

## CAPSTONE OVERVIEW

According to ACOTE (i.e., the accrediting body for OT programs), the doctoral capstone is to be an integral part of the curriculum design for earning the doctor of occupational therapy degree. The goal is to provide in-depth exposure to areas such as advanced clinical practice, research, administration, leadership, program/policy development, advocacy, education and theory development. While all of the courses in the curriculum prepare students for the culminating capstone, four targeted classes offer the formal delivery of this component of the curriculum. The following table offers a summary of these four courses.

Course Name	Course Description
OT656 Advanced Experiential Learning Seminar	Preparation to transition from the classroom to full time experiential learning courses (i.e., level II fieldwork and capstone). Students will gain knowledge of the supervisory and mentoring processes, recognize professional expectations for full time experiential learning assignments, and complete a variety of related preparatory steps. Traditional lecture 1 hour.
OT671 Doctoral Capstone Seminar	An individualized doctoral capstone plan is collaboratively designed between students, capstone coordinator, faculty capstone advisors, and a facility's expert capstone mentor(s) to include individualized learning objectives and the initial conception of a culminating capstone project. The culminating capstone project must relate theory to practice, demonstrate a synthesis of advanced knowledge in occupational therapy, and be meaningful to the setting. Additionally, a comprehensive curriculum review for the national board exam and the processes for national certification and state licensure are included. Each student must pass a comprehensive competency examination prior to the commencement of the doctoral capstone experience. Traditional Lecture (3 credit hours)
OT680 Doctoral Capstone Experience	Full-time 14-week doctoral capstone experience in which students will achieve specialized skills in one or more of the following areas: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and/or policy development, advocacy, education, theory development or other innovative practice. Under the supervision of an expert mentor, students will execute their doctoral capstone plan established in OT671 by meeting the individualized objectives and completing a relevant culminating capstone project. Traditional Clinical Rotation (11 credit hours)
OT681 Doctoral Capstone Project	Development and dissemination of a capstone portfolio that includes a comprehensive culminating project in a focused area of study. The portfolio is created in consultation with a capstone faculty advisor. The capstone portfolio will display the students' advanced knowledge in occupational therapy through the integration of curriculum content and specialized knowledge gained during the doctoral capstone experience. Traditional Practicum/Internship (2 credit hours)

The capstone consists of two parts: 1) capstone experience, and 2) capstone project. These two components of the capstone are described in detail in the following two sections.

## **I. CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE**

The capstone experience is an individual 14-week educational assignment that must be started after the completion of didactic coursework and level II fieldwork. It shall be a full time (i.e., 40-hour week; 560 hours) assignment. At the discretion of the capstone mentor, the capstone student may be allowed off-site release time to perform tasks related to the capstone experience and/or project. Off-site release time shall not exceed 20% of the total hours (i.e., 560) required for the capstone experience. In other words, off-site release time for experience/project work shall not exceed 112 hours total. Prior fieldwork or work experience cannot be substituted for any portion (i.e., credit) of the capstone experience (i.e., OT680). The experience is designed through collaboration among faculty, student, and facility mentor(s); and it is provided in a setting(s) consistent with the program's curriculum design. It reflects the sequence and scope of curriculum content. The capstone experience should allow for the development of in-depth knowledge in the designated area of interest.

### **Capstone Treks**

Based on ACOTE's requirement of a designated area of interest for the capstone, the UMMC OTD curriculum was designed to offer four unique areas for student focus. It is expected and beneficial that some overlap between focus areas may occur (e.g., an administration/leadership capstone may also involve some clinical service provision; OR, a community health capstone may also involve some administration/leadership skills). Nonetheless, the student's primary focus should meet the descriptions below and allow for individualized learning objectives that target specialized skill acquisition unique to the selected focus area. Consistent with the UMMC OTD curriculum design the four focus areas have been designated as "treks". The following table identifies each trek (i.e., capstone focus area) along with a description and example experiences for each trek.

