

2008/2009 ADMISSIONS CYCLE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Fact Sheet MSc (OT) and MSc (PT) Programs

WHAT ARE THE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS?

1. A 4-YEAR baccalaureate degree (120 units/credits) or the equivalent (Applicants may apply in the 4th year of their degree. By June 30, 2009 the degree must be completed.)

2. A minimum average of B or 75% or 3.0/4 or 8/12 calculated over the last 60 units/credits of your university degree work is required for admission.

In addition, the MSc (PT) program requires:

- one half or full credit in a biological or life science course with a grade of B or higher
- one half or full credit in a social science or humanities course with a grade of B or higher

These pre-requisite courses can be presented from any level of your university academic study.

WHERE DOES AN APPLICANT GET AN APPLICATION?

Domestic applicants: (those who are either Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents in Canada.) Applicants apply via Compass Online Application Service through the Ontario Rehabilitation Sciences Programs Application Service (ORPAS), a division of OUAC in Guelph, Ontario. The online application service is located at:

<http://www.ouac.on.ca/orpas/>

The non-refundable ORPAS processing fee is CAD \$170.00 and the non-refundable McMaster institutional fee is CAD \$75.00.

International Applicants: (those who are NOT Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents in Canada.) Applicants apply directly to McMaster through the McMaster University School of Rehabilitation Science Admissions Office. The application material can be:

a) downloaded from the web site at: www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/rehab (choose International Students, click on Application Requirements) or

b) requested by mail from the OT/PT Admissions Co-coordinator, McMaster University, School of Rehabilitation Science, Room 402, 1400 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON L8S 1C7 Canada or

c) requested by e-mail at: otpt@mcmaster.ca

The non-refundable McMaster processing fee is CAD \$250.00 (money orders only), made payable to McMaster University and mailed to the McMaster University School of Rehabilitation Science, OT/PT Admissions Office.

WHAT IF MY FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH?

If your native language is not English, a TOEFL score of 600 (written) or 250 (computer) or 92 (iBT) is required. The only exception to this requirement is for those who have completed an entire university degree in either Canada, U.S.A, United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand. The TOEFL score must be sent directly from the TOEFL Centre to McMaster University (McMaster code: 0936, Department codes: OT- 44 and PT- 48.) Scores that are more than two years old are not valid.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS?

The Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University has a policy in place to facilitate the admission of aboriginal students. Aboriginal applicants must meet the same academic requirements (GPA, pre-requisites, etc.) as other domestic applicants. In addition, they must provide additional material to be sent directly to the School of Rehabilitation Science OT/PT Admissions Committee c/o Penny Salvatori, which includes a photocopy of their aboriginal status card and/or letter of verification of their aboriginal ancestry and/or affiliation from an official representative of the applicants First Nations, treaty, or community organization. Applicants who meet these criteria will be offered an interview.

CAN I USE MY COURSES FROM ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM OR APPLY AS A MATURE STUDENT?

No. The MSc (OT) and MSc (PT) Programs begin in the fall of year one and continue over two full years. All students must complete all courses and advance from semester to semester. There is no provision for transferring into the program or for the credit of previously studied courses.

HOW WILL THE PRE-ADMISSION GPA BE CALCULATED?

Domestic Applicants: A calculation will be completed by ORPAS based on an applicants final 60 units/credits of university academic study (i.e. equivalent of 10 full courses or 20 half courses) completed and final as of December 31st of the application year, and will include summer, part-time, intercession, on-line distance education, transfer courses, courses taken on an exchange program, failed university courses and degree courses taken beyond the four-year undergraduate degree. For applicants currently enrolled in the 4th year of a baccalaureate program, this calculation will start with the applicants final fall grades (completed as at December 31st) and will move back in chronological order based on the order of the courses listed on the transcript. Where grades must be extracted from a term to achieve the equivalent of 10 full courses, the average of that term (e.g. an applicants second year) will be used. For applicants who are enrolled in graduate degree study or have completed a graduate degree, the calculation will begin with the graduate work and move back in chronological order. GPAs based on graduate work will be assessed by the McMaster OT/PT Admissions office. Practicum courses and non-convertible grades (e.g. pass/fail) will not be included in this calculation. Ontario Bachelor of Education degrees will not be included or converted in the GPA calculations.

Permanent Residents: Academically eligible applicants with permanent residence status are considered Domestic applicants holding Canadian citizenship. If your

transcript contains university coursework taken from outside of Canada (other than from the U.S.A.), ORPAS will forward your application to the McMaster OT/PT Admissions Office for evaluation in collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies. (ORPAS will process the GPA for U.S.A. schools.) Foreign transcripts, therefore, do not need to be converted by the applicant. They will be assessed by the McMaster OT/PT Admissions office, based on an applicants final 60 units/credits of university academic study completed as of December 31st of the application year. The calculation will move back in chronological order, following the transcript, as described previously in the section for Domestic applicants.

