



Ontario Society of
Occupational Therapists

New Graduate Resource

May 2023



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01

Certification Exam

01 | CERTIFICATION EXAM

ABOUT THE NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CERTIFICATION EXAM (NOTCE)

- Administered by CAOT (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists)
 - Registration, payment, and exam results are accessed through your CAOT account
- Must have a passing grade (70%) to practice with a general license in Ontario
- Format: 2 parts, 2 hours each, each having 100 multiple-choice questions (4 hours, 200 questions total)
- Registration deadlines and exam locations can be found on the [NOTCE website](#)
- [NOTCE FAQs](#)

Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offered 3 times a year• April, September, & December
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-person computer based exam at a writing centre• OR online exam from home with live remote proctoring
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian graduate of an approved occupational therapy education program• Confirmation email of completion of your program sent from your university to the NOTCE department before your exam day

01 | CERTIFICATION EXAM

PREPARATION

- [Study resources](#) published by CAOT
 - [NOTCE Resource Manual](#) (free)
 - [NOTCE Online Prep Class](#)
 - [NOTCE Study Guide and Practice Exam](#) (paid)
- Request testing accommodations
 - Complete Form A through the NOTCE registration process
 - Provide supporting documents ([Form B](#) or a letter from your university or your religious leader)

RESULTS

- Uploaded to your CAOT profile 6-8 weeks after your exam date
- If you do not pass, you can request a few options:
 - Reconsideration (free)
 - Appeal (paid)
 - Manual rescore (paid)
- You are allowed 3 attempts to pass the NOTCE



02

Registering with
the College

02 | REGISTERING WITH THE COLLEGE

To use the title ‘occupational therapist’ and practice in Ontario, you must [register with the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario \(COTO\)](#)

PROVISIONAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

- You are allowed to practice before passing the certification exam if you fulfill the following:
 - Register with COTO and meet all their [general registration requirements](#)
 - Register for the next available sitting of the NOTCE
 - Have an offer of employment where you will be supervised by an occupational therapist who has held general registration for at least one year
 - Submit a completed [Provisional Registration Supervision Agreement](#)
- After you pass the NOTCE, you will be eligible for the General Practising Certificate of Registration
 - If you fail, your provisional license can be extended once until the next available exam date
- **More info:** [Provisional Registration](#)

02 | REGISTERING WITH THE COLLEGE

USE OF TITLE AFTER GRADUATION (More info: [COTO Standards for Use of Title](#), [Quick Reference Tool](#))

Type of registration	Can use title 'Occupational Therapist'	Can use designation 'OT Reg. (Ont.)	Can state you have a MScOT degree
Not registered with COTO	X	X	✓
Waiting for provisional registration status	X	X	✓
Waiting for general registration status	X	X	✓
Obtained provisional registration status	✓	✓	✓
Obtained general registration status	✓	✓	✓



03

Professional Liability Insurance

03 | PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

COTO requires you to have proof of Professional Liability Insurance (PLI) to register and practice as an occupational therapist in Ontario

WHAT DOES PLI COVER?

[OSOT's PLI plan](#) includes:

- Sexual Abuse Therapy and Counseling Fund Endorsement (required by COTO)
- Professional Liability Protection for Errors and/or Omissions
- Legal Expense Reimbursement
- Cyber and Privacy Liability
- Virtual Care/Telepractice (conditions apply)
- Support personnel and students

PLI plans are also offered by [AON](#) and [CAOT](#), all approved by COTO



04

Finding a job

04 | FINDING A JOB

JOB SEARCH

- Occupational therapy is a steadily growing profession in Ontario and across Canada
- Search for jobs that fit your strengths, skills, qualifications, and interests
- Research the companies you are interested in
- **Job posting sites**
 - [OSOT](#)
 - [CAOT](#)
 - [Government of Canada](#)
 - [Indeed](#)
 - [Glassdoor](#)
- **Expected wages and job prospects**
 - [OSOT Member Profile Report \(2020\)](#)
 - [Government of Ontario Labour Market Information](#)
 - [Canadian Occupational Projection System \(2022-2031\)](#)

04 | FINDING A JOB

PREPARING YOUR RESUME (More info: [Healthcare resume tips](#))

- Customize your resume and cover letter to match the job description and company
 - Tell them what drives you, what your interests and passions are
 - Explain why you are a good fit based on your experiences, skills, and knowledge
- Highlight your accomplishments/experiences in reverse chronological order (set a 2-page limit)
 - Proofread!
- **Important headings**
 - Name/contact information, professional summary/objective, skills (soft/hard), education and certifications, work experience, clinical placements, volunteer work, research
- **Before you apply...**
 - Ensure your LinkedIn profile is also updated
 - Check that your online presence is clean
 - Have a [professional email](#) (e.g., firstname.lastname@domain.com)
- You only need a CV if you plan to pursue a role in academia

