

Review of Doctorate in Occupational Therapy

This is a proposed doctoral degree in Occupational Therapy (OT). The degree proposal is well-written and it addresses all issues required of a proposal of this kind. There are however a number of concerns/question:

- It is not clear why OT practitioners need to be doctorally prepared. The fact that only 69% are may not necessarily lead to the validation of this argument but instead to the counter-argument that it is not necessary to have OT practitioners be doctorally prepared. So, in the end it is an issue of whether one “buys” the argument that in every profession one needs to have a Ph.D. to accomplish anything. Certainly nothing in this proposal makes it clear why OT practitioners need to be doctorally trained.
- The connection to research, traditionally the main reason for obtaining a doctoral degree, is not clearly articulated. The connection to the fact that doctorally trained OT’s can obtain advance faculty positions and be able to participate in translational research, is not fully developed.
- The curriculum is not strong in preparing someone to participate in any kind of experimental research. The minimum of two statistical courses provided as “possible electives” even if they were required, would not elevate someone to be able to perform translational (or, for that matter, any kind of quantitatively sound research). Thus, the research aspect of this degree is not well made.
- Evidence of the labor market no clear and the assumption that, with greater demand of entry-level practitioners there will be demand for doctorally trained practitioners is not an immediate “leap”. This is the case in the majority of other evidence of labor-market need provided in the proposal. So that argument (as well all the others presented here) is not effective.

On the positive side, this degree does not appear to cost much to the School. Most courses will be taught by adjuncts (it would be informative to see whether they are doctorally trained) so if the expected enrollment does not materialize, there will not be any adverse impact on the School. No capital investments are needed, so this degree does not appear to have a significant financial downside. The disappointing part of this proposal is that it is not as focused and the emphasis on research appears to be an afterthought.