



TO: The Honorable Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: David H. Hamilton *David H. Hamilton*

SUBJECT: State University of New York at Buffalo: Authorization to Award the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (O.T.D.) degree

DATE: December 31, 2025

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Bellamy*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent)

Should the Board of Regents authorize the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) to confer the O.T.D. degree at the State University of New York at Buffalo?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State Statute.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its January 2026 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken.

Procedural History

At its meeting on December 17, 2024, the SUNY Board of Trustees authorized the State University of New York at Buffalo to confer the O.T.D. degree, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents. On December 19, 2024, the Department received the application to register the O.T.D. program in Post-Professional Occupational Therapy.

Background Information

Paragraph (f) of subdivision (2) of §355 of the Education Law authorizes the State University Board of Trustees:

To grant all degrees, diplomas and certificates which heretofore [i.e., July 1, 1948] have been granted or have been authorized to be granted upon the completion of courses of study in any state-operated institution which now is or hereafter may be in the state university, prior to the acquisition of such institution by the state university, and also such other degrees as the regents may hereafter specifically authorize them to grant.

Degree authorization is necessary as the award represents the State University of New York at Buffalo's first use of the O.T.D. degree title. Board of Regents approval of this authorization will allow the registration of acceptable programs leading to the O.T.D. degree.

State University of New York at Buffalo offers a dual degree program B.S./M.S. in Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy and a standalone M.S. in Occupational Therapy program. Currently, the institution is authorized to offer the following doctoral level degrees: Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.), Doctor of Law (J.D.), Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), Doctor of Audiology (AuD.), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.), Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Doctor of Nursing Science (D.N.S.), and Doctor of Social Welfare (D.S.W.).

Related Regent's Items

Not Applicable.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board of Regents authorize the SUNY Board of Trustees to award the O.T.D. degree on duly qualified students successfully completing the O.T.D. program in Post-Professional Occupational Therapy at the State University of New York at Buffalo, effective January 13, 2026.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Regents approve the degree authorization, the Department will register the program and the institution will proceed to recruit and enroll students.