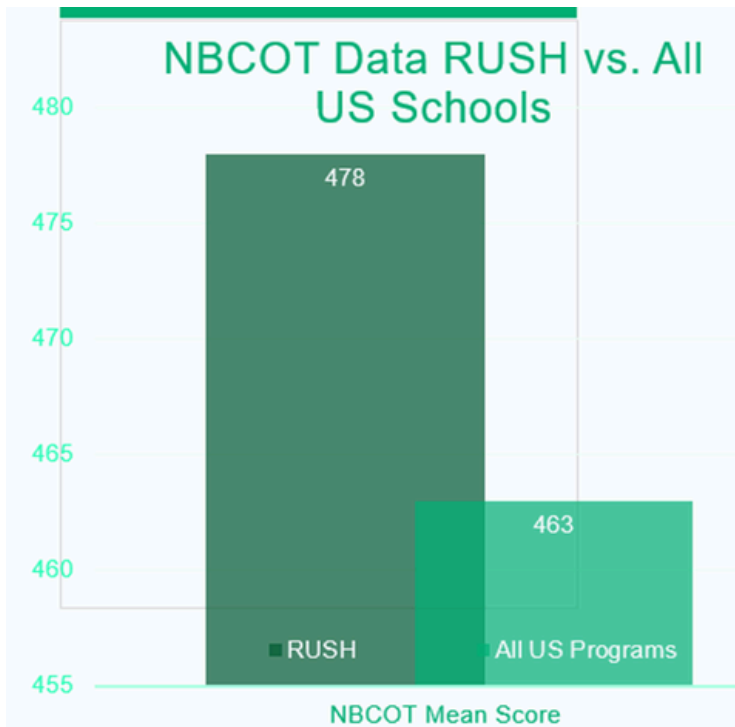
The entry-level Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program at Rush University has been approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at:

7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 510E
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: 301-652-AOTA
Fax: 240-762-5140
www.acoteonline.org



National Board Certification of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) examination results indicate our students are well prepared upon graduation. Our students are prepared throughout the curriculum with exams designed to prepare them for the board exam and a practice exam provided as part of the curriculum. The below statistics are based on the OTD graduating class of 2025.

National New Graduate Pass Rate	RUSH New Graduate Pass Rate
96%	100%





RUSH OTD Outcomes

Graduation year	Number of students matriculated (g2)	Students that withdrew due to reasons not related to academic and clinical performance (g3)	Number of on-time graduates (g1)	On-time graduation rate*	Overall graduation rate**
2020	36	0	36	100%	100%
2021	36	1	34	97%	97%
2022	37	1	36	100%	100%
2023	38	0	38	100%	100%
2024	36	0	36	100%	100%
2025	36	1	31	89%	94%
2026	34	0	33	97%	97%
2027	40	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available
2028	38	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available

*In accordance with 2023 ACOTE Standard A.6.5 Graduation Rate is defined by the number of students who graduate on time (g1) divided by the number of students admitted in the original cohort (g2) minus the number of students who withdrew due to military, health, family issues, death and other reasons not related to academic and clinical performance (g3). calculation per calendar year is = (g1/(g2-g3). On time (G1) = the number of students who graduated according to the published program length. If a student does not graduate according to the published program length, they should not be counted in any graduation rate.

** "Overall graduation" rate refers to the students that took more than 8 semesters to complete the program but did graduate.

Data is calculated by calendar year

Scholarly Outcomes Class of 2025

- 1 International Presentation
- 11 National Presentations
- 10 State Presentations



Employment Outcomes

- 21% of the Class of 2025 was employed before graduation
- 95 % of the Class of 2025 was employed within 6 months of graduation
- Average starting salary \$75,000

Admissions Requirements

Complete the **online application through the Occupational Therapy Centralized Application System (OTCAS)** at:

<https://otcas.liaisoncas.com>.

You can find a video walking you through OTCAS [here](#). 🎥

***Please ensure you thoroughly complete the experiences section in OTCAS.** Academic and non-academic factors, including community service, work experience, research, and leadership, will be considered.



Complete a **bachelor's degree** from a regionally accredited institution.

Applicants may apply with outstanding coursework if all coursework is completed and a degree is conferred by matriculation (Sept)



Achieve a minimum **GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale** in the most recent two years of your education



Personal Statement

Demonstrating your understanding of the profession and what characteristics and experiences support you in becoming an occupational therapist.

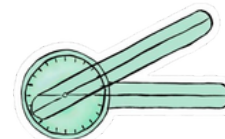


Two Letters of recommendation

From individuals acquainted with the applicant's academic/professional aptitudes. OTCAS will contact each reference with instructions on how to complete an online evaluation.



Occupational Therapy Experience: 20 hours (minimum) observation of occupational therapy. Contact the department if you were unable to complete in person observation and need alternate options.



Interview

Selected applicants will be invited for a small group virtual interview session and must complete a RUSH supplemental application, with a \$40 fee.



Prerequisite Courses

The following courses are **required** to be completed (with a letter grade of “C” or higher) **before matriculation** with the following content:

Human anatomy with lab* (cadaver lab preferred) *4 credit hours*

- *Must be completed within five years of program start*
- *Two sequential Human Anatomy & Physiology courses with labs will also fulfill this requirement*

Human physiology* (lab preferred) *at least 3 credit hours*

Statistics *at least 3 credit hours*

- (including descriptive and inferential statistics)

Sociology or Anthropology *at least 3 credit hours*

- *Any college introductory or advanced courses may be used to fulfill this requirement*

Human growth and development across the lifespan *at least 3 credit hours*

- *Must cover development from birth through aging and end of life*
- *If a single lifespan course is not available, you may combine multiple development courses (e.g., Child, Adolescent and Adult Development) to meet the requirement*

Abnormal Psychology-*at least 3 credit hours*

One additional **Psychology** course -*at least 3 credit hours*

- *Any college introductory or advanced courses may be used to fulfill this requirement*

****Note: Exams testing out of coursework and advanced placement (AP) coursework are not acceptable for prerequisite requirements. Pass/Fail classes will be accepted for Spring 2020 only.**

***** The OTD program requires students to complete all required courses in the Rush University Department of OT plan of study. We do not accept transfer of credit for previous coursework and/or work experience.**

Application Checklist

Applications will be reviewed by the OT Admissions Committee after OTCAS application is submitted and OTCAS has verified all transcripts, and letters of recommendation. Applications will be reviewed once they are verified by OTCAS.

