

OTA/PTA Experiential Learning Opportunities

OTA/PTA students at Canadore College participate in the following types of [experiential learning](#):

- **Clinical Placements:** OTA/PTA students participate in more than 500 hours of clinical placements. Students can expect to gain experience in several environments such as hospitals, private clinics, and home care. Students experience the workplace with direct supervision and support of registered physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and rehabilitation assistants. They apply and develop skills in physiotherapy and occupational therapy professions, identify future career and academic directions, participate in interprofessional experiences, and develop workplace contacts.
- **Job Shadowing and Service Learning:** Canadore partners with numerous organizations to bring job shadowing and service learning opportunities to OTA/PTA students. Some of these partners include the Centre for Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Manual Physio Solutions, the North Bay Regional Health Centre, the Near North District School Board, the Nipissing Parry Sound Catholic District School Board, One Kids Place, PREP Therapy, Symetrics, and the Victorian Order of Nurses. Students gain exposure to therapeutic exercise programs, rehabilitation for Panthers varsity athletes, seating and mobility assessments/interventions, pulmonary rehabilitation exercise sessions, and group treatment facilitation. They direct and provide workshops to high school students on various health topics like safe transfers and lifts, athletic taping and infection control. Students work with a wide variety of patients of all ages, including patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis, neurocognitive disorders, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and communication barriers.
- **Labs and Simulations:** OTA/PTA students apply and develop relevant skills in physiotherapy and occupational therapy labs. They can often practice new skills with the Village's Very Important Panther (VIP) seniors, so they improve their skills and gain confidence before placement. Students also learn through simulations, which are immersive learning experiences that replicate clinical scenarios, workplace tools and/or environmental circumstances. One lab that students can look forward to is the Therapeutic Taping Workshop with Mabel Plourde-Doran. Meet Mabel in [this video!](#)

- **Open Houses:** OTA/PTA students have the opportunity to showcase, to a community audience, their knowledge and expertise in physiotherapy therapeutic modalities, therapeutic exercises, and rehabilitation practice. This allows students to integrate theoretical learning through practical application.
- **Interprofessional Education:** Interprofessional Education (IPE) involves learning with, from, and about each other, sharing our different perspectives while learning together in areas of common interest in the practice of health care. OTA/PTA students engage in a variety of large-scale interprofessional education (IPE) events, collaborating with professionals from multiple disciplines throughout their program. Students also engage in several collaborative activities with specific programs. For example, OTA/PTA students teach Strength and Sport Conditioning (SSC) students about therapeutic modalities, while SSC students share their expertise in exercise prescription and performance training. In another interprofessional event, OTA/PTA students introduce Respiratory Therapy (RT) students to occupational therapy and physiotherapy approaches for shared patients, and in turn, RT students educate OTA/PTA students on the use and function of various therapeutic oxygen devices and equipment. [Click here to learn more about Interprofessional Education at Canadore.](#)

OTA/PTA Experiential Learning Spaces

The following campus spaces are used to bring experiential learning opportunities to OTA/PTA students at Canadore College:

- **Mobility Lab:** The Mobility Lab allows students to learn about occupational therapy and physiotherapy to gain the skills they need to work in a variety of clinical and community-based settings.



The Mobility Lab is the heart of hands-on learning in the OTA/PTA program—an immersive, spacious environment where students develop and refine the essential skills of rehabilitation practice. Designed to mirror real clinical settings, the lab is fully equipped to support training in treatment and client care. This dynamic space features eight therapy beds, an accessible washroom and kitchen, and an impressive range of state-of-the-art therapeutic equipment. There is

a hospital bed, overbed table, and hospital chair to replicate a realistic hospital room environment. Students gain hands-on experience with electrostimulation units, low-level laser therapy, ultrasound, soft-tissue instruments, massage tools, thermotherapy and cryotherapy modalities, taping supplies, and more.

The lab also boasts a full-immersion whirlpool and a Hi-boy pool for warm or cold water therapy—including ice baths—allowing students to practice real-world hydrotherapy techniques. A dedicated exercise therapy zone is fully equipped with cardio machines, weights, resistance bars, ankle weights, yoga balls, foam mats, and agility equipment to support functional rehab training.

Throughout the lab, students also have access to an extensive collection of assistive devices and adaptive equipment, providing countless opportunities to build confidence and competence in client-centered care.

To support mobility and gait training, the lab houses a wide selection of walkers, canes, crutches, and wheelchairs, allowing students to practice safe ambulation techniques. Students also benefit from augmented reality headsets, anatomical models, and a documentation room where they can refine their charting and clinical reasoning skills. A built-in washer and dryer and robust infection control resources reinforce best practices for maintaining a safe clinical environment.

A standout feature of the Mobility Lab is its state-of-the-art simulation technology. The space is equipped with ceiling-mounted cameras and microphones, allowing students to participate in realistic simulations while faculty monitor from an adjacent control room. These simulations can be recorded and played back, providing students with invaluable opportunities to review their performance, reflect in a supportive environment, and repeat the scenario to build confidence and competence. This best-practice simulation design ensures students engage in high-quality experiential learning that aligns with the highest standards in health care education.

Alongside hands-on practice areas, the lab offers a dedicated learning zone with tables, chairs, and a projector, creating space for small-group teaching, case discussions, and debriefing.

Spacious, modern, and exceptionally well-equipped, the Mobility Lab provides OTA/PTA students with an unparalleled environment to learn, practice, and gain confidence in their clinical skills—truly preparing them for the realities of professional practice.

- **The Snoezelen Room:** The Snoezelen® Room is a controlled multisensory environment used as a specialized teaching space for students at Canadore College. Equipped with calming lights, gentle sounds, tactile objects, and sensory-rich therapeutic tools, the room allows students to learn how multisensory environments support client relaxation, emotional regulation, and engagement. Through hands-on practice, students explore how to adapt sensory inputs, tailor interventions, and apply client-centred approaches for individuals with developmental, cognitive, mental health, or neurological conditions. This space provides an immersive learning environment where students develop practical skills in therapeutic use of sensory environments.



- **Quinn's Apartment:** The Quinn's Apartment is a fully furnished, real-life apartment located in the center of campus, giving OTA/PTA students a realistic environment to apply their skills. Equipped with advanced simulation cameras and microphones, the space allows students to participate in realistic scenarios that can be recorded and reviewed for feedback and reflection.

The Quinn's Apartment offers an immersive, hands-on learning experience that helps students build confidence and competence in real-life client settings.



- **The Village:** The Village is a world class health and wellness facility that brings a ground-breaking approach to educating the next generation of our country's health professionals. The Village fosters a spirit of collaboration that greatly enhances the delivery of community-based services while inspiring a new ideal for holistic care and healing that can be adopted by communities across the country. This innovative educational community seamlessly blends teaching, learning and living across generational boundaries to provide a continuum of care services while supporting leading-edge applied research.

The OTA/PTA students are proud to be involved with the Very Important Panthers (VIPs) from The Village—an inspiring example of intergenerational learning. Students organize and lead a walking program and welcome VIPs into the lab to practice hands-on skills. The VIPs also serve as simulated patients, offering students meaningful, real-world experience.

This partnership fosters strong relationships, with students often joining VIPs for exercise classes and social time outside of structured activities. Students consistently report positive feedback, highlighting how much they learn with and from the VIPs. We deeply value this collaboration—it enriches student learning and celebrates the shared contributions of generations.

[Click here to learn more about The Village.](#)

