



## FACTS ABOUT ACCREDITATION FOR STUDENTS & GRADUATES

### What is accreditation?

Accreditation is the public recognition awarded to education programs that meet established standards of quality in teaching, student achievement, curricula, academic support, and other criteria. Accredited programs commit to following a continuous process of evaluation and quality improvement.

The OTA & PTA EAP supports education programs to meet or exceed established standards as they work towards and maintain accreditation. We involve students, graduates, employers, and educators in developing our standards and assessing the quality of our education programs. Accredited programs undergo an accreditation review every 6 years to renew and maintain accreditation. It's a voluntary process but rigorous and demonstrates the program's commitment to quality education. Most programs begin preparing at least a year prior to their Site Review.

### How does accreditation help students?

#### 1 Quality Education

Education programs that decide to seek and maintain accreditation are committed to providing students with quality learning environments and experiences to achieve competencies necessary for practice.

#### 2 Your Career

When the program achieves OTA & PTA EAP accreditation, students, employers, and communities can be confident that graduates from the program have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet the health care challenges facing society today.

### What does it mean when a program has Candidacy Status?

Candidacy Status is the first step toward accreditation. It indicates a formal affiliation with our accreditation program, with the intent to complete an accreditation review within 6 years. A program must meet several key requirements including guidelines around curriculum, fieldwork hours, and staff qualifications to obtain Candidacy status.

If the program you are considering has Candidacy Status and completes their accreditation review successfully prior to your graduation date, you would be considered a graduate of an accredited program.

## Why aren't all OTA & PTA education programs in Canada accredited?

Currently, accreditation of OTA & PTA education programs in Canada is voluntary. Programs which choose to pursue accreditation value quality education and the best possible employment outcomes for their graduates. However, there are many reasons why a program may not be currently accredited. It is not an easy process and requires the institution's commitment to support the program's pursuit of accreditation.

## What are my options if my education program was awarded accreditation after I graduated?

OTA & PTA EAP is relatively new and the first education programs were awarded accreditation in 2012. If you graduated before your program was accredited, unfortunately you are not considered a graduate from an accredited program. In some circumstances, students can choose to return to an accredited program, receive advanced standing for past coursework and after completing some additional courses, graduate from that accredited program. Current students might be able to transfer credits from a non-accredited program to an accredited program so they graduate from an accredited program, but this varies according to the institution.

## Questions to Ask the Education Program

- 1 Is the program accredited by the OTA & PTA EAP?
- 2 When does the program expect to complete the accreditation process and receive notification of accreditation award? Will this be before or after my graduation? (For programs with candidacy status.)
- 3 Are employers in the area in which I wish to work specifically seeking graduates of accredited programs?

To learn more about the Accreditation Process and our currently accredited programs visit our website at: [www.otapta.ca](http://www.otapta.ca) or email: [info@otapta.ca](mailto:info@otapta.ca)

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