To submit your application for **early acceptance** consideration, you are advised to follow this checklist. **Completing your application in this timeframe will give you priority for interview and scholarship funds, however all applications submitted before the deadline will be considered. Early application submission is highly encouraged.**

- Review the **OTCAS Quick Start Guide** and FAQs on the [OTCAS website](#).
- By September 30th, arrange for all official transcripts and letters of recommendation to be sent to OTCAS as the verification process can take up to 4-6 weeks.
- Submit your OTCAS application by **October 15th to be considered for early admissions.**
- RUSH University does not require a supplemental application for consideration for an interview. However, interviewing applicants will be required to do so.
- Regularly check your OTCAS portal to monitor your application and the receipt of all supporting documents.

In order to meet the **January 15th deadline**, you are advised to follow this checklist:

- Review the OTCAS Quick Start Guide and FAQs on the [OTCAS website](#). By November 15th
- arrange for all official transcripts, and letters of recommendation. Submit your OTCAS
- application before midnight January 15th.
- RUSH University does not require a supplemental application for consideration for an interview. However, interviewing applicants will be required to do so.
- Regularly check your OTCAS portal to monitor your application and the receipt of all supporting documents.

*Accepted applicants must complete a criminal background check and the required Health and Immunization History documentation. A felony conviction potentially negatively impacts a graduate's eligibility for certification and licensure.

Questions about OTCAS application should be directed to OTCAS directly.

Questions about the status of your application, Rush University's OT program, and/or application procedure can be directed to the OT Admissions committee at

OT_Admissions@rush.edu

Course of Study

YEAR 1

BEGIN SEPTEMBER 2027 SEMESTER 1

OCC 501 Human Structure & Principles of Movement (3)
 OCC 501L Functional Anatomy w/Lab (2)
 OCC 520 Health Conditions (4)
 OCC 608 Introduction to Clinical Practice (2)
 OCC 510 Self-Care and Professional Transitions (1) **(Practicum #1)** ★
 OCC 600 Introduction to Occupation Health and Wellness (3)
 IPE 502 Interprofessional Patient Centered Teams (0)
Total = 15

JANUARY 2028

SEMESTER 2

OCC 576 Sociocultural Aspects of Care (2)
 OCC 609 Occupational Performance & Ability (3) **(Practicum #2)** ★
 OCC 620 Foundational Theories in OT (3)
 OCC 579 Research Methods (4)
 OCC 643 Health Care Systems (3)
 IPE 502 Interprofessional Patient Centered Teams (0)
Total = 15

MAY 2028

SEMESTER 3

OCC 625 Functional Neuroscience & Cognition (4)
 OCC 607 Psychosocial Aspects of Care (3) **(Practicum #3)** ★
 OCC 610 Occupational Therapy Process (3)
 OCC 615 Developmental Disabilities I (3)
 OCC 617 Clinical Practice Skills/**FWI-A** (2) ★
 OCC 683 Evidence-Based Practice Series I (1)
Total = 16

YEAR 2

SEPTEMBER 2028 SEMESTER 4

OCC 612 Physical Disabilities I (4)
 OCC 614 Mental Health Practice (4) **(Group Dynamics)** ★
 OCC 618 Clinical Practice Skills/**FWI-B** (2) ★
 OCC 684 Evidence-Based Practice Series II (1)
 OCC 630 Program Development (2)
Total = 13

JANUARY 2029

SEMESTER 5

OCC 613 Physical Disabilities II (4)
 OCC 616 Developmental Disabilities II (4)
 OCC 685 Evidence-Based Practice Series III (2)
 OCC 810 Professional Reasoning & Doctorate Experience I (2)
Total = 12

MAY 2029

SEMESTER 6

OCC 795 **Advanced Fieldwork I** (9) ★
 OCC 644 Leadership & Advocacy (2)
 OCC 811 Professional Reasoning & Doctorate Experience II (1)
Total = 12

YEAR 3

SEPTEMBER 2029 SEMESTER 7

OCC 797 **Advanced Fieldwork II** (9) ★
 OCC 812 Professional Reasoning & Doctorate Experience III (1)
 OCC 820 Capstone Competencies (1)
Total = 11

SEMESTER 8 GRADUATE APRIL 2030

OCC 825 **Individualized Doctoral Experience** (12) ★
 OCC 828 Capstone Dissemination (1)
Total = 13

Total hours = 107



★ Indicates a hands on clinical experience

General Program Requirements

This program is delivered through a full-time hybrid delivery model, combining in-person instruction, and some distance education components. Primarily, students are in classes Monday through Thursday in-person. Some additional Friday, evening or weekend hours may be required for the completion of academic and clinical assignments. Students are given ample notice of these required days.

In-person sessions are primarily held at Armour Academic Center at 600 S. Paulina, Chicago, IL 60612, which is accessible and designed to support an inclusive and engaging learning environment. Students are encouraged to review the accessibility features of both physical and virtual learning spaces to ensure their needs are met. For additional support or accommodation requests, please contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services at StudentAccessibility@rush.edu.

Several of our courses have both asynchronous and synchronous sessions. Technology requirements for these courses and the entire program can be found on our [website](#) as well as in the Technology Requirements Section below. Collaborative strategies are commonly used in the curriculum, which means you need to work with your peers outside of scheduled class periods. This comprehensive approach aligns with our commitment to excellence in occupational therapy education while providing students with the flexibility and resources needed to succeed.

Students enrolled in the OTD program at Rush University are expected to have the skills necessary to function as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy student in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical/fieldwork settings. The technical standards required of all students enrolled in the OTD program can be found in the next section.

Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for occupational therapists, administered by the national board for certification in occupational therapy (NBCOT®). After successful completion of this exam, the graduate will be an occupational therapist, registered (OTR). In addition, all states require licensure to practice; however, state licenses are usually based on the results of the NBCOT certification examination. A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the NBCOT certification examination or attain state licensure.



