The mission of the Department of Kinesiology is to create, interpret, transmit, and apply knowledge related to movement, exercise, and human occupation with the ultimate goal of enhancing human health, productivity, and quality of life. The M.S. and Ph.D. in kinesiology are available with research specialization (thesis or dissertation) in biomechanics, exercise physiology, exercise psychology, motor control and behavior, physical activity epidemiology, and occupational science.

The M.S. in kinesiology with the nonthesis option provides courses that cover the breadth of the kinesiology field and electives, and it may include a final project. This degree supports an interest in coaching/teaching (team or individual), personal training or fitness instruction, or it may supplement the practice of physical therapy, athletic training, or other allied health professions, or any individual purpose a student may have. No thesis is required.

The occupational therapy program resides in the Department of Kinesiology and offers two graduate professional programs, an entry-level master of science (MS–OT) and a post-professional doctor of occupational therapy (OTD). Occupational therapists interested in pursuing a Ph.D. may also apply to the occupational science track of the Ph.D. in kinesiology. The purpose of the graduate program is to prepare clinicians, researchers, and teachers who possess a solid foundation in both the theoretical and applied aspects of the disciplines of occupational therapy and science.

Graduate training in kinesiology can be directed toward the degrees of M.S. and/or Ph.D. in kinesiology. Both of these degrees combine advanced courses with the option of an intensive research experience. Department research facilities are well equipped, and faculty and graduate students have access to other specialized research facilities across campus. Faculty and graduate student research is currently supported by funding from the state and federal government, research foundations, and private industry. Faculty are affiliated with the Institute on Aging; Cardiovascular Research Center; Center for Neuroscience/Neuroscience Training Program; departments of Biomedical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Medicine, Neurology, Population Health Science, and Psychology; McPherson Eye Research Institute; Harlow Center for Biological Psychology; interdepartmental graduate program in Nutritional Sciences; Trace Research and Development Center; VA Geriatric Research and Education Center; Waisman Center; and Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute.