

Welcome to the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) application site!

At UTEP, we prepare future occupational therapists to be leaders, innovators, and advocates for the communities they serve. Located on the vibrant U.S.–Mexico border, our program offers a distinctive educational experience grounded in occupational therapy’s core values, cultural richness, community engagement, and evidence-based practice.

Choosing the right occupational therapy program is an important step in your professional journey. At UTEP, you will join a dynamic, supportive learning environment designed to foster your growth as a clinician, scholar, and change agent in healthcare.

Why Choose UTEP OTD?

A Strong Foundation in Occupation-Based Practice

At the heart of our program is a commitment to occupation-based practice—the foundation of the profession. Students learn to use meaningful, everyday activities as both the focus and method of intervention. This approach prepares graduates to promote health, well-being, and quality of life by helping individuals and communities engage in the occupations that matter most. Our curriculum ensures that occupation remains central to clinical reasoning, intervention, and outcomes across all practice settings.

A Distinctive, Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Our program is uniquely positioned in one of the most culturally diverse regions in the country. You will graduate prepared to deliver culturally responsive, client-centered care across a wide range of populations. UTEP is the *only entry-level occupational therapy program in the United States that requires Spanish coursework*, equipping graduates with highly marketable skills to serve bilingual and diverse communities nationwide.

Hands-On Learning in Meaningful Community Contexts

From the start of the program, students have the opportunity to engage in applied learning opportunities through service-learning and field experiences in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. These experiences provide meaningful exposure to underserved populations and strengthen your ability to deliver impactful, occupation-centered care in real-world settings.

Strong Emphasis on Evidence-Based Practice and Research

Our curriculum is designed to develop critical thinkers and lifelong learners. Students complete a robust sequence of research coursework, culminating in a faculty- and community-mentored research project. UTEP students consistently present at the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) national conference—demonstrating the strength and visibility of our program.

Career-Ready Training

The program includes six semesters of rigorous didactic coursework followed by immersive experiential learning, including two 12-week Level II fieldwork rotations and a 14-week doctoral capstone experience. Graduates are well-prepared to transition into practice and excel in diverse healthcare settings.

Exceptional Value and Affordability

UTEP is consistently recognized for its affordability, offering one of the most cost-effective occupational therapy doctoral programs in the country. Students benefit from a high-quality, accredited education with a strong return on investment, minimizing financial burden while maximizing career opportunities after graduation.

High Demand for UTEP Graduates

UTEP and the College of Health Sciences are experiencing rapid growth, and our graduates are highly sought after locally, across Texas, and nationwide. Employers value the advanced clinical skills, cultural competence, and adaptability that define UTEP OTD graduates.

Your Path to Practice

Graduates of the UTEP OTD program are eligible to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) examination. Successful completion of this exam allows graduates to pursue licensure and practice as occupational therapists across the United States.