Technical Standards

INTRODUCTION

Rush University is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment where all students can succeed. Guided by our core values: Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence (ICARE). We work to ensure accessibility and cultivate a supportive, respectful, and accountable culture through individualized and confidential support services.

The **Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) Program** at Rush University prepares students to become skilled and compassionate providers of occupational therapy services. The following **technical standards** outline the essential skills, abilities, and behavioral characteristics required for successful participation and progression in the program. By upholding these technical standards, RUSH OTD program ensures that all students are prepared for the dynamic and demanding nature of occupational therapy practice while maintaining a commitment to diversity, accessibility, and academic excellence. Students may achieve these technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation. Reviewing these standards can help determine if accommodation is needed to fully access and successfully engage in the Rush OTD program.

Rush University is dedicated to ensuring that qualified students who identify as having disabilities have equal access to the Occupational Therapy Program through **reasonable accommodations** in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students who require accommodation are encouraged to contact the **Office of Student Accessibility Services** as early as possible to discuss their access needs confidentially, and to allow adequate time for review and implementation. Accommodation is not retroactive, so timely requests are essential.

The following technical functions are required of all students enrolled in the Occupational Therapy program:

Acquire Fundamental Knowledge

- Students will acquire information by some or all sensory modalities (e.g. tactile, visual, auditory, etc.), students will acquire information from **material presented in courses**, such as lectures, group discussions, and physical demonstrations.
- Students will acquire information by some or all sensory modalities (e.g. tactile, visual, auditory, etc.), students will **acquire information from written documents and computer systems** (e.g. literature searches, health record review, & data retrieval).
- Students will acquire information through the use of some or all sensory modalities (e.g. tactile, visual, auditory, etc.), students will identify relevant information **presented across various formats** (e.g. paper, presentations, audio, video).
- Students will acquire information through the use of some or all sensory modalities (e.g. tactile, visual, auditory, etc.), students will **recognize and assess changes in client factors**, performance skills, as well as occupational performance and participation.

Interpreting Data and Information

- When presented with assessment information in a variety of formats (e.g. standardized assessment results, informal observations or findings, other assessment tools), students will interpret the information in the determination for services and/or use the findings for the development of a treatment plan.

Collective Safety

- Possess psychomotor skills necessary to provide, assist in, and/or direct holistic occupational therapy care and perform or assist with procedures and treatments.
- When providing occupational therapy services, students will do so in a physically safe and appropriate manner for themselves and the client.
- When providing occupational therapy services students will use any and all necessary universal precautions based on practice setting.
- When presented with an emergency, students will support necessary emergency response intervention and/or activate the emergency response intervention system to ensure client safety.

Communication Skills

- Draw from a variety of strategies to effectively and sensitively communicate with **clients, families, and peers** based on their own and needs of others.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback that promotes respectful professional and effective communication.
- Communicate effectively with faculty, educators, Rush University staff, and all **members of the healthcare team** during practicum, clinical, community, and other learning experiences.
- When conducting an evaluation, assessment, or treatment session with a client, students will accurately and appropriately elicit relevant information (e.g. medical/psychiatric history, occupational profile) required to effectively facilitate collaboration to effectively support clients.

Clinical and Professional Judgement

- Throughout their education, students will measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data through clinical decision making related to diagnosis and treatment of clients to determine qualification for services, develop treatment plans, assess progress towards goals, and determine termination of services.
- Throughout their education, students will exhibit professional reasoning across academic and practice, settings, according to the occupational therapy scope of practice.
- Throughout their education, students will demonstrate organizational skills to complete responsibilities within designated time frames or collaborate with involved parties when extensions or accommodation are required.
- Throughout their education, students will synthesize information, problem solve and think critically to determine the most appropriate theories, assessments, and/or interventions to utilize with a client.

Developing Professional Interactions and Attitudes

- Students will work to build and maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, families, students, faculty, staff, educators, and other professionals.
- When presented with a conflict in a relationship, students will work to identify and utilize strategies to address the conflict and maintain effective, professional relationships.
- When presented with an unsafe professional relationship, students will identify and utilize policies and/or interpersonal strategies to protect the safety of themselves, clients, families, etc.
- Students will collaborate with the client and any additional parties involved, while following appropriate protocols, to advocate for client's needs.
- To manage stress and adapt to rapidly changing environments inherent to the academic and practice settings, students will use a variety of strategies, supports, and available resources to support their wellbeing.

Integration of Ethical Principles:

- In a variety of situations, students will demonstrate:
 - Integrity, through adherence to the Rush University Student Code of Conduct;
 - accountability, through use of strategies such as collaboratively developing and adhering to an equitable participation in group projects, requesting support when needed, etc., and;
 - concern for others, through use of strategies such as intentionally seeking and understanding others' ideas, checking in on the physical and mental wellbeing of others, identifying access barriers of others and attempting to find solutions, etc. based on the needs and desires of the individual.
- Throughout their education, students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical guidelines (e.g. Rush University Code of Conduct, AOTA Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics), including potential ethical conflicts.
- When presented with an ethical conflict, students will carefully consider the effects of each course of action and come to a professional decision based on best practices within the field, collaboration with other professionals, and/or their own personal/professional ideals.
- When presented with an ethical conflict, students will understand and utilize the appropriate reporting procedures and line of communication to discuss the issue and come to a resolution.

To learn more about accommodations at Rush University please contact:

www.rushu.rush.edu/office-student-accessibility-services

Email: studentaccessibility@rush.edu

Graduation Requirements

Once admitted to the Occupational Therapy program, students embark on a journey that entails the accumulation of 107 term hours for graduation. In order to graduate and have the Occupational Therapy Doctorate conferred, students must meet the following:

- Successfully complete all didactic coursework and fieldwork
- Pass the Department of Occupational Therapy oral competency exam
- Successfully complete all requirements of the individual doctoral experience and capstone project
- Pass the Rush University Interprofessional Patient Care Teams course (IPE 503)
- Complete a minimum of 16 contact hours of approved professional or community service

In order to be eligible to take the registration exam administered by the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapists, students must have completed all graduation requirements as documented in official transcripts from Rush University. Students must complete all program requirements within 45 months from the time they begin the program. Students will have 15 months to complete Level II fieldwork after the final day of Semester 5 of the curriculum and 12 months to complete the doctoral experience/project after the last day of their final Level II fieldwork. Any student who expects to go beyond this timeframe must request an exception to the policy, in writing, to the program director.



