# Transcript

00:00:03 Announcer

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

00:00:10 Sofia Perez

Therapy is a growing career field with a need for trained professionals. Dr. Ashley Carden is an associate professor of OT at Missouri State University. She also works in the neonatal Intensive Care unit as a certified neonatal therapist. Missouri State currently has two OT programs, the OT Masters degree and the post professional OT Doctorate in the fall of 2024, they will be welcoming their first cohort for the entry level OT. Cardin discusses these different OT program offerings and the importance of the programs to the Ozarks region.

00:00:42 Dr. Ashlea Cardin

Occupational therapy is considered a dual entry profession, meaning you can either have a master's degree or an entry level doctorate to sit for your national boards, your exam, and then begin practicing. There is no salary difference job descriptions are the same it's just staying an extra year to pursue an individual capstone experience and to get a little bit more education from research and teaching perspective. And so, it really depends on what the goal is for the students. If they would like to pursue occupational therapy, get into practice sooner, you might go the master's track. If you're interested in staying on for another year and getting some specialization in a certain area and pursuing a final capstone experience, you would choose the entry level doctorate. But both places land you as sitting for your board so that you can then become an occupational therapist.

00:01:34 Sofia Perez

Missouri State’s fully-online, post professional OT doctorate program launched this fall. This program allows the working OT professional to advance their career.

00:01:42 Dr. Ashlea Cardin

So, this program is for occupational therapists and so again, people who have already gotten their occupational therapy degree. They've been in practice for a year or more and they've decided that they want to go back to get a post professional clinical doctorate to advance their skills, either in a certain specialty area or to prepare them for teaching at the graduate level or to pursue research, or if they're finding themselves being led into administrative positions, this would give them a chance to refine those skills and learn about leadership, especially from an occupational therapy standpoint. It is important that we brought the post professional occupational therapy doctorate to Missouri State for several different reasons. We are going to offer the only program in the area that said it is fully online as the need for occupational therapists continues to grow. The need for occupational therapy educators also continues to grow with this degree. This would help prepare you and make you eligible to, either in a Master's program or in an entry level doctoral program, or a post professional doctoral program. Also, we see occupational therapists moving into more and more areas that are considered emerging practice, and so we're seeing more occupational therapists specialize in rural health, oftentimes in emerging practice areas. We're asking those who are leading to be change agents and so being part of a post professional doctoral program, allows occupational therapists to enhance their skills. Build on their practice or positions them to be those change agents and those leaders in new and emerging practice areas. An additional reason is that we see more and more occupational therapists going into private practice of post professional doctoral degree would allow you to take additional marketing and business classes. You could also get a specialty certification like in a teaching track or in a business track so that you can hone those skills and be better prepared to enter the workforce as perhaps an entrepreneur.

00:03:43 Sofia Perez

Cardin explains what sets the OT programs at Missouri State apart from other programs across the country.

00:03:48 Dr. Ashlea Cardin

What I love about Missouri State is that we continue to offer huge value and excellent outcomes for the price for one of the lowest price programs in the country, but we continue to have 100% graduation rate and NBCOT pass rate. And employment rate post-graduation. And so, we're very proud of that. And so, you're getting a lot of value for the price we are so proud of the program at Missouri State because it is so tightly woven into the public affairs mission into the pillars of the university, our faculty are passionate about community engagement they're passionate about service. We're passionate about cultural humility and becoming ethical leaders in the community. If students find themselves drawn to the public affairs mission of the university, know that that's woven into our program and that's a very important piece. I think what makes all our programs here at Missouri State unique is that the faculty are also still practicing clinicians. So, we're still out in the field. I'm still putting on scrubs and clocking in on Thursday nights at the hospital. I'm still going out and seeing clients. We all still see clients that life experience brings a unique aspect to teaching because we're still plugged in as clinicians, we really enjoy having our students with us. And so, we try our hardest to take our students out into the field. I just had thirty students out at a rural health clinic in Seymour last week, and we were talking about, you know, what does rural OT look like compared to outpatient in a hospital? So, we really try to get our students engaged, and I'm super proud of that.

00:05:14 Sofia Perez

That was Doctor Ashley Cardin. I'm Sofia Perez for the Missouri State Journal.

00:05:18 Announcer

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397, the Missouri State Journal is available online@ksu.org.