Occupational/Physical Therapist Assistant

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Overview

Our Occupational/Physical Therapist Assistant program provides comprehensive training for those who seek to support individuals with disabilities and functional impairments. As medical advancements break down accessibility barriers, the demand for skilled therapy assistants grows.

In this program, you will:

- learn under the guidance of experienced occupational therapists and physiotherapists
- acquire essential competencies that exceed the national standards for occupational therapy and physiotherapy assistants
- learn core rehabilitation and healthcare delivery concepts and skills
- participate in observational clinical visits to witness the practical application of therapeutic skills
- study advanced rehabilitation concepts, common health conditions, and therapeutic methods
- develop a deep understanding of complex health conditions and advanced therapeutic techniques
- complete practicum rotations to apply and refine your skills in real-world settings.

We'll equip you with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills to ensure you can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those requiring occupational or physical therapy.

As a graduate, you will be prepared for occupational therapist or physical therapist assistant roles. You will effectively manage therapeutic supplies and equipment within healthcare facilities and help your clients improve their quality of life.

Traits, skills and aptitudes

Those in occupational and physical therapy tend to be methodical, social, and objective.

You need:

- empathy
- patience
- the ability to work well under stress, maintain professional behaviour, and regulate your emotions
- tact
- effective communication skills
- interpersonal skills
- organizational skills and attention to detail
- physical strength and stamina, including the ability to use your hands, wrists, and arms for prolonged periods
- manual dexterity
- the ability to encourage patient confidence and participation
- the ability to work independently and as part of a team.

You may need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for long periods, which includes exposure to latex and disinfection materials. You must be comfortable performing patient care procedures in very close proximity to your clients.

Some positions will require extended work hours and shift work, including nights and weekends.

You are strongly encouraged to refer to the ALIS website for career, learning, and employment information for occupational therapist assistants and physical therapist assistants to ensure you can successfully meet the occupational requirements for the program and profession.

SAIT program pathways

Graduates of SAIT's Pre-Health Sciences program may meet the admission requirements for this program.

Practicum, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning

You'll complete required practicum rotations in a clinical facility where you will work under the supervision of a licensed physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

You will be assigned practicum placements with consideration given to your preference of location. However, due to limited availability in Calgary, it might be necessary for you to travel or relocate outside the of the city or province.

The healthcare field has a strong focus on health, wellness, and fitness to practice due to the demanding nature of the work and Occupational Health and Safety requirements. As such, special considerations will not be granted based on individual circumstances or preferences, except those stated as protected grounds when an accommodation has been approved.

In compliance with the practica agreements with our clinical partners, you will be required to provide specific documentation before you can participate in your practicum. Find out what requirements you need for this program.

International students must also complete their Immigration Medical Exam (IME) and obtain a co-op work permit to attend this practicum. For more information, please contact the International Centre.

Accreditations, designations and certifications

This program is accredited by the Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant Education Accreditation Program in collaboration with Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC) and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT).

This program is currently accredited from April 30, 2022 through April 30, 2028, at which time it will seek renewal of this status.

Graduates will earn their Occupational Therapist Assistant (OTA) and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) designations.

Credentials

Upon successful completion of this program, you'll be awarded a SAIT Occupational/Physical Therapist Assistant diploma.

Admission requirements

Applicants educated in Canada

Applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency and achieve a passing grade in each of the following courses (or equivalents), with a minimum combined grade average of 60%:

- English Language Arts 30-1
- Biology 30
- Chemistry 20 or Science 20
- MEDT 211 (SAIT course offered via Open Studies)

SAIT accepts high school course equivalents for admission for applicants educated outside Alberta.

Applicants educated outside of Canada

All applicants who were educated outside of Canada must demonstrate English language proficiency and provide proof they meet the program admission requirements with an international document assessment. Find accepted educational documents and assessment options.

SAIT may also accept courses completed at certain international post-secondary institutions.

Costs

2026/27 tuition and fees

The following estimated costs are effective as of July 1, 2026.

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees is based on the suggested schedule of study. Following a modified schedule will impact the

fees you pay per semester and may alter final costs.

Domestic Students

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	3	$5,918.40	$2,265.50*	$8,183.90
2	2	$3,945.60	$1,764.50	$5,710.10
			Total cost:	**$13,894**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for domestic students is based on the recommended course load per year.

If you began this program prior to July 2026, the following rates apply:

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	3	$5,400	$2,265.50*	$7,665.50
2	2	$3,600	$1,764.50	$5,364.50
			Total cost:	**$13,030**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for domestic students is based on the recommended course load per year.

*You will be ineligible for the UPass during the third semester of your first year.

Why are there two tuition rates for domestic students? Learn more about ETI adjustments.

International Students

The program total is based on the estimated amount you will pay if you enter this program during the 2026/27 academic year. The program total amount listed on your letter of admission may appear higher. This amount is your maximum tuition guarantee for the program. SAIT will not exceed this maximum, regardless of changes in tuition and fees between academic years.

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	3	$20,196	$2,265.50*	$22,461.50
2	2	$13,464	$1,764.50	$15,228.50
			Total cost:	**$37,690**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for international students is based on the recommended course load per year.

*You will be ineligible for the UPass during the third semester of your first year.

Books and Supplies

Books and supplies are approximately $2,500 per full-time year.

This is a bring-your-own-device program with a standard computer hardware and software requirement. See the specific requirements on our computers and laptops page. A portable personal computing device is required. An Apple or Windows-based laptop or tablet is preferred. Phones are not suitable.

Find your booklist on the SAIT Bookstore's website. Booklists are created by semester and available approximately two weeks before

classes begin.

Required personal protective equipment (PPE)

The industry-approved PPE you'll need will be discussed during your first few days of classes.

Additional fees

- A fee is associated with obtaining a police information check, including a vulnerable sector check, payable to the police or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).
- The School of Health and Public Safety strongly recommends that students meet Alberta Health Services' Standard for Immunization of Post-Secondary Health Care Students. Fees for completing immunization requirements start at $85, however, may increase, depending on your vaccination history, and any new immunizations you choose to acquire.
- A fee is associated with the CompTracker application used in this program.
- A fee of approximately $50 to $100 is associated with an electronic student permit checking submission required for clinical practicum placements, payable to Synergy Gateway through the Verified software platform.
- Basic Life Support (BLS) Provider (Level C) CPR annual updates are required. All CPR courses must be from the Heart and Stroke Foundation.
- You are responsible for additional expenses related to your practicum, including pre-practicum requirements and relocation costs to practicum sites outside of Calgary.