Scholarly and Professional Service

Scholarly Activities

All faculty are involved in research projects in occupational therapy. Students participate in faculty-supervised research projects of interest, which may be carried out in one of Rush University Medical Center’s occupational therapy clinics, other healthcare facilities, or community organizations. Students are required to present their research projects during the annual Department of Occupational Therapy Research Symposium, submit them for presentation at state and national conferences, and/or publication in a professional journal identified by the faculty research adviser.

Students are also required to independently complete a capstone project that will advance knowledge within the occupational therapy profession. All students present their findings at RUSH’s Doctoral Capstone Dissemination day; publication is highly encouraged. You can find previous capstone student's work [here](#).

Professional Service Activities

A hallmark of outstanding Rush students and alumni is the desire to make meaningful service contributions. All Rush students are required to **complete 16 hours of service**. Many opportunities exist for students to obtain these hours, including collaboration with faculty service projects, and departmental and university-wide student organization events. A few of the current OTD faculty service partnerships include opportunities to volunteer at Revive Center for Housing and Healing, Gigi's Playhouse, and House of Good Shepard Shelter. Additional opportunities with the larger RUSH community include the [RUSH Community Service Initiatives Program \(RICSIP\)](#).



Technology

Required Software/Online Tools

My Apps: <https://myapps.rush.edu/>

Students are recommended to use My Apps, which is a virtual desktop where Office software, RUSH Email, and secure storage is provided.

Visit <https://rushuportal.learning.rush.edu/faq> for more information about the My Apps virtual environment. Students are also able to log into RULearning from MyApps.

RULearning Login Page: <https://rulearning.rush.edu/>

Students are also able to access RULearning via the listed login page.

Computer Requirements:

Students should have computers with audio/visual capabilities (including the ability to record presentation assignments) and that support learning management tools including but not limited to Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor, Panapto, and ExamSoft.

Microsoft Office Suite: Word, Excel, and PowerPoint:

If you do not already have the Microsoft Office software you can access the Suite through My Apps or download a copy of the Microsoft Office suite at a reduced cost for Windows or Mac users: <https://rush.onthehub.com/>

Internet Browsers:

Students should have access to more than one browser, such as Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox or Safari. All browsers should be the most up-to-date version available.

Internet Requirements:

Students must have access to a high-speed internet connection when working off campus.

Adobe Acrobat Reader:

Students should have access to the most up-to-date Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Canvas: <https://rushuniversity.instructure.com/>

Rush University uses Canvas learning management system for all courses.

Practicum:

A unique opportunity for first year students to receive hands on learning experiences in a variety of occupational therapy settings.

01

Students are randomly assigned, in pairs, to a practicum location.

- 3-4 hours of hands-on learning for 4 weeks.
- Occur once per semester for the first three semester.

02

Faculty Orientation

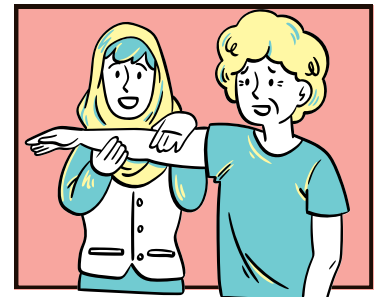
- Provides students information regarding assignments, expectations of the site, and can answer any questions.



03

Students will submit:

- An completed evaluation from their clinical instructor
- An NBCOT Self-Assessment.



04

Classroom Application:

- Each semester students complete an assignment for an associated class



05

At the end of the four weeks, there will be a **debrief meeting** held by a faculty member to discuss the experience.

GROUP DYNAMICS EXPERIENCE

As one of the hands-on clinical experiences of the RUSH OTD curriculum, the Group Dynamics Experience is integrated into **OCC 614: Mental Health Practice**. With faculty mentorship, second-year OTD students collaborate with a community partner to lead occupational therapy groups.



Students work with a variety of sites such as shelters for the unhoused, daycare centers, university programs supporting students with disabilities, skilled nursing facilities, and many non-profit organizations.

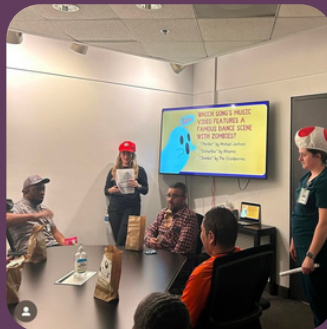


Students work with individuals across the entire lifespan so that they can apply content they learned in the classroom into practice before going on to their advanced fieldworks.

WHAT KIND OF GROUPS DO RUSH OTD STUDENTS LEAD?



Play-based groups with toddlers



Life skills groups with adults with traumatic brain injuries



Physical activity groups with older adults



Fine motor & socioemotional groups with youth with Down Syndrome



Fitness groups with older adults



Social & mindfulness groups with adults with disabilities

“ I really enjoyed getting the chance to take the **lead** on groups while still having a faculty member present. It is really great **practice** and has been helping build my **confidence** as a future OT! ”
-Class of 2025 RUSH OTD Student

Faculty Contact:
Ricardo D. Ramirez, OTD, OTR/L, QMHP

✉ ricardo_ramirez@rush.edu

📍 rushu.rush.edu

**IT ALWAYS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE
UNTIL IT'S DONE**

Capstone is designed to provide an indepth exposure to the areas of occupational therapy, including: advanced skills in leadership, clinical practice, policy development, research, program development, administration, education, and advocacy



About Capstone

Capstone is 14 week, 560 hour experience that occurs during the final year of the OTD program. Preparation occurs across 3 semesters and 5 courses prior with individualized student advising throughout

What's the difference between **capstone** and **fieldwork**?