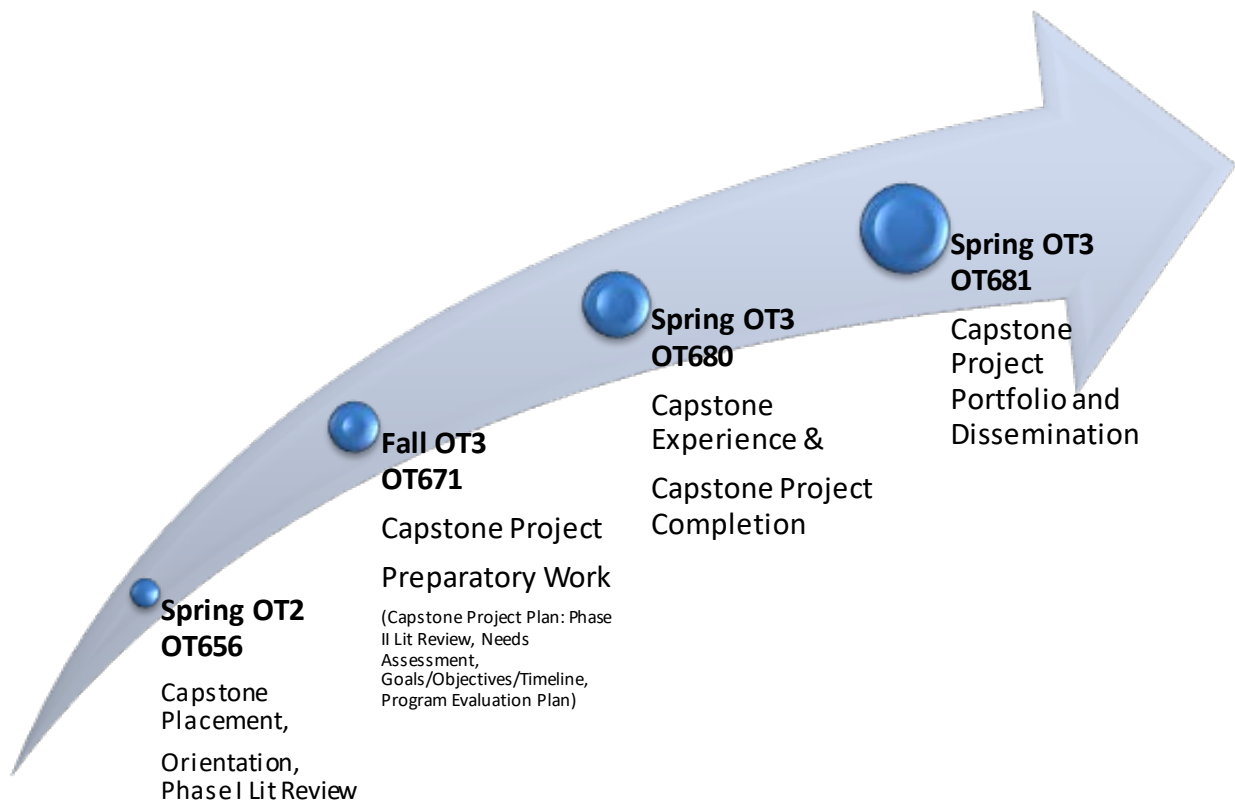
<b>Trek</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example Experiences</b>
Clinical Specialty	Designed to focus on clinical skills through participation in the day-to-day processes of a specialized occupational therapy practice. Specialized evaluation and interventions emphasizing theory and evidence, and other competencies relevant to the specific clinical setting will be achieved. Opportunities for leadership and advocacy for occupational therapy within the setting are expected.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low Vision</li> <li>2. Burn Center</li> <li>3. Hand Center</li> <li>4. Lymphedema Care</li> </ol>
Research / Education	Designed to focus on skills needed for an educator and/or researcher by participation in the day-to-day processes in these settings. The development of specialty skills may include a variety of instructional opportunities, participation in the research process, leadership activities, advocacy efforts, use of theory and evidence, program assessment and improvement, and other competencies relevant to education and research.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research Department</li> <li>2. Accredited OT or OTA Program</li> <li>3. Non-traditional School System roles (e.g., special education, dyslexia programming, etc.)</li> </ol>
Administration / Leadership	Designed to focus on participation in the day-to-day administrative/management processes at a selected institution or community setting. Advanced administration/leadership skills may include program assessment (i.e., quality improvement /outcome measures), human and nonhuman resource utilization, legal and ethical practices, fiscal responsibility, advocacy and integration of occupational therapy services, and other competencies relevant to the setting. Use of theory and evidence to support decision-making is expected.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regional Rehab Manager</li> <li>2. Owner of private outpatient clinic</li> <li>3. Rehabilitation manager in acute care hospital</li> <li>4. Professional Associations (e.g., state/national OT association)</li> <li>5. Congressional Assignments</li> </ol>
Community Health	Designed to focus on a selected community service area by participation in day-to-day processes of the organization. Specialty skills may include unique modes of service delivery, leadership opportunities, advocacy (i.e., for the service, population, and/or occupational therapy), use of theory and evidence unique to the community group, program assessment and improvement, and other competencies relevant to working with the community program and population(s) served.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adult day center for developmental disabilities</li> <li>2. Homeless Outreach Center</li> <li>3. Foundations or Associations (e.g., Arthritis, Special Olympics)</li> </ol>