04 | FINDING A JOB

INTERVIEWING

- **Preparation**
 - Do your research to understand the organization and the job you are applying for
 - Think of specific, detailed examples and structure them to tell a coherent story
 - STAR (situation, task, action, result/reflection)
 - CAR (context/challenge, action, results)
- **Common types of questions**
 - Behavioural
 - Scenario/situational (apply the CPPF!)
 - Technical/competency
 - General
- **Questions to ask employers**
 - When they expect to hire, onboarding process, supports available for employees
 - Expectations for team members, hours, what a typical day/week looks like
 - Departments you will be working with, mentorship opportunities,
 - Core values of the company, qualities required to succeed
- [Preparing for a Job Interview as an Occupational Therapist, The Complete Guide to your First OT Job Interview](#)

04 | FINDING A JOB

SELECTING A JOB

- Your first job offer may not be your “dream job,” but is a great learning opportunity and your chance to enter the system
- Remember: where you start isn’t necessarily where you will end up
- **Salary negotiation**
 - Discuss once the employer brings it up and negotiate for a fair wage
 - Research and have a salary/hourly wage in mind
 - Consider benefits, vacation, pension, growth opportunities, alignment with career goals
- **If you are interested in starting your own private practice...**
 - [OSOT Private Practice Resources](#)
 - Consider your level of experience and competence in the area of practice you wish to work in, know your market
 - Ensure you have sufficient [insurance](#)
 - Stay connected and network with other OTs



05 Financial Planning

05 | FINANCIAL PLANNING

CASH FLOW MANAGEMENT

Spending Plan/Budgeting	Credit Score	Student Loan Repayment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Automate your set expenses (e.g., rent, phone bills, cable, car, etc.)● Limit your variable expenses (e.g., food) - look for sales on Flipp app!● Use the income gap to increase your financial stability● More info: Cash Flow Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Credit bodies: Equifax or TransUnion● Try to maintain a score between 650-700● Understand and prepare for soft and hard credit inquiries● Learn how to increase your credit score● Considerations for increasing your credit limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Plan and calculate your repayment● Sign up for OSAP Repayment Assistance Plan● Take advantage of tax credits● Consider investing your money while paying off your student loan (e.g., TFSA, RRSP)

05 | FINANCIAL PLANNING

TIPS FOR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS (SELF-EMPLOYED)

- You will be considered to be in private practice when the following criteria are met:
 - All or a portion of income is received from fees, retainers, contracts or other monies not defined as salary, and is claimed as such for taxation purposes
 - Business expenses are incurred
 - You present yourself to the public as a self-employed occupational therapist
- Have a personal bank account AND a business account
 - Save a portion of your income to pay taxes in a savings account,
 - Find an accountant to assist with your taxes
- **More info:** [OSOT Private Practice Resources](#)

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FINDING A FINANCIAL ADVISOR

- Familiarity with the healthcare sector
- Varied experience
- Multiple designations
- [Compensation models](#) (commission vs fee-based vs fee-only)
- Avoid working with friends and family (see [COTO Standards for Professional Boundaries](#))



06

Professional Development

06 | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STAYING EVIDENCE-INFORMED

OSOT	CAOT	COTO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Annual OSOT conference● Webinars and workshops (live and archived)● Practice resources● Workshop and course listings● Finding evidence for your practice● Podcasts● Other membership benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Annual CAOT conference● Webinars● Practice magazine (OT Now)● Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Quality Assurance Program● Standards and practice guidelines● Practice support● Webinars and podcasts● Case studies● Questions and answers

06 | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

KEEPING CURRENT

- Follow relevant organizations on social media and/or subscribe to their mailing lists
 - e.g., OSOT ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#))
- Sign up for alerts
 - [Google Alerts](#) (news stories sent to your email based on key terms you enter)
 - Location (e.g., Canada, Ontario, your city)
 - Practice (e.g., occupational therapy, health, rehabilitation, client population, setting)
 - Policy (e.g., Health Canada, Public Health Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care)
- Search research journal sites using key search terms
 - [Springer Link](#)
 - [SAGE Journals](#)
 - [Google Scholar](#)

06 | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NETWORKING

OSOT	CAOT	Social Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Networking opportunities across Ontario● Annual OSOT conference● Interest groups● Sector-specific teams● Mentorship program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Networking opportunities across Canada● Annual CAOT conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LinkedIn● Facebook● Twitter● Instagram● See COTO guidelines for Use of Social Media

FUNDING OPTIONS

- Government of Ontario funding for [small businesses and entrepreneurs](#)
- [OSOT Research Fund](#)

GOOD LUCK!

OSOT is your one-stop shop from now until you retire

- [Advocacy](#)
- [Professional Development](#)
- [Practice Resources](#)
- [Networking](#)
- [Other member benefits](#) (insurance, Goodlife Fitness, real estate referral, and more!)

Please feel free to reach out for support:

- Telephone: (416) 322-3011
- Toll free: 1-877-676-6768
- Email: osot@osot.on.ca

