

MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST (OT) LICENSING GUIDE FOR SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you as a foreign-educated occupational therapist (OT) must do to become eligible for licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background on the larger occupational therapy profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATION OF THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROFESSION

The practice of occupational therapy in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). You must be licensed to practice as an OT in Michigan.

This guide assumes that you hold the equivalent of a U.S. degree in occupational therapy and that your Michigan license will be your first U.S. occupational therapy license. As a foreign-educated OT, the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) requires the Occupational Therapist Eligibility Determination (OTED).

You will become an Occupational Therapist by examination. The NBCOT's certification exam, which is required to become licensed as an OT in Michigan, is administered by Prometric Test Centers. There is also a Michigan jurisprudence examination covering the occupational therapy laws and rules for licensure in Michigan. The jurisprudence examination is administered by PSI and must be completed as part of the licensure process.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

OVERVIEW

Internationally educated OTs need to meet several requirements to receive Licensure by Examination in Michigan.

- I. Evaluate your foreign degree and foreign license with the NBCOT.

The NBCOT requires the OTED as a method of determining if your completed education is comparable to current U.S. entry-level educational requirements. The criteria for submitting an OTED application requires an OT to complete a master's-level degree in occupational therapy and necessary fieldwork requirements. You will be required to complete the application, provide documentation demonstrating compliance with all eligibility criteria, and pay the application fee.

Once you have completed and been approved through the OTED process, you are eligible to apply for the NBCOT Certification Examination for Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR).

If your degree is not deemed equivalent to a U.S. degree, you will be able to submit additional documentation for the standard(s) deemed deficient. You must work directly with the NBCOT in correcting any deficiencies in your report; the Michigan Board of Occupational Therapy has no role in the evaluation and re-evaluation process.

- II. Pass the OTR exam through the NBCOT and have your scores transmitted directly to the State of Michigan from the NBCOT.
- III. Submit your licensure application, required supporting documents, and pay the application fee

Your application sent to the Michigan Board of Occupational Therapy should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from www.michigan.gov/healthlicense
- Appropriate Fee

- Contact NBCOT to have your OTR exam score sent directly to the State of Michigan. Visit www.nbcot.org for information and instructions on how to arrange for your scores to be sent to the State of Michigan.
- Take the jurisprudence examination through PSI. You may contact PSI to schedule your exam by visiting www.psiexams.com or by calling PSI at 800-733-9267.
- An applicant whose educational program was taught in a language other than English must submit a certified score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language – Internet Based Test (TOEFL-IBT). Required section scores on the TOEFL-IBT are:

Not less than 21 on the reading section
Not less than 18 on the listening section
Not less than 26 on the speaking section
Not less than 24 on the writing section

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not met all licensing requirements within those 2 years you will need to submit a new application and pay the appropriate fee again.

- IV. Be fingerprinted by a Michigan-approved vendor for a criminal background check.

Directions for completing the fingerprint requirement are mailed to you from the Department upon receipt of your application.

3. TESTS

Michigan requires passing both the jurisprudence and the NBCOT's OTR examinations for an OT to become licensed in Michigan.

The passing score on the jurisprudence exam is 75%, (21 out of 28 questions). Licensure candidates must take the jurisprudence examination through PSI. The jurisprudence examination covers material that can be found in the Administrative Rules of the Michigan Board of Occupational Therapy, in Article 1 parts 11 and 12, and in Article 15 parts 161 and 183 of the Michigan Public Health Code.

The NBCOT OTR is a computer-based test that is designed to measure entry-level competence of candidates who have met eligibility requirements for certification of the OTR credential. The OTR exam consists of 3 clinical simulation test items and 170 multiple choice items.

CONTENT AREAS OF THE OTR EXAM

Content for the exams is derived from the results of practice analysis studies and developed to measure the knowledge required for practicing as an entry-level OTR. The percentages below show the approximate percent of test items you will encounter in each domain:

1. Acquire information regarding factors that influence occupational performance throughout the occupational therapy process. (17%)
2. Formulate conclusions regarding client needs and priorities to develop and monitor an intervention plan throughout the occupational therapy process. (28%)
3. Select interventions for managing a client-centered plan throughout the occupational therapy process. (45%)
4. Manage and direct occupational therapy services to promote quality in practice. (10%)

SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES OF THE OTR EXAM

Prometric administers the NBCOT OTR in testing centers across the U.S. You must apply with the NBCOT for the certification exam online at www.nbcot.org where your application will be valid for one year. Within three (3) business days after the NBCOT approves your exam application, you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter by email. The ATT letter is active for 90 days. After the ATT letter has been received, candidates can schedule their testing appointment directly with Prometric. The ATT includes detailed instructions for choosing a testing center and scheduling a date to take the OTR exam.

