

Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant

The Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant Program at Eastern College - Halifax Campus has been accredited by the Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant Education Accreditation Program (OTA & PTA EAP) in collaboration with Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC) and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT). The status of Accreditation was granted to the program on April 30, 2014 for the period until April 30, 2020.

OUR MISSION

We pledge:

To offer a program of study that prepares the student for ethical practice and rigorous employment standards to meet workforce demand in the field of Occupational or Physiotherapy according to the national guidelines of practice set forth by the CPA and CAOT.

To develop partnerships with agencies, businesses and associations in the healthcare industry to facilitate clinical training, lifelong learning and social responsibility of faculty and students.

To participate in ongoing assessment of program outcomes, faculty effectiveness, student satisfaction and industry feedback to initiate improvement and strive for our goal of excellence in Occupational Therapy education.

To provide our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become gainfully employed as OTA/PTAs who effectively function under the supervision of a licensed therapist, and who are responsible, productive members of the health care community.

To instill value for lifelong learning and contemporary practice to maintain expertise in the OTA and PTA fields.

To provide a positive, non-discriminatory and supportive learning environment.

To support the faculty's commitment to being effective, ethical and caring educators and to further develop their expertise.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

With increasing numbers of aging people requiring assistance, along with those recovering from surgery,

health and chronic conditions, there is an increased need for those who assist occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Eastern College offers a diploma program to educate individuals who will work under the supervision of Occupational Therapists or Physiotherapists in the implementation of treatment programs. The program involves extensive theoretical education combined with practicum training with potential employers in hospitals, health units and private clinics. Students in this program will follow curriculum guided both by the currently identified functions, tasks, abilities and attitudes for entry-level, formally trained support personnel as defined by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists as well as by the competencies defined by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association for "Group One" physiotherapist support personnel.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

This program is designed to prepare students to enter the health care industry working in various settings as an occupational therapy assistant, a physiotherapy assistant or to perform elements of both roles under the supervision of a licensed Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, or both. Graduates may work in acute care, long term care or community care venues in either public or private settings.

PREREQUISITES

- Grade 12 or equivalent, or if none, Wonderlic test with a minimum score of 14
- Grade 12 level English and a science course (Biology, Chemistry or Physics)
- Current Criminal Record Check (Clear Conduct Certificate)
- Vulnerable Sector Search
- Completion of Eastern College's OPA Health and Fitness Waiver Form
- Exposure to the PT and OT field through one of the following:
 1. Written or recorded interviews with both an OT and a PT
 2. An essay outlining an understanding of both professions and reasons for choosing the OTA/PTA career

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Clear Conduct Certificates: Students acquiring a Clear Conduct Certificate for admission into a program take on the reasonableness of its validity. Students are solely accountable for any offences not uncovered by the investigation being discovered and precluding the student from subsequent field placement or employment.

Fieldwork Placement Requirement: Students will be required to complete the two-step Tuberculin Skin Test prior to the start of the program. On enrollment, the College will provide students with a detailed immunization form (based on Nova Scotia Health Authority standards) which must be completed prior to the stipulated start date of the fieldwork placement.

These immunizations are for the protection of the student as well as the clients they will be serving. Failure to obtain the required immunizations and submit the immunization form by the stipulated date may affect the student's ability to find a fieldwork placement, which in turn will impact the student's ability to complete program requirements for successful graduation.

Out of Town Field Placements: You may be required to go out of town for your field placement. You may incur additional costs associated with these field placements (i.e. travel, accommodations, etc.). At this time, field placements occur only in Canada.