Capstone


- **Experience**
14 week, 40 hour/week full time mentored experience across several sites within Chicago, nationally, and abroad
- **Project**
An individualized project that demonstrates the student's ability to relate theory to practice and to synthesize in-depth knowledge in a practice area that relates to the capstone experience. Projects are disseminated prior to graduation

Fieldwork

- **Level I and II**
Level I - 2 weeks full time
Level II - 12 weeks full time
All occur in a variety of clinical and community settings
- **Goal**
Fieldwork is clinically focused to promote competence for entry-level practice

600 S Paulina St, AAC
Suite 1010 A
Chicago, IL 60612

 [RUSH OTD Capstone Projects](#)

 K. Ashley Burks:
Kia_A_Burks@rush.edu

Financial Aid

If you intend to apply for financial assistance through the Rush University Office of Student Financial Aid, please complete the 2025/2026 FAFSA application at studentaid.gov. When completing the application ensure to include the Rush University's school code, 009800. By adding the school code to the FAFSA your information will automatically be transmitted to the Office of Student Financial Aid. The financial aid process may take up to 21 days after (1) the date you submit the FAFSA and (2) formal acceptance is received by Rush University Office of Student Financial Aid.

In certain situations, you may need to submit additional documents. You will be contacted via email if this is the case. The Office of Student Financial Aid will review your application for financial assistance once your file is complete with all requested documents. You will receive an email when your award is ready, directing you to the secure University Portal where you can find information about your financial aid award and the next steps.

You may need to complete additional paperwork based on the aid you receive and accept. Details will be included in the award information provided to you.

Office of Student Financial Aid
Armour Academic Center
600 South Paulina St., Suite 440
Chicago, IL 60612
(312) 942-6256

Email: Send us an email at financial_aid@rush.edu.

For additional information check out the Rush University Office of Student Financial Aid website: <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/rush-experience/student-services/office-student-financialaid>



OTCAS Application Fee Waiver

Fees



OTCAS charges \$172 for the first program and \$71 for each additional program. Some programs may have an additional supplemental fee.

Fee Assistance Program

A limited number of fee waivers are provided to qualified applicants on a first come, first-served basis. You may request a fee waiver as soon as you create an application. Contact 617-612-2860 before you submit a fee waiver to determine if they are still available.



Qualification Requirements



1. Filed Federal Income Tax Return Form with an adjusted gross income that falls below the Low Income Level.
2. Must request a fee waiver before application is submitted

Applying for a Fee Waiver

1. Start OTCAS application
2. Click on your name in the upper right corner of the application, then select "Fee Assistance Program"
3. Enter household's adjusted gross income and number of people in household
4. Upload a copy of the filed Federal Income Tax Return
5. Await notification, may take up to 10 business days

Internal Scholarships

Several Scholarship opportunities are available to incoming Rush Occupational Therapy students.* Scholarships are awarded by the OT department scholarship committee and allocated through the Rush University Office of Student Financial Aid. To be eligible, students must have a confirmed seat in the program, complete FASFA, and complete all required Office of Student Financial Aid paperwork. **No further application is available.**

Merit Scholarships:

Merit scholarships are awarded based on overall application strength, as determined by OTCAS application review (academic background, leadership background, research & employment experiences) and the interview.

Graduate Assistantships:

Graduate assistants work with an occupational therapy faculty member approximately 8 hours/week across their first three semesters in the program.

Graduate Assistantships are awarded based on overall application strength, as determined by OTCAS application review (academic background, leadership background, research & employment experiences) and the interview.

College of Health Sciences Leadership & the Allied Health Professional Scholarship

The College of Health Sciences Leadership & the Allied Health Professional Scholarships are awarded based on overall application strength, as determined by OTCAS application review (academic background, leadership background, research & employment experiences) and the interview. Additionally, recipients have shown through OTCAS application materials that their backgrounds uniquely align with the Rush OTD mission by demonstrating a commitment to learning, occupational therapy, and service to others. We seek candidates whose unique experiences, perspectives, or qualities enrich the learning environment and enhance the profession's ability to address society's varied needs.

Be sure to complete the **OTCAS Rush OTD Program Materials Section** thoroughly to highlight your experiences.

Other Scholarships:

Throughout the second- and third-year scholarship funds are available based on a variety of different criteria including:

- Academic and experiential background
- Demonstration of Rush's ICARE values
- Artwork submission demonstrating the art & science of OT

*Scholarship information/allocation is subject to change



External Scholarships

AOTA E.K. Wise Scholarship

- Three scholarships in the amount of \$2,500 each will be available annually to students enrolled in (or accepted to) a full-time accredited occupational therapy program and who can contribute to a diverse workforce.
- Application open in March 2025
- More information [here](#).

AOTF Scholarships

- The American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF) awards more than 50 scholarships annually to students currently enrolled in accredited occupational therapy programs. Scholarships range from \$150 to \$5,000 annually and are awarded to students who have completed at least one year of occupationally therapy course work.
- More information [here](#).

AMBUCS Scholars-Scholarships for Therapists

- The AMBUCS Scholars-Scholarships for Therapists distributes \$200,000 annually in awards ranging from \$500 to \$6,000. Applicants are selected based on financial need, US citizenship, commitment to local community, academic accomplishment, character for compassion and integrity, and career objectives.
- More information [here](#).

The Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans

- The PDS Fellowships for New Americans program honors the contributions of immigrants and children of immigrants to the United States. Each year, we invest in the graduate education of 30 New Americans—immigrants and children of immigrants—who are poised to make significant contributions to US society, culture or their academic field.
- More information [here](#).

PIF/ Lifeline Scholarship Program

- Scholarships are available for adult students who are enrolled in one of the following programs: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/hearing therapy, mental health, or rehabilitation. Recipients must be preparing for, or already involved in, careers working with people with disabilities/brain related disorders.
- More information [here](#).

External Scholarships Continued

Carlotta Welles Scholarship

- This scholarship is for a student seeking an associate degree; must be a member of the American Occupational Therapy Association; demonstrate a need for financial assistance; and have a sustained record of outstanding scholastic achievement.
- More information [here](#).

Alice Jantzen Memorial Scholarship

- Qualified applicants must all eligibility requirements. For Post-baccalaureate scholarships, this must be the first degree in Occupational Therapy; have a sustained record of outstanding scholastic achievement; Supply application data including: (1) Two references and (2) Program Director's statement.
- More information [here](#).