On the day of the test, you must bring the ATT and two forms of acceptable identification (one primary and one secondary form). Both forms of ID MUST match the first and last name indicated on the ATT letter. Acceptable forms of primary identification is a currently valid, government-issued photo ID with your legal name and legible signature (passport, driver's license, etc.). Acceptable forms of secondary identification is an unexpired ID that must contain both your printed name and legible signature. At the Prometric test center an electronic record of your ID, your photograph, and a digital fingertip record will be taken. You are required to undergo fingertip analysis any time you leave and re-enter the testing room for validation purposes. You should arrive at least thirty minutes early. You are allowed 4 hours for the OTR exam.

FAILING THE OTR EXAM

You will be notified via email when the exam result has been posted online. Your downloadable PDF feedback report will include the overall score along with domain-level performance information and an explanation for interpreting your overall and domain-level performance. You can use the report to learn what areas to study before you retake the exam. You must apply to retake the examination with the NBCOT. There is a 30-day waiting period after the last examination date before you may test again. There is no limitation on the number of times you may retake the examination.

PRACTICING FOR THE OTR EXAM

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for the content and the computer-based testing technology. There are a variety of test preparation resources available at low cost. NBCOT Aspire offers official NBCOT exam prep flashcards, an entry-level knowledge match game, an official NBCOT study guide, NBCOT practice tests, an OTR clinical simulation practice test, and OTR examination tutorials that are all available through their website. Consider investing in test preparation as it may save you money by not having to pay to retake the test and by entering the job market faster.

4. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as an OT. Working in healthcare in a different capacity and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages:

- Your employer may pay for some costs associated with licensing
- You can focus more energy on studying
- You will have a chance to adapt to the U.S. healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans. You may find some employers have benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that will support your goals.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AIDE

Occupational Therapy Aides are not licensed in Michigan and typically have a high school education and work under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist. They assist patients, prepare materials, assemble equipment, and handle many clerical tasks.

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

5. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

OT licenses must be renewed every two years through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing. Your license will expire on May 31. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You must renew online. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty-day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to May 31. If you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

LICENSING MOBILITY (ENDORSEMENT)

The State of Michigan grants licensing to OTs either by examination (the process described in this topic) or by endorsement. An OT licensed in another state, who wants to practice in Michigan, must independently meet all Michigan requirements for licensing. If you become licensed in Michigan and want to practice occupational therapy in another state, you will need to research the legal requirements for that state. Fortunately, since the OTR exam is accepted by all states, an occupational therapist looking to relocate to Michigan will not have to retake the OTR exam.

6. IMPORTANT LINKS

LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/healthlicense.
- The page that focuses specifically on occupational therapy which includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions is: http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_27545---.00.html.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Bureau of Professional Licensing
PO Box 30670
Lansing, MI 48909

Telephone Number: 517-335-0918
Fax: 517-241-0032
Email: bplhelp@michigan.gov
- The laws that regulate licensing for all health professions including OTs can be located at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>
- The administrative rules governing occupational therapy practice in Michigan can be located at: http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/Files/AdminCode/1530_2015-029LR_AdminCode.pdf.

CREDENTIAL REVIEW AGENCY

- OTED process - <http://www.nbcot.org/oted>

TESTING

- OTR Exam Application and Information through the NBCOT – www.nbcot.org
- [OTR Exam Handbook](#)
- Prometric administers the NBCOT OTR exam- www.prometric.com
- PSI administers the jurisprudence examination - www.psiexams.com
- TOEFL www.ets.org/toefl

NATIONAL RESOURCES

- The NBCOT represents members of Occupational Therapy Boards for all states. It develops the OTR exam www.nbcot.org