

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

With increasing numbers of aging people requiring assistance, along with those recovering from surgery, health and chronic conditions, the need has never been greater for occupational therapists, physiotherapists and their assistants. Eastern College offers a diploma program to educate assistants who will work under the supervision of Occupational Therapists or Physiotherapists in the implementation of treatment programs. The program provides 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 Physiotherapist Assistants.

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

1. Student has Grade 12 or equivalent or meets criteria for Mature Student Status.
2. Mature students must be 19 years of age, pass a qualifying test, and provide a Letter of Intent OR resume that supports their skills and aptitudes to be successful in the program.
3. The approved qualifying test for this program is the Wonderlic test. A passing score for this program is 13.
4. Student must provide a clear Criminal Record Check.

PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Completion of a standardized health form and immunizations must be completed prior to placement.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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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 Student Success Strategies as well as the field placement requirements.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

| Course | Hours |
|---|----------|
| Student Success Strategies | 20 |
| Career Planning & Preparation - Level I | 20 |
| Digital Literacy for Professionals | 40 |
| Professional Skills for Health Care | 80 |
| Professional Writing for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistants | 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 | 20 |
| Career Planning & Preparation - Level II | 20 |
| Field Placement – Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant | 18 weeks |

TOTAL WEEKS 77

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

In this orientation module, you will focus on achieving success from day one. You will develop non-technical skills to enhance your personal, academic, and career success. You will explore learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. You will also enhance your 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. You will also explore techniques for managing change, stress, and conflict.

Career Planning and Preparation Level I

This module will introduce you to and provide practice in using the tools required for a successful job search. The concepts covered in this module will help you maintain a career-focused approach throughout your studies so that you are better prepared to conduct a job search after graduating. Specifically, you will learn how to identify your soft and hard skills and how to articulate your abilities in a clear and concise Elevator Pitch that will appeal to employers and resonate with industry contacts. You will learn about the job search resources available to you including using career websites, creating Linked In profiles, accessing the “hidden” job market, and networking. You will examine sample resumes and cover letters and begin the process of creating your own professional resumes and cover letters that align with current conventions for content, organization, and formatting. You will also learn about the role of references, thank you letters, workplace philosophies, and strategies for success including maintaining a professional image and using proper etiquette when communicating with potential employers and industry contacts.

An introduction to Occupational Health and Safety is also provided with specific focus on employees’ rights and responsibilities, workplace health and safety policy and programs, hazard identification and control, and safety training options such as WHIMIS and First Aid.

Digital Literacy for Professionals

This course has four units that introduces you to the fundamental concepts and principles of learning and working in a digital environment. The first unit introduces you to using devices and handling information with topics on operating systems (Windows, MAC, and Linux), computer organization (folder management and naming conventions), cloud storage (including Microsoft OneDrive), types of web browsers including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari), and fundamental troubleshooting. In the second unit, you will become familiar with creating and editing information through learning about file formats (pdf, mp4, docx), productivity (including iWork and Microsoft Office Suite) and creativity (Adobe, Canva, iMovie) platforms, and basic introduction to Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. The third unit on communicating and collaborating will introduce you to web conferencing applications (Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams), mail applications (including Microsoft Outlook and Gmail), project management tools (Trello, Asana), and time management tools (including Todoist, Outlook Calendar, and iCal), and building rapport virtually. In the final unit, you will gain an understanding on netiquette, cybersecurity, and digital wellness. After completing this course, you will have enhanced digital literacy skills as a professional in the working and learning environment.

Professional Skills for Health Care

This module is designed to equip students with the skills necessary for success in today’s health care environment. Topics covered include: why 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 specialised workplace, working with others, working in teams, and ensuring success in field placement and career.