International Applicants: International applicants submit all of their material to the McMaster OT/PT Admissions office for evaluation. In collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies, the GPA calculation will be completed by the McMaster OT/PT Admissions office. The calculation will be based on the applicant's final 60 units/credits of university academic study, moving back in chronological order, as described previously in the section for Domestic applicants. Foreign transcripts do not need to be converted by the applicant.

WHAT ARE THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM COURSE LENGTHS?

- A full term is September to April = 2 course lengths
- A half term is September to December OR January to April = 1 course length

HOW MANY APPLICANTS ARE THERE FOR HOW MANY PLACES?

In 2008 there were approximately 800 applicants in the Domestic stream for the OT program and approximately 1100 applicants for the PT program. We admit 64 students into each program yearly, including up to 6 positions in each program for International students.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT DEADLINE DATES FOR THE 2009 ADMISSIONS CYCLE?

International Applicants:

Applications will be accepted throughout the year. TOEFL results must be received before an interview will be considered. Applicants who are considered suitable candidates, based on the material submitted, will be invited to interview. Applications received by **January 9, 2009** will be considered for an interview at the end of April. Notification to all applicants who were interviewed will be sent on TBA.

WHEN ARE THE 2009 INTERVIEW DATES?

Domestic Applicants: Domestic interviews are held in Hamilton or Thunder Bay, according to the applicant's preference. Hamilton interviews for OT and PT applicants in 2009 are April 24, 25 and 26. Thunder Bay interviews are held at approximately the same time, generally for one day only.

International Applicants: OT and PT Interviews in 2009 are held in Hamilton on April 24, 25, and 26. All applicants are responsible for their own travel costs to and from the interview. If invited, in-person interviews are mandatory in order to continue consideration for admission. Failure to attend will result in an automatic withdrawal from the applicant pool.

WHAT IS PBL AND HOW DOES IT WORK AT McMASTER?

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an educational approach that contends that knowledge is best remembered in the context in which it is learned, and that acquisition and integration of new knowledge requires activation of prior knowledge (Schmidt, 1983). In contrast to the common approach of using a problem for application after learning has taken place, problem-based learning requires that the learner encounter a problem first as the initial stimulus for learning (Barrows, 1980; Branda, 1990). The learner thus becomes actively involved in the learning process, can shape it to meet personal needs based on prior knowledge and experience, can engage in independent study appropriate to his/her unique learning style, and can integrate information from many sources, including student peers, into a construct for use in dealing with future problems.

The essential characteristics of a PBL health profession curriculum are outlined by Walton and Matthew (1989) as follows: an organization of content around problems rather than disciplines, an integrated curriculum rather than one separated into basic sciences and clinical sciences components or “traditional” courses, and an inherent emphasis on cognitive skills or “process” as well as on knowledge of “content”. Practice-based client scenarios or professional issues serve as the “problems” in the curriculum, and are designed to meet specific program goals and objectives. Clinicians are useful resources in this regard, and often help to develop the paper “problems” for tutorial learning by providing information on clinical practice. As students explore the problems, they gain the profession-specific and generic knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours required for entry to professional practice and for continuing growth throughout a lifetime of professional activity.

Small group tutorials provide an excellent forum for problem-based learning to occur. Students, with the guidance of a faculty facilitator/tutor, meet once or twice weekly (depending on the semester and course) to explore client scenarios using a problem solving process. This process helps students develop clinical reasoning and decision making skills for future practice. The process involves 7 basic steps: 1) identify the problem; 2) explore pre-existing knowledge; 3) generate hypotheses; 4) identify learning issues; 5) research and self-study; 6) sharing and discussion of new knowledge and insights; and 7) assessment and reflection on learning. The role of the faculty tutor is to foster learning by asking questions, stimulating critical thinking, challenging students’ point of view, providing feedback, and evaluating student performance. Students are encouraged to think and discover during the learning process, not just to memorize facts.

Problem-based learning is also consistent with self-assessment and self-directed learning in that students determine their own learning needs in a given learning situation, develop specific learning objectives, determine how best to achieve those objectives and what learning resources to use, measure their learning progress, and finally evaluate learning outcomes.

HOW IS ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMS DETERMINED?

The admission process considers academic achievement, personal qualities and experience.

Domestic Applicants: All eligible applicants to both the OT and PT programs are ranked solely on the basis of their GPA for an interview invitation. Approximately 300 of the top ranked applicants to each of the programs are invited for a personal interview. It is impossible to accurately predict how competitive the applicant pools are from year to year, however, the cut-off GPA for an interview invitation for the last 2 years was 3.62 and 3.64 for PT and 3.45 and 3.49 for OT.