Willard & Spackman Memorial Scholarship

- For student seeking a post-professional graduate degree; must be a member of the American Occupational Therapy Association; demonstrate a need for financial assistance; and have a sustained record of outstanding scholastic achievement.
- More information [here](#).

Kappa Delta Phi Scholarship

- For student seeking a baccalaureate degree or post-baccalaureate certificate; must be a member of the American Occupational Therapy Association; demonstrate a need for financial assistance; and have a sustained record of outstanding scholastic achievement.
- More information [here](#).

Lands Banks Memorial Scholarship

- This scholarship provides financial assistance for students pursuing a graduate school degree in an accredited occupational therapy program. Students must be enrolled full time in a program and have completed on year of coursework. This scholarships is prioritized for people who are typically under-represented in occupational therapy.
- More information [here](#)

For other scholarship opportunities, you can log on at www.aota.org Follow the student link to Financial Aid.

External Scholarships Continued

\$25,000 Be Bold No-Essay Scholarship

- 25,000 dollars designed for individuals who are wanting to pursue advanced education
- Complete a bold application profile with your goals achievements and drive
- More information [here](#)

Amtrak Academic Scholarship

- 5,000 dollars to cover tuition, books, fees, and equipment required for an advanced application.
- Complete an application with a required 500 word essay and resume.
- More information [here](#)

Niche \$2,000 No Essay Scholarship

- 2,000 dollars for people who are in college and planning on pursuing a graduate degree the following year to ease the burden of education-related expenses.
- More information [here](#)

Pauahi Foundation Public Scholarships

- 150 scholarships for people who are pursuing a graduate education that is based on merit and financial need.
- Must submit an application, a transcript, a personal essay, and a list of extracurricular/community service activities.
- More information [here](#)

Dr. Omega Logan Silva Scholarship

- 20,000 for women with financial need who are pursuing a career in the healthcare field. To apply, you must fill out an application with an essay, letters of recommendation, resume, and transcript.
- More information [here](#)

AMN Healthcare Champions Scholarship

- A 5,000 dollar scholarship to support students pursuing advanced degrees in a healthcare field.
- Must complete an application with a 500-word minimum essay.
- More information [here](#)

External Scholarships Continued

Roothbert Fund Scholarships

- 7,000 dollars to people who intend on pursuing a graduate degree.
- Applicants must provide transcripts, write three essays, provide three letters of recommendation, and fill out the application.
- More information [here](#)

James M. & Erma T. Freemont Scholarship Program

- Scholarship money will be provided for people who intend on pursuing a graduate degree in a healthcare field.
- More information [here](#)

BPWI Educational Foundation Returning Student Scholarship

- Provides financial assistance for women in Illinois pursuing higher education.
- Must submit an application with a transcript, two letters of recommendation, and an completed essay.
- More information [here](#)

Cassandra Toroian Scholarship

- 5,000 dollars for people who are pursuing a graduate degree in need of financial assistance
- Applicants must complete an essay and have an excellent academic record.
- More information [here](#)

Taco Bell Live Más Scholarship

- 25,000 dollars for students who are pursuing higher education.
- Applicants will create a video about your passion and impact on the community.
- More information [here](#)

External Scholarships Continued

The Mensa Foundation Scholarship Program

- 10,000 dollars to students who have academic and professional goals.
- More information [here](#)

Medical Professional Student Scholarship

- 10,000 dollars for people who are pursuing an advanced degree in a medical profession who have financial need.
- More information [here](#)

Allied Health Scholarship

- Scholarship money for full-time students who plan on pursuing an advanced degree in the allied health field.
- More information [here](#)

Hancock Health Foundation Scholarship

- Scholarship money for students pursuing a career in a health care field to help fund education costs.
- More information [here](#)

Tylenol Future Care Scholarship

- Makers of Tylenol award \$10,000 to well-deserving students pursuing careers in healthcare.
- More information [here](#)

Chicago Occupational Therapy Scholarship

- A scholarship currently offered to students who are currently admitted or attending graduate school to become an occupational therapist.
- Applicants must be attending schools or have permanent addresses in the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, or Wisconsin.
- Committed to working in a private-practice setting with pediatrics.
- More information [here](#)

International Applicants

Rush University Medical Center welcomes international applicants. If you are an international student interested in applying to the OT program, please review the helpful links below and contact CHS_Admissions@rush.edu with any questions.

[TOEFL requirement and waiver information.](#)

[International course evaluation requirement.](#)

If you need an F-1 visa or immigration status to study at Rush, contact International Student Services at international_students@rush.edu or (312) 942-5681.



Student Organizations

Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)

A student run organization open to all Rush OT students. SOTA is committed to serving the community through volunteer activities and fundraising and increasing awareness of the value of occupational therapy to both the public and other health care disciplines.

Rush OTs in Action (ROTA)

Department committee of faculty and student members who meet monthly to hold the department accountable for racial and ethnic for promoting racial and ethnic equity by:

- Educating future occupational therapy practitioners, faculty, and staff on topics related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Advocating for change within Rush's Occupational Therapy program and across the profession based on evidence-based recommendations
- Improving the prospective and current student experience by ensuring an inclusive environment

Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD)

An international nonprofit organization that works to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and address occupational injustice. Check out the a project from the Rush COTAD Chapter [here!](#)



Rush offers many other opportunities for students to become involved in our over 35 active student organizations and the Office of Community Engagement.

<https://www.rushu.rush.edu/getting-involved>

Wellness Resources

Center for Clinical Wellness

A healing environment designed for and tailored to RUSH employees, students, and house staff. The center offers both on-site and virtual resources, including free counseling, coaching, and other wellness-oriented services. They are available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. either in-person or through telehealth.

They offer mental health forums, wellness workshops and talks, online learning modules, rooftop yoga, and even a mindfulness app! Take some time to recharge in the energy pods, or meet with a professional for extra support.

Rush Wellness Assistance Program

The Rush Wellness Assistance Program is an overarching resource for all RUSH University students and their families. They offer support in three areas:

- **Work:** Professional and personal development through online tutorials called “Skillbuilders”, addressing topics like emotional wellbeing, achieving personal goals, managing stress, and many more
- **Life:** 24/7, confidential, short-term counseling services
- **Home:** Pre-screened services for child and elder care, legal support, and financial planning

Rush Student Assistance Program (SAP)

A free, confidential resource for support and counseling, including ComPsych GuidanceResources. Rush SAP can help with finding balance for school, work, and life, addressing financial and legal issues, coping with emotional stress, and help for alcohol or drug dependence

Initial services for the first six sessions are free for Rush students. Longer-term services may be free, discounted, or have a cost. It is completely confidential.

Center for Academic Excellence (CAE)

The CAE provides academic support for writing, statistical data analysis, mathematics, and other services. They have one-on-one consultations or virtual support, with assistance for study skills, test-taking strategies, time management, and more.

Interested in learning more about any of these resources? Head to the University Wellness page for direct links and contact information: <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/student-life/student-affairs/university-wellness-services>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is unique about Rush's OTD Department?

The Rush University experience is unique because of the carefully crafted academic, clinical, and research curriculum paired with Rush University Medical Center. As part of this students participate in a **clinical experience during every semester of the program**, beginning in week 4 of the first semester. Rush University utilizes the Practitioner-Teacher-Investigator (PTI) model, meaning OT faculty members have many different roles, including teaching, research, and practice. Additionally, Rush OT practitioners support students' learning by sharing their expertise in the classroom and supervising clinical experiences. This allows students to learn from current practitioners in a variety of professional practice settings, in addition to the faculty.

Furthermore, our doctoral coursework builds students' leadership, advocacy, and independence with program development. RUSH University graduates are equipped with **clinical skills as well as leadership skills** to move the profession forward.

Rush values our **small class size** of 36 students. We have a 1:4.5 faculty-to-student ratio and value the relationships we build with our students in the classroom, through advising, and clinical supervision.

Is there a part-time, fully online, or non-traditional option?

No. The program is designed to be primarily in-person Monday-Thursday between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. The program has a few online courses, including an interdisciplinary statistical methods course and an interprofessional patient-centered team course in which OTD students collaborate with students from other disciplines and engage with healthcare service users.

How are faculty and students involved in research?

The occupational therapy faculty, clinicians, and students participate as a research team to develop research projects. The team begins meeting in the second semester and finishes with a graduate research project presentation dissemination during the fifth semester. Students are also encouraged to submit their work for state and national presentation and/or publication. 58% of the class of 2025 presented at a National Conference. Four students received grants to support their research. Students are also required to complete a capstone project, many of which have been published. You can learn more about previous capstone projects [here](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Aside from student organizations, what outside of class experiences are available for Rush OT students?

- The College of Health Sciences (CHS) requires its students to accumulate a minimum of 16 hours community service throughout their time at Rush.
- Many opportunities exist for students to obtain these hours, including collaboration with faculty service projects, and departmental and university-wide student organization events. Some current OTD faculty service partnerships include opportunities to volunteer at Revive Center for Housing and Healing, OT Street Medicine and the Night Ministry.
- The office of Student Life offers opportunities for various activities throughout the year for students enrolled in all academic programs.
- Rush Community Service Initiatives Program (RCSIP) was established in 1991 to create a thriving network of community service programs that match Rush University student interest and initiative with the social and healthcare needs of the Chicago population. Students have the opportunity to participate in clinical and non-clinical community service programs that are administered through the RCSIP office and overseen by Rush Clinicians.
- Rush OT students have the opportunity to apply and serve as student members on the OT department admission committee.
- Rush OT also hosts lots of social activities to foster community. Activities include OT Prom with Gigi's Playhouse, Bunco, social gatherings at favorite Chicago spots, and many more.

I'm not from the Chicago. Where can I find information about moving to and living in Chicago?

Rush University Student Life at: email: student_life@rush.edu or visit their website at: www.rushu.rush.edu/studentlife. The department also makes efforts to connect students in the incoming cohort in a timely fashion so they can find housing together if interested.

Do I need to send my official transcripts directly to Rush University?

Not during the application phase. Only if you are admitted to the program will you need to submit official transcripts.

Do I have to submit a supplemental application?

If you are invited for an interview you will be required to submit a supplemental application.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does Rush require the GRE?

No, beginning matriculation 2023 the admissions committee no longer considers GRE scores.

Can I have outstanding pre-requisites courses when I apply?

Yes. Courses must be completed prior to beginning the program which is early September.

What are the statistics of admitted students in the OT program?

The average Prerequisite GPA (based on 4.0 scale) for matriculated students is above 3.6.

Number of students matriculated per cycle

- 2023 admission: 34
- 2024 admission: 40
- 2025 admission: 38

What is the tuition?

Tuition was \$15,944 per term; \$127,552 total tuition as of 3/30/26. Rush does not charge additional fees. However, there are other cost components to consider when applying for financial assistance including medical insurance (required), books, supplies, rent, utilities, etc.

Note: tuition is subject to change.

IPE 502 INTERPROFESSIONAL PERSON CENTERED TEAMS

Enrollment in IPE 502 fosters collaboration among students, both pre-professional and practicing healthcare providers, enabling them to learn from one another and work together toward achieving the core competencies of Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (IPEC). This course directly supports RUSH's mission by equipping students with the skills needed for person-centered, community-oriented, and population-focused care. By working in interprofessional teams, students help enhance the health of individuals and communities while addressing pressing issues such as social and environmental health determinants and health equity.

Through a combination of didactic and experiential service-learning encounters, IPE 502 provides valuable exposure to a range of essential topics, including community engagement, sustainability, planetary health, age-friendly practices, and telehealth, all while reinforcing the IPEC core competencies.

IPE 502 is a two-semester course where students collaborate in teams of six, representing at least four different healthcare programs. Around 700 students from 17 healthcare disciplines participate each year. The course is graded on a Pass/No Pass basis and appears on student transcripts.

IPEC Competencies



Values and Ethics

Work with team members to maintain a climate of shared values, ethical conduct, and mutual respect.

Roles and Responsibilities

Use the knowledge of one's own role and team members' expertise to address individual and population health outcomes.

Communication

Communicate in a responsive, responsible, respectful, and compassionate manner with team members.

Teams and Teamwork

Apply values and principles of the science of teamwork to adapt one's own role in a variety of team settings.

