



keep

February 12, 2021

Dr. Christopher Blake  
President  
Middle Georgia State University  
100 University Parkway  
Macon, GA 31206-5145

Dear Dr. Blake:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive change:

**Significant Departure Program**

**Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (M.S.O.T.)**

Submission date:

**9/25/2020**

Intended Implementation date:

**7/1/2022**

Case ID:

**SC011916**

The 74 credit hour Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (M.S.O.T.) degree program, which is consistent with the mission of Middle Georgia State University, will prepare entry-level occupational therapists to provide holistic care for individuals, families, and populations in the Middle Georgia region. It is designed as a bridge program that will allow licensed Occupational Therapy Assistants holding an associate degree to advance their careers by completing a master's degree in two years. Courses will be delivered primarily through distance education instruction, which will be combined with face-to-face labs, practical skills examinations, and clinical fieldwork experiences. The expected initial enrollment is 15 students, with administrative oversight provided by the Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Science and the Program Director. The program was approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents on April 16, 2019.

A comprehensive list of all other programs offered by the University was provided, as well as a list of approved off-campus instructional sites. The curriculum, course descriptions, and student learning outcomes were included. Admission and graduation requirements for the program, along with the definition of a credit hour, were also noted. Student learning will be assessed through a variety of means in compliance with Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards such as case studies, fieldwork assignments, and research projects. The M.S.O.T. program will also be integrated into the University-wide institutional effectiveness process, which was described in detail. This annual process involve the systematic collection, review, and use of assessment data for continual improvement of teaching and learning. In addition, each program is required to undergo a Comprehensive Program Review on a five-year cycle.



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The Faculty Roster describes the qualifications of two full-time faculty members who will support the Occupational Therapy program. One faculty member has a related master's degree and only teaches the undergraduate foundational courses. The other faculty member has a Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree and will teach the graduate courses. Both appear qualified for their teaching assignments. Qualifications for two future faculty members to be hired were also provided and appear appropriate. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications is the responsibility of the peer review teams who will assess the faculty as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

Library and learning resources appear to be adequate. The Middle Georgia State University Library system has an extensive collection of print and electronic resources that support the occupational therapy curriculum. This collection includes books/e-books, journals, and databases. A list of discipline-specific resources was provided. Students may access items in person from any campus location, or online from the Library website. Additional external resources are available through GALILEO (Georgia Library Learning Online) cooperative borrowing arrangements and interlibrary loans. Library staff provide reference and research assistance through group orientation sessions, individual consultations, LibGuides, and online LibWizard tutorials. A dedicated Graduate Studies Librarian and resource materials are also embedded within the Brightspace learning management system.

Student support services appear to be adequate and are available to all students, regardless of location. Services may be accessed in person or remotely via telephone, Skype, and email. Along with standard academic services such as financial aid, student records, and admissions, the University provides additional support through academic advising, career development, and testing. The Office of Career Services offers self-assessments, resume writing assistance, interview preparation, and job search support. Computer workstations are available for student use at the Mathematics Academic Resource Center, the Writing Center, and the Student Success Center. The University also offers cultural, social, and recreational programs plus leadership opportunities through the Graduate Student Advisory Committee and student government.

The physical resources appear to be adequate. The proposed M.S.O.T. program will be housed in existing facilities on the Cochran, Macon, and Warner Robbins campuses. These facilities include faculty office space and classrooms equipped with computers, projectors, screens, and Smartboards. Distance education instruction will be conducted through the existing Brightspace learning management system, which the University already has technical infrastructure in place to support. Technical support will be provided to students through online tutorials, the IT Help Desk, Technology Assistance Center, and designated Information Technology personnel.

Financial support for the program appears to be adequate; a projected four-year budget was provided. Expenses will include personnel, travel, supplies, and library resources. Revenues will come from student tuition and fees, plus reallocation of existing funds. The program is expected to be self-sustaining by the end of the fourth year of operation. A contingency plan is in place to cover costs in the event expected enrollment numbers are not achieved.



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The SACSCOC substantive change policy was revised in 2020. It includes many new requirements and changes to previous requirements. The *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* and learning resources are available on the substantive change webpage at [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org).

**The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (M.S.O.T.) degree program. It was the decision of the Board to approve the program and include it in the scope of the current accreditation.**

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. Stephanie L. Kirschmann at 404-679-4501 or via email at [skirschmann@sacscoc.org](mailto:skirschmann@sacscoc.org).

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW/SKO:lp

Enclosure (invoice with liaison's copy only)

cc: Dr. Kevin T. Cantwell, Associate Provost  
Dr. Stephanie L. Kirschmann