

OT Department Cross Cultural Experience Requirements and Process

The intent of the Occupational Therapy Cross-Cultural Experience is to provide students with in-depth involvement in a culture different from one's own. Cultural exploration includes gaining knowledge of the distinctive values, traditions, beliefs of a particular population/society. The overall goal for the experience is to gain cross-cultural and cross-national insight into the political, social, cultural and economic factors that influence the provision of occupational therapy either within or outside of the U.S. and define the role of occupational therapy within the system of care.

There are multiple pathways to earn Cross Cultural Experience credits for the MSOT or OTD degrees:

1. Finland Semester Exchange Programs (offered spring semester of MS program, first year only) (15 units)*
2. SJSU Faculty-Led Programs (FLP), including the ones offered by OT faculty OCTH 210ITL (3 units). The FLP must be upper division or graduate level - a 100 level or above course # and must have a health-related focus. These courses also meet the Departmental elective course required of all OT Department degrees.
3. Short Study Abroad to Netherland Utrecht. – also meets Departmental elective course requirement.
4. Completion of a SJSU College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) international experience requirement as a part of bachelor's degree major requirements at SJSU (completed in 2018 or more recently). These international/cross-cultural experiences were previously required in all CHHS degree programs and involved participation in an FLP or other CHHS approved alternative experiences. Submission of petition verifying this experience is required, along with informal transcript showing course/FLP take as undergraduate. *
5. OCTH 298 (1-unit independent study) (CR/NC)

This course is available for those students who have NOT completed the options listed above. Students can meet the OT Department's cross-cultural experience requirement in the following ways: have a petition approved that describes a current international experience; prior international experience within the last seven years; or domestic cross-cultural experience. The petition (using the Dept's fillable form) must be approved by the OT Department prior to taking this course. This petition is available through your advisor and on the OT Department website. This one-unit independent study course will include readings and reflection assignments designed to meet independent study goals. The petition will identify a current/prior international experience or domestic proposed site/combination of sites and cultural events/experiences meeting the following requirements: 1) provides exposure to a culture different from one's own, 2) and a culture with which one has no or limited prior exposure and 3) a setting in which one has direct interaction with the population. Students must be onsite/engaged with others for a minimum of 25 hours total. Cross-cultural experiences may include student-to-student contacts around the world, domestic cross-cultural experiences, and important festivals or community events. Be advised that exclusively attending festivals is not sufficient cultural immersion. Students must have their hours verified by the site(s) and checked off by the course instructor. *

*Students using options 1, 4 or 5 will also be required to take the OCTH 210 elective (2 units) offered by the OT Department or another approved elective (relevant to occupational therapy) upper division course (2+ unit).

Submit your petition to the OT Department Office: occupationaltherapyadmin@sjsu.edu

Be sure to write "Cross-Cultural Experience Petition" in the subject line of the email.