Please note: Eastern College reserves the right to deny admission into this program based on an unpardoned criminal record that would bear relevance to the field placement requirements of the program. In addition, employers will be given a copy of the student's Clear Conduct Certificate on file prior to accepting students into the field placement situation.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student must obtain an overall grade, in each module of at least 70% in order to graduate and receive a diploma. A student must complete all requirements of the Student Success Strategies, Career Planning and Preparation modules, the Field Placement requirements, as well as meeting the attendance requirements as outlined by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education throughout the duration of his/her program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	
Course	Hours
Student Success Strategies	20
Career Planning & Preparation - Level I	20
Computer Fundamentals	40
Professional Skills for Health Care	80
Expository Writing	40
Current Social Issues for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant	40
Introduction to Rehabilitation and Interpersonal Skills	40
Human Anatomy, Physiology, Diseases/Disorders	120
Introduction to Occupational Therapy	40
PTA/OTA Administration and Program Support	20
Data Collection for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Assistants	20
Basic Patient Care, Functional Movement and Rehabilitation	80
Personal Fitness	40
PTA Therapeutic Techniques I – Musculoskeletal	60
PTA Therapeutic Techniques II – Modalities & Physical Agents	40
PTA Therapeutic Techniques III – Cardiac, Neurological, Respiratory and Specialty Areas	60
Physiotherapy in Mental Health	20
Advanced Interpersonal and Communication Skills	40
Group Intervention in Occupational Therapy	40
OTA Therapeutic Techniques for Older Adults	80
OTA Therapeutic Techniques for Children	60
OTA Therapeutic Techniques in Mental Health	40
Communication Disorders	20
Developmental Psychology and Functional Development across the Lifespan	40
PTA/OTA Integration and Advanced Practice	40
St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid/CPR Level C/WHMIS	20
Career Planning & Preparation - Level II	20
Professional Integration (Discussion Board)*	
Field Placement – Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant**	18 weeks
TOTAL WEEKS	77

* Runs concurrently with Field Placement

**Work terms/internships are scheduled for a minimum of 20 hours per week, but the total number of hours worked and the timing of hours scheduled are at the discretion of the employer/host to a maximum of 40 hours per week.

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

Instructor Led

In this orientation module, emphasis is placed on thinking about achieving success from Day One. This module stresses the importance of developing non-technical skills to enhance personal, academic, and career success. This includes understanding learning styles and honing practical study skills, such as memory, reading, note-and test-taking techniques. Personal exercises will focus on teamwork, decision making and problem solving skills, setting SMART goals and maintaining a positive attitude; techniques for managing change, stress and conflict will also be explored.

Career Planning and Preparation Level I

Instructor Led

This module introduces tools for planning and preparing for a successful job search, so that students can maintain a career-focused approach throughout their education program. Students will learn about the "Hidden" Job Market and ways to access it in their upcoming job search, how to research opportunities and network for industry contacts, and use appropriate etiquette when communicating with prospective employers. Students will identify their personal skills, values and preferences for the workplace, begin preparation of a professional resume and references, and organize proof documents for their career portfolio. Class discussions on various self-management topics introduced in Student Success Strategies will round out this module, which is a pre-requisite for Career Planning and Preparation - Level II.

An introduction to Occupational Health and Safety will also be discussed, specifically the definition of occupational health and safety; an individual's safety rights; responsibilities under Nova Scotia law; hazard identification and control; WHMIS, First Aid and fire safety requirements. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, and quizzes in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Software Lab: Computer Fundamentals

Instructor Facilitated

Through a combination of theory and hands-on-practice, this module examines the role and use of the computer in today's workplace. Emphasis is placed on those computers outfitted with the Microsoft Windows operating system. Students will review basic computer concepts, Windows OS usage, and complete hands-on training exercises in business-standard software applications, including Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Word. Keyboarding skills are also honed via daily keyboarding exercises and drills.

Professional Skills for the Health Care

Instructor Led

This module is designed to equip students with the skills necessary for success in today's health care environment. Topics covered include: which jobs require professionalism, definitions and key elements of professionalism, why professionalism is important to all involved in the health care environment, making a commitment to the job, how to contribute to the specialized workplace, working with others, and ensuring success in the field placement and career.

Expository Writing

Instructor Led

Writing and communication are an important part of every work environment. This course will help build the oral, written, and speaking skills for workplace success. Activities will include reading, class discussions, and lectures. Students will be asked to write an argumentative essay, process essay, and a research paper, while learning and applying principles of clear and correct writing to their own compositions. Students will strengthen and expand their writing skills so they can write more effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes.

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Current Social Issues for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant

Instructor Led

Issues such as population growth, forms of the family, organized religion, censorship and the status of women are treated from a sociological perspective. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing students' critical thinking and writing skills. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Introduction to Rehabilitation and Communication Skills

Instructor Led

This course introduces the student to the field of physiotherapy within the Canadian and Ontario healthcare systems. The course examines the role of the PT and the PTA within the healthcare team, discusses ethical and legal issues in physiotherapy, and examines the principles of cultural competence. The course also introduces students to effective verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills.

Human Anatomy, Physiology and Diseases/Disorders

Instructor Led

This course provides the student with an introduction to the structures and functions of the human body, with an emphasis on the musculoskeletal, neurological, cardiovascular and respiratory systems as they pertain to physiotherapy. Disorders of these systems are examined. The course also discusses other systems of the body, and how all systems function in the maintenance of homeostasis. Correct anatomical, medical and scientific terminology is taught throughout the course.