We are excited to partner with you in advancing interprofessional education and practice!

Jan Odiaga, DNP, CPNP-PC, College of Nursing
Theresa Gierlowski, MPM, College of Health Sciences
Mary Jo Guglielmo, MPH, College of Health Sciences
Temitope Orenuga, MD, MPH, College of Medicine

Lynette Richter, DNP, CCRN, CNL, CHSE, College of Nursing
Grisel Rodriguez-Morales, MSW, LCSW, College of Health Sciences
Steven Taylor, PhD, OTD, OTR/L, College of Health Sciences

Getting to Rush University Medical Center TRANSPORTATION MAP

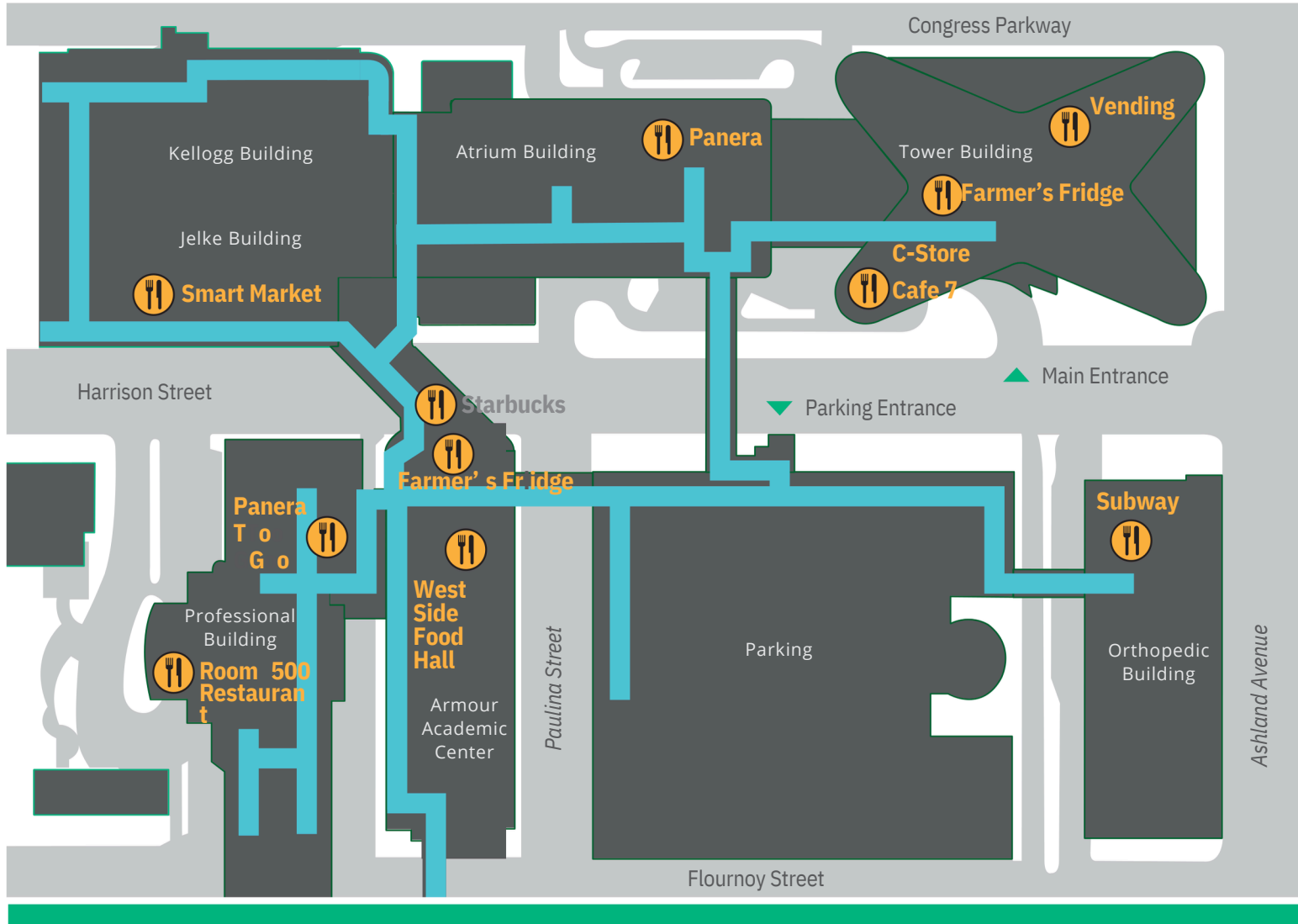


KEY

- Hospital
- Emergency
- Cab Stand
- Parking
- Patient & Visitor Parking
- Employee Parking
- Valet
- CTA Train
- Bike Rack
- Divvy Station
- Rush Parking Shuttle Stop
- Metra Shuttle Stop
- CTA Bus Stop
Ashland #9
Paulina #7
Polk #157
Jackson #126
- Convenience Shuttle Day Run Stop



Dining Options at Rush University Medical Center



Armour Academic Center
Farmer's Fridge, 4th Floor, 24/7

Starbucks, 1st Floor
 Monday – Friday: 5 a.m. – 7 p.m.
 Saturday – Sunday: 6 a.m. – 6 p.m.

West Side Food Hall, 2nd Floor
 Monday – Friday: 6:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
 Saturday – Sunday: 7 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Atrium Building
Panera, 4th Floor, 24/7

Jelke Building
Jelke Smart Market, 1st Floor, 24/7

Orthopedic Building
Subway, 1st Floor
 Monday – Friday: 6:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.
 Saturday: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.
 Sunday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Professional Building
Farmer's Fridge, 10th Floor, Rush University Cancer Center
 Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Panera To Go, 1st Floor
 Monday – Friday: 6:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Room 500 Restaurant, 5th Floor
 Monday – Friday: 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Room 500 To Go, 5th Floor
 6:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Tower Building
Farmer's Fridge, 4th Floor, 24/7

Café 7, 7th Floor, Employees Only
 Monday – Friday: 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

C-Store, 7th Floor, 24/7

Dr. Murphy's 2-Go, 4th Floor
 Monday – Friday:
 Noon – 1 p.m., 2 – 3 p.m. and 7 – 8 p.m.