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Professional Writing for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistants

“The illusion of communication is that it has happened.”- George Bernard Shaw. Writing serves as the backbone of communication. This course prepares the OTPA student for professional written communication in the healthcare field, including communicating with patients and their families, healthcare professionals, community stakeholders, vendors, and the public. Students practice communicating with groups and individuals through assignments, class discussions, role-plays, and case studies. By the end of the course, students will be able to use the everyday writing skills most suited to the occupational therapy and physiotherapy fields.

Current Social Issues for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Assistant

In this course, a variety of current social issues, such as gender topics, cultural differences, race issues, poverty, etc. are examined from a sociological perspective. Students are encouraged to recognize a variety of perspectives on each issue addressed. Focus is on seeking understanding of both the larger sociological issues and the individual experience of each topic. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing students’ critical thinking and writing skills.

Introduction to Rehabilitation and Interpersonal Skills

This course introduces the student to the field of physiotherapy within the Canadian and Provincial 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 strategies. Several topics discussed in this course apply to OTA practice such as ethics, communication skills, cultural competence and professionalism.

Human Anatomy, Physiology and Diseases/Disorders

This course is designed to introduce the student to the structures and functions of the human body, with emphasis on the musculoskeletal, neurological, cardiovascular and respiratory systems, as they pertain to human movement, functional kinesiology, and rehabilitation. Disorders of the musculoskeletal, neurological, cardiovascular and respiratory systems encountered in physiotherapy and occupational therapy are discussed. The course also provides an overview of the other systems of the body. Correct anatomical, medical and scientific terminology are taught throughout the course.

Introduction to Occupational Therapy

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 the province 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

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.

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Data Collection for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Assistants

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.

Basic Patient Care Techniques, Functional Movement and Rehabilitation

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

This course will prepare students to develop personal fitness programs for low risk clients. Students will learn how to determine exercise risk and gather information on current fitness level. They will use this information to incorporate cardiovascular exercise, resistance training, and stretching into a safe and effective exercise program.

PTA Therapeutic Techniques 1: Musculoskeletal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this course, students build on previous coursework by focusing on therapeutic use of self, activity and environment, 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

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

Developmental Psychology and Functional Development across the Lifespan

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. Students will practice adapting an assigned physiotherapy or occupational therapy intervention for each major stage of development.

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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

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

The CPR component provides comprehensive CPR training to students. It includes the latest first aid and CPR guidelines and meets federal and provincial regulations for Standard First Aid and CPR. Topics include: preparing to respond; the EMS system; check, call, care; airway emergencies; breathing and circulation emergencies; first aid for respiratory and cardiac arrest; wound care; head and spine injuries; bone, muscle and joint injuries; sudden medical emergencies; environmental emergencies; and poisons. The WHMIS component teaches students the basic elements of WHMIS 2015 and the Global Harmonization System. This covers the safety measures and guidelines to be followed when exposed to or working with hazardous materials.

Career Planning and Preparation Level II

This module builds on concepts and skills introduced in the Career Planning and Preparation Level 1 prerequisite module. In this subsequent module, you will update and refine your resume and Linked In Profile. You will continue writing cover letters and learn the value of customizing cover letters to specific job postings. You will have the opportunity to apply this knowledge as you conduct a job search and write a cover letter tailored to an ideal job post. Through research, you will create a list of top employers and target current industry opportunities. You will learn about current methods for applying to job postings using technology. You will also gain an understanding of the job interview process, typical interview questions and possible responses, and expectations of both the interviewer and interviewee. In addition, you will engage in practical application of the interview process through role-plays. Topics such as negotiating salary, self-management, and on-the-job success for placements and post-graduate employment will be also covered.

Field Placement

On successful completion of the classroom hours of this program, students will be placed on field placement. The objective is to give students the “hands-on” skills necessary to be employed as a Physiotherapy Assistant or an Occupational Therapy Assistant. Students gain knowledge relevant to the technical and clerical aspects of the professions including identifying and ordering equipment and supplies, ensuring personal and client safety in the performance of assigned tasks, educating clients effectively and performing administrative tasks to support service delivery, under the direction of the mentor.