Introduction to Occupational Therapy

Instructor Led

This course introduces the student to the field of occupational therapy, with a focus on the role of the OT and OTA within clinical practice. Client-centered principles are explained and the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement is applied to daily activities. The code of ethics and standards that guide occupational therapy practice in Ontario are also examined. An overview of assessment and intervention as it applies to occupational therapy for cognitive and physical dysfunction is presented.

PTA/OTA Administration and Program Support

Instructor Led

The main purposes of this course are to prepare students to a) manage administrative activities that support effective service delivery, b) support the supervising therapist in applying an evidence-informed approach in their services, and c) engage in self-directed lifelong learning through the development of a specific learning plan. Students will practice administrative tasks such as scheduling and billing clients, documenting workload statistics, facilitating the use of equipment, supplies and inventory records, and searching for evidence regarding a clinical question. They will also have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning needs and develop a specific learning plan. In addition, in the context of effective client reception and scheduling, students will practice using a variety of strategies to prevent and resolve conflict.

Data Collection for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Assistants

Instructor Led

This course introduces students to data collection in physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Students will learn to safely and effectively apply a range of tests and outcome measures and will learn to accurately interpret, record and report results.

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Basic Patient Care Techniques, Functional Movement and Rehabilitation

Instructor Led

This course provides students with the basic knowledge and skills required to safely, effectively and efficiently implement interventions assigned by the physiotherapist or occupational therapist. The course begins with a review of the role of the PTA/OTA, an overview of basic medical terminology, and an introduction to reflective practice. This is followed by training in infection control, goniometry, and manual muscle testing. The rest of the course focusses on fundamental client care techniques including: posture and body mechanics, positioning and draping, basic bed mobility skills and transfer techniques, safe and effective use of gait aids, and therapeutic exercise.

Personal Fitness

Instructor Led

This module provides students with a fitness program that is accommodating to all fitness levels. It familiarizes students with the components of fitness and the proper training techniques for maximizing one's potential fitness level. Cardiovascular, flexibility, strength and endurance activities are considered as components of a personal fitness program.

PTA Therapeutic Techniques 1: Musculoskeletal

Instructor Led

This course prepares students to safely, effectively and efficiently implement interventions assigned by the physiotherapist to treat common musculoskeletal disorders. Students build on previous coursework to develop a deeper understanding of musculoskeletal pathologies and the use of therapeutic exercise and other interventions to support clients' function and mobility. In addition, through daily lab work and a challenging case study assignment, students integrate and apply the knowledge and skills developed in previous coursework such as those related to communication skills, teamwork, client-centered care and evidence-informed practice.

PTA Therapeutic Techniques 2: Modalities and Physical Agents

Instructor Led

This course prepares students to safely, effectively and efficiently apply modalities and physical agents. Students learn to ensure client safety by screening for contraindications and precautions and by participating in the maintenance and care of equipment. In addition, through daily lab work and a case study assignment, students integrate and apply the knowledge and skills developed in previous coursework, such as those related to communication skills and inter-professional collaboration.

PTA Therapeutic Techniques 3: Cardiac, Neurological and Respiratory Management and Specialty Areas

Instructor Led

This course prepares students to safely, effectively and efficiently implement interventions assigned by the physiotherapist to improve the mobility, health and well-being of clients with neurological, cardiac or respiratory conditions. The course emphasizes work with adults, but also addresses common pediatric conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida and cystic fibrosis. In addition, the course provides students with the basic knowledge and skills needed to work in specialty areas such as geriatrics, burns and vestibular rehabilitation.

Physiotherapy in Mental Health

Instructor Led

This course provides an overview of physiotherapy practice in mental health. Students will become familiar with major mental health disorders and the role of physiotherapy in the management of these illnesses. Through role play activities, students will practice strategies to interact effectively and sensitively with clients with mental health concerns, including responding appropriately to mental health emergencies. In addition, through group presentations, students will discuss the appropriate use of relaxation exercises in physiotherapy and practice administering these techniques.

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Advanced Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Instructor Led

This course is designed to give students the opportunity to practice the interpersonal and communication skills required to work effectively in a health care team. Through an experiential learning approach, students practice the following skills: leading teamwork, establishing team norms, setting team goals, resolving conflicts, building group cohesion, problem solving, and evaluating team performance. Engagement in and facilitation of effective verbal and nonverbal communication is explored.