All applicants who are interviewed are ranked on a combination of their pre admission GPA and their interview scores to determine the final ranking for offers of admission. We admit 64 students to each of the OT and PT programs, including up to 6 positions in each for International students. The final approval of applicants for admission will be granted by the Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies.

International Applicants: Applicants who are considered suitable candidates, based on their application material, will be invited to an interview. Successful interview candidates (based on pre-admission GPA and personal interview) will be recommended for offers of admission. Enrolment is limited to six international places in each of the OT and PT programs. The final approval of applicants for admission will be granted by the Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies.

HOW IS DEFERRAL OF ADMISSION VIEWED?

According to the policy of the School of Graduate Studies, deferral of admission is not granted. Applicants are advised to apply to the OT and PT programs during the year that they are able to attend.

IF I HAVE BEEN REFUSED BEFORE, SHOULD I BOTHER APPLYING AGAIN?

Applicants are invited to re-apply. Applications from one year are not held over to another year. Each application is considered as a new submission.

IF I AM NOT ACCEPTED THIS TIME, HOW MAY I IMPROVE MY APPLICATION FOR THE FUTURE?

Generally, applicants choose to continue university course work to upgrade and improve their marks. An understanding of the learning environment and the professions is important and can be accessed through articles on problem-based, self-directed learning, as well as through our annual Information Sessions held in the fall of the year.

WHAT IS THE TUITION FEE AND RELATED COST FOR THE PROGRAMS?

Domestic Applicants: The tuition fees are approximately \$7500.00 per year plus incidental fees of approximately \$600.00.

International Applicants: The tuition fees are approximately CAD \$25000.00 per year plus incidental fees of approximately \$600.00.

In addition, books/equipment/photocopying are about \$1600.00 per year, living costs about \$14,000.00 per year and placement fees, including in-transit placement fees, are approximately 2000.00 per year.

ACCEPTANCE FEE

Applicants being offered admission must complete the online offer of acceptance to McMaster University and pay a non-refundable deposit fee (acceptance fee) of CAD \$500.00 by credit card online by the offer deadline date. This fee will be deducted from the tuition following registration and entry into the program.

IS THERE ANY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?

Yes! Please see enclosed FAST FACTS – AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES sheet.

CAN I WORK DURING THE TWO YEARS?

The Programs we offer are intensive and demanding. Each student has a personal method of time management and varying priorities. Most students in these programs find it difficult to manage part-time employment.

WILL ALL MY CLINICAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS BE IN HAMILTON?

Placement procedures are different for the two programs. The catchment for McMaster University goes beyond the City of Hamilton and although students are entitled to select preferences, there is no guarantee that their choices will be satisfied. Both programs offer a Northern Studies Stream (NSS) option in collaboration with Lakehead University. Approximately 1/2 of the students in each of the two programs will be able to participate in Clinical Education in Northwestern Ontario.

WHAT IS THE EMPLOYMENT RATE OF GRADUATES?

The employment rate of graduates from the School of Rehabilitation Science after graduation approaches 100 percent. Graduates of the OT and PT programs have obtained jobs in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, chronic care facilities, nursing homes, schools, industry, home care programs, mental health facilities, private clinics and rehabilitation companies. Employers consistently rate McMaster OT and PT graduates highly. Examples of employers statements include: McMaster grads bring a unique set of skills to the work place even as new grads. They take on tasks and know how to find the resources they need to get a job done.

HOW MUCH WILL I MAKE AS A PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONER?

Applicants are recommended to call the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists at (613) 523-2268 and/or the Canadian Physiotherapy Association at (613) 564-5454 to acquire current information for salaries in various sectors of the professions. The respective website for CAOT (<http://www.caot.ca>) and/or CPA (<http://www.physiotherapy.ca>) may also provide salary information.

ASSUMING I AM ACCEPTED, MAY I GET HELP FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE?

The McMaster University Off-Campus Housing office and the International Students Advisors office may assist in arranging accommodation close to the university. You may find information on housing via the website: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/> by selecting one of the two office options mentioned above. In addition, the OT/PT Admissions office attempts to assist by collecting accommodation suggestions recommended by present OT/PT students in the programs. These suggestions are offered specifically to incoming OT/PT students and include a list of those seeking OT/PT housemates. To take advantage of this service and/or include your name for fellow students, contact otpt@mcmaster.ca in the summer. The available listings will be posted and updated on our website at: www.srs-mcmaster.ca, then click Current Students. "Housing for OT and PT" appears under Admissions Topics.