



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE



WELCOME

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) provides services, products, events and networking opportunities to assist occupational therapists in achieving excellence in their professional practice. In addition, the CAOT provides national leadership to actively develop and promote the client-centred profession of occupational therapy in Canada and internationally.

Be sure to visit our website (www.caot.ca) and our Internationally Educated Occupational Therapists Portal (www.gocanadaot.com). Here, you will find more information on the CAOT, occupational therapy in Canada and, more importantly, how to register to work as an occupational therapist in Canada.



Occupational Therapy in Canada

The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities that give meaning and purpose to their lives. Occupational therapists work in community agencies and health-care organizations such as hospitals, chronic care facilities and rehabilitation centres. Some occupational therapists work with clients within a specific age group or disability such as those with arthritis, mental illness or spinal cord injury.

Occupational therapy is a regulated profession in each of Canada's ten provinces. To work as an occupational therapist, you must be licensed or registered by the regulatory body in the province where you plan to work. In Canada's three territories, occupational therapy is not a regulated profession, but professional associations and employers have specific requirements for practising. A complete list of provincial and territorial regulatory bodies and associations can be found at www.gocanadaot.com.

Before You Come to Canada

While you are waiting to go to Canada, there are many important things you can do to improve your chances for success.

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office (www.credentials.gc.ca) is an organization of the Government of Canada that provides you with helpful resources such as the *Planning to Work in Canada?* workbook and the Working in Canada Tool (www.workingincanada.gc.ca). Use these resources to find and collect important information and to develop your job-search plan.

If your occupational therapy education was completed in a language other than English or French, there may be certain language requirements set out by the provincial regulatory body to work as an occupational therapist. Make sure you know these requirements. If you need to improve your language skills, start before you come to Canada. You can find information at www.language.ca.

Your official education, work and identity documents are important. It is much easier for you to gather and organize your documents while still in your home country. Carefully review the requirements of the provincial regulatory body to determine which documents are required and which parts of the registration process you can start while still in your home country.

Verify the translation requirements. In some cases, you will have to use a professional translation service in Canada.

Becoming an Occupational Therapist in Canada

Register with the regulatory body in the province where you plan on working as you must meet their specific requirements. If you plan on working in one of Canada's territories, contact their association for details on work requirements.

1. Credential Review

Your education will be assessed to ensure that it is comparable to Canadian standards. Visit the website of the provincial regulatory body to determine how to submit your education documents.

www.cic.gc.ca

It is important for you to learn about the steps you need to take to get your credentials and qualifications recognized in Canada. Citizenship and Immigration Canada also recommends that you review the resources on our website for helpful information about the immigration process and living in Canada.

2. National Certification Examination

This CAOT-administered examination tests your knowledge of Canadian standards of occupational therapy theory, intervention and professional behaviour. The examination is required by most provincial regulatory bodies to register to work as an occupational therapist. The national certification examination is not required for occupational therapists who work in the province of Quebec, which has its own requirements.

The national certification examination is offered twice a year at sites across Canada. Make sure you know all the important dates, fees and required documents to write this examination. More information on the examination, the eligibility requirements and the registration process is available at www.caot.ca.

3. Other Requirements

Regulatory bodies may have other requirements to work as an occupational therapist. Check the requirements of the province in which you wish to work. Additional requirements may relate to practice currency, professional liability insurance, language, immigration status and membership in the CAOT.

Finding a Job in Canada

There is a demand for occupational therapists in each province and territory. However, finding your preferred job may take a while. You should take time to research job openings and develop a plan for finding work. In Canada, occupational therapists are self-employed or employed in many different places, including hospitals, schools, the work place, rehabilitation centres, private clinics, nursing homes, community programs and the homes of clients.

The Internationally Educated Occupational Therapists Portal (www.gocanadaot.com) has a section called “Help Finding Employment” which provides employment information and resources.

Investigate any “bridging programs” for which you may be qualified. A bridging program offers work experience or skills or language upgrading courses to assist internationally trained individuals in their progress toward professional certification.

Before you begin to work, it may be necessary to obtain professional liability insurance, available from the CAOT.

Provincial Regulators

College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia
www.cotbc.org

Alberta College of Occupational Therapists www.acot.ca

Saskatchewan Society of Occupational Therapists
www.ssot.sk.ca

College of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba
www.cotm.ca

College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
www.coto.org

Ordre des ergothérapeutes du Québec www.oeq.org

New Brunswick Association of Occupational Therapists
www.nbaot.org

College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia
www.cotns.ca

Prince Edward Island Occupational Therapists
Registration Board www.peiot.org

Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Therapy Board
www.nlaot.ca

Additional Resources

National Certification Examination Webinar
www.caot.ca/webinar/index.html

Citizenship and Immigration Canada www.cic.gc.ca

Service Canada www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Foreign Credentials Referral Office www.credentials.gc.ca