## II. CAPSTONE PROJECT

The capstone project should complement the capstone experience to ensure the ability to synthesize in-depth knowledge within the focused area of study. Not only should the capstone project be beneficial to the student, but it should also provide a meaningful service to the capstone facility.

### Capstone Project Timeline

The capstone project is first introduced to students through an introductory lunch and learn session that is held early in the second year. Then, during the spring of the second year, students complete a one-hour course to prepare them for the transition to the full-time experiential learning assignments. It is during this course when students are notified of their capstone trek and specific site assignment. Additionally, the capstone project process and requirements are reviewed in detail with the students, including targeted timelines. The following graphic shows the general timeline for completion of capstone project.



## Capstone Project Components

The major components of the capstone project are outlined in the following table.

Project Components	Component Description
<b>Literature Review</b>	A comprehensive written review of the published evidence and/or background information on a given topic (i.e., site/setting; population; needs; solutions; etc.).
<b>Needs Assessment</b>	A process used to clarify problems and identify appropriate interventions or solutions. Identifies areas of need related to individuals, services, education/training, organizations, communities, or research. It includes a systematic process for identifying needs, or "gaps" between existing conditions and desired outcomes or "wants". Appropriate and sufficient data gathering informs the process for identifying and developing an effective product (i.e., project) that will address a targeted need.
<b>Goals/Objectives/Timeline</b>	A list of specific measurable outcomes for the capstone project (i.e., what is to be accomplished) with a projected implementation timeline.
<b>Completion / Implementation</b>	A project completion process that is informed by the preparatory activities (e.g., literature review, needs assessment) that was completed prior to the capstone experience. It should result in a useful and meaningful project that can benefit the capstone site in a significant way while also providing an opportunity to the student to synthesize knowledge as an occupational therapy student. The project must be fully completed, but it may or may not be implemented during the capstone experience.
<b>Evaluation Plan</b>	A description and means to systematically assess the outcome/impact of the capstone project. Includes the identification and/or creation of a useful instrument(s).

## **Capstone Project Examples**

Capstone project design may vary substantially from student to student as influenced by the student's trek, learning objectives, setting and needs assessment. The following formats are suggested for consideration when adopting an approach to the capstone project design. Capstone project formats may include, but are not limited to:

### **1. Program Development**

The student plans a new program that meets a need of the capstone site and is complementary to occupational therapy expertise.

### **2. Modification of an Existing Program**

The student develops a meaningful and significant modification plan to an existing program at the capstone site based on an identified need for improvement that is relevant to occupational therapy expertise.

### **3. Course Development**

The student develops part (e.g., module) or all of a course relevant to occupational therapy. This could be appropriate for an educational setting, or the course development could also be for personnel or family training related to an occupational therapy domain of concern.

### **4. Professional Publication**

The student may create a professional publication for a variety of sources which may be peer reviewed (i.e., journal, poster, editorial) or non-peer reviewed (i.e., facility newsletter).

### **5. Advocacy or Public Relations Project**

The student designs an advocacy or public relations campaign designed to enhance services based on an identified need or issue related to occupational therapy.

### **6. Research Project**

The student may plan and/or complete part or all of a research project to meet the unique needs of the capstone site related to the knowledge base of occupational therapy.

### **7. Comprehensive Case Study**

For clinical specialty capstones, the student may design and implement occupational therapy intervention for one or more clients. Following intervention, the student would

complete a case study manuscript to highlight innovativeness and creativity throughout the occupational therapy process (i.e., evaluation to discharge). Mentor must be an occupational therapist.