Group Intervention in Occupational Therapy

Instructor Led

This course prepares students to assist in the design and delivery of group treatment programs in occupational therapy. Through interactive labs, students apply the principles of group intervention directly to their own experience, learn how to lead an occupational therapy group, and realize the potential benefits and challenges of group intervention. The stages of group development as well as various frames of reference related to group intervention are examined. Students also have the opportunity to write a group protocol for a client population of their choosing.

OTA Therapeutic Techniques for Older Adults

Instructor Led

This course prepares students to enable engagement in occupation with older adults. Topics covered include health promotion, age related disease processes, cultural diversity, splinting, seating systems, wheelchair mobility, and working with caregivers. Students develop skills to address physical and cognitive challenges that impact daily function in older adults. The role of the OTA in safely and efficiently implementing assigned service components within the occupational therapy process is examined. Students also apply evidence-informed research to occupational therapy intervention.

OTA Therapeutic Techniques for Children

Instructor Led

This course prepares students to enable engagement in meaningful activities of daily living with children and adolescents. Topics covered include typical and atypical development, developmental theories, diagnoses related to pediatrics, assessment tools, and interventions for children and adolescents regarding self-care, productivity and leisure. The concept of family-centred care is applied to the occupational therapy process. The role of the OTA in understanding and contributing to the occupational therapy plan, and in supporting the OT in service delivery is explored.

OTA Therapeutic Techniques in Mental Health

Instructor Led

In this course, students build on previous coursework by focusing on therapeutic use of self and activity as it applies to working with clients with psychiatric disorders. Topics covered include diagnoses and medication related to mental illness, and interventions with clients regarding performance of daily activities, education, work, leisure, and social participation. Students develop the skills needed to perform activity analysis, and to describe and respond to mental health symptoms.

Communication Disorders

Instructor Led

This course provides students with an overview of major speech and language problems that can impair a client's ability to communicate effectively. Students learn strategies to improve interactions with clients with communication disorders, and are introduced to common augmentative and alternative communication devices. This course also provides students with a basic understanding of swallowing and swallowing disorders.

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Developmental Psychology and Functional Development across the Lifespan

Instructor Led

This course introduces students to human development from infancy to old age. The main purpose is to prepare students to work effectively with clients in different age groups and to provide developmentally appropriate care. Students will become familiar with the major physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes throughout the lifespan, so they will be able to distinguish between typical developmental changes and those that are pathological in nature. Students will practice adapting an assigned physiotherapy or occupational therapy intervention for each major stage of development. In addition, this course will help students develop a more holistic view of the clients they will be working with, as well as gain insight into the developmental changes in their own lives.

PTA/OTA Integration and Advanced Practices

Instructor Led

In this course, students will consolidate the knowledge and skills they have developed throughout the program. Students will apply their problem solving, communication, inter-professional and practical skills in case studies, role plays and simulations. The course will provide students with the opportunity to enhance their existing clinical skills. In addition, advanced practical skills will be introduced.

St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid/CPR Level C/WHMIS

Instructor Led

This module introduces participants to intermediate first aid techniques and to Level C cardiopulmonary resuscitation. This training is ideal for medical workers and anyone requiring a strong foundation for future First Aid training.

Career Planning and Preparation Level II

Instructor Led

This module continues to build on the concepts and skills introduced in Career Planning and Preparation - Level I. Students will learn how to conduct an effective job search and identify various methods of applying for work with today's technology. Students will create a personal list of "Top Employers" and target current industry opportunities, while finalizing their professional resume, portfolio and career correspondence. Students will learn to identify the different types and forms of interviews, practice responding to typical questions, and practice follow-up, evaluation and negotiation techniques they can use to ensure success. Self-management topics from Career Planning and Preparation - Level I will be reviewed, with a focus towards on-the-job success in both learner placements and post-graduate employment.

Field Placement

Internship

In this combined program of study, efforts will be made to evenly divide Field Placements between the two disciplines. The Placements will be scheduled to ensure each student obtains a minimum of 150 hours' experience in occupational therapy and physiotherapy. Students are expected to attend each placement a minimum of 35 hours per week. Note: A Clear Vulnerable Sector Search is required prior to the start of the fieldwork placement. This will also be required to work in hospitals and government subsidized healthcare organizations such as long-term care facilities.

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