

Steps to Legally Becoming an OTR/L 2024

NBCOT Board Exam Registration/Application:

- Create an online account at www.nbcot.org (You should have already done this to sign up for your OTKE)
- Login and complete your application (follow directions in the handbook and online)
 - There is a \$515 fee (and an extra \$40 fee for an automatic score transfer request to the state of WI for licensure).
 - Submit your official transcript as outlined below
- When you register, you will receive the certificant handbook. **It is very important to read this information!* Follow the directions to complete signing up for the exam.
- If you need an *accommodation*, check out that link on the website for directions to request it. If you did not have an accommodation in the OT program, it is not likely you will get it for the exam.
- Please check the box on your examination that allows the OT program to see your results should you fail.
- After applying for the certification examination, candidates must submit:
 - An official final college or university transcript that indicates the date of graduation and degree title (You cannot get this transcript until after you graduate.). This is typically available by the 2nd week of January.
 - **NOTE: If you have an unusual circumstance regarding your graduation timeline (I.e., medical leave or delay), you may be eligible to use the Degree Verification Form (DVF) to register for your board exam. This is only to be used in unique circumstances (I.e. if you finish graduation requirements in March but won't receive a transcript until May).*
- NBCOT will issue an **Authorization to Test Letter (ATT)**. Take it with you to the exam site to show you can take the exam.

Order Transcript:

- Login to your UW-L WINGS account – click on the official transcript link on the left menu tab
 - Select order transcript – this takes you to the Credentials Solutions website that UW-L uses to order transcripts.
 - Select Order PDF transcript
 - When prompted with “Tell us when to release your transcript(s)” select “Hold until degree is recorded”
 - Select “enter recipient manually” – the email address is transcripts@nbcot.org – this recipient is a business or other third party – Department: NBCOT, Inc. – Address: One Bank St. Suite 300 Gaithersburg, MD 20878 – Telephone Number: N/A
 - No attachment
- Costs \$10. Your transcript will be sent once your degree is posted.
- You can check the status of your order by going to transcriptsplus.net/order and clicking the “check the status of my order” link. You will need your order number and SSN or Student ID number.

WI State Licensure (each state has a different process – check individual state licensing websites):

- **NOTE: This process recently (2022) transitioned to “LicenseE,” Wisconsin’s new self-guided, online platform. This system has replaced paper-based applications for licenses.**
- **General Process:** Submit application, pay fee, fill out online forms/information, then you will be sent an email with an application ID number and link to view your application status online
 - Required Fees: Initial Credential Fee (\$75) and State Law Exam (\$75).
 - Non-Required Fees: Temporary License (\$10) and Expedited Processing (\$10).
 - Link for most info in this section <https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Professions/ApplicationProcess.aspx>

- **WI Statutes and Rules Examination:**
 - Once your application has been processed into the system (including the appropriate fees), an automated email will be sent to you stating that you have access. You will be given a Test Name and Test Password.
 - DSPS Website instructs you to go to <https://eptol.dr1.wi.gov/> and then select “test launching” with the instructor as “gsp.” This will lead you to a Test Name and Test Password login screen.
 - If you score 88% or higher, your score will automatically be sent from the examination department of DSPS and input into your file. If you score lower than 88% you will need to pay another \$75 for a re-take (potentially an oral exam too?).
- **Form 1569 – Application**
 - **Requires date degree granted (must wait until you know this date). The date on your degree and the date on your form must be the same. Therefore, you must wait until your degree has been granted to submit this form.**
 - Leave Veteran and Practice Sections Blank
 - *Note: You MAY be able to submit your WI state licensure application PRIOR to graduation; however, it will be incomplete without your transcript, degree granted date, and NBCOT exam date. RUMOR: I’ve heard that submitting your incomplete application will move you to the top of the pile once your application is indeed complete. The recent change to online applications should make this entire process more efficient!*
- **Form 3217 – Initial Credential Fee Reduction**
 - For this form, they consider the past couple of years of tax forms. If you are questioning your eligibility, they recommend submitting the form but paying the full fee. If you are eligible, you will be reimbursed the extra money. If you are not eligible, you’ll have paid the correct amount and your application will not be delayed.
 - Applies only to the Initial Credential Fee (\$75). A 10% reduction fee means that you only pay 10% of the fee (\$7.50).
 - If you choose to pay for only the required fees (initial credential fee and state law exam) your total will be \$150 without the fee reduction or \$82.50 with the fee reduction.
 - If you choose to pay for the required and unrequired fees (temporary license and expedited processing), your fee will be \$170 without the fee reduction or \$102.50 with the fee reduction.
 - *If you qualify and want to pursue the reduced fee – this form **must** accompany your application!*
- **Form 1570 – Certificate of Professional Education -**
<https://dsps.wi.gov/Credentialing/Health/fm1570.pdf>
 - Fill out the top section then forward it to Travis Hendrickson at thendrickson@uwlax.edu or in-person to 105 Graff (or via fax). He will complete the form and send it directly to WI DSPTS (state licensing board) ASAP. *Note: The form contains personal/identifying information.*
- **Form 1572 – Request for Temporary License**
 - Requires the identification and signature of a licensed therapist who has agreed to be your supervisor
 - Costs an extra \$10
- **Form 3071 – Fax Payment**
 - Form to enter your credit card information for payment.
 - How do I submit my payment?
 - If you mail your application, you can submit payment via check or via the Fax Payment Form 3071.
 - If you fax your application, payment must be submitted via Fax Payment Form.
 - *You must use the Fax Payment Form if you want to request expedited processing (extra \$10).*

Wait Patiently:

- Level II Fieldwork grades must be posted and will not be reviewed by Records & Registration until the date final grades are due for the semester.
- Once semester grades are finalized, the Records and Registration Office will approve. This typically happens the next business day (typically very late December).
- Records & Registration will post degrees, then official transcripts will be available. This is typically 1-2 days later (likely early January).
 - If you ordered your transcript online already and selected “Hold for Degree,” your transcript will be automatically sent.

Schedule NBCOT Exam:

- U.S. graduates examining for the first time must submit academic documentation that confirms eligibility for admission to the examination. Either of the following is accepted:
 - Official Final Transcript
 - RARE Circumstances: Degree Verification Form (DVF) available through the NBCOT site. The form must be signed by the Program Director and registrar to verify graduation requirements have been met and can be used for signing up for your board exams prior to having your official transcript.
- Once NBCOT gets your transcript or DVF form, they will mail an Attestation to Test (ATT) letter to you with instructions on how to schedule the NBCOT exam at a Prometric Testing Center.
 - You already paid the fee with the NBCOT Exam Application, so you simply follow the instructions and schedule the test online.
 - If you want to take your test on a Saturday, you should try to schedule at least 6 weeks out (this is a popular date, and it fills up quickly).
 - If you want to take your test on a weekday, scheduling 2-4 weeks in advance is typically sufficient.
- When scheduling your exam, keep in mind that there are predetermined score release dates. These can be found on the NBCOT website. Exams must be scheduled 3 days prior to release date to receive scores that day.

NBCOT Details (UWL):

1. NBCOT will **NOT** consider you as eligible to take the exam until **AFTER** you have graduated, and the registrar has sent in an official transcript for you. They will only send it in when you request it and pay for it (see the registrar's web page or the OT program webpage, alumni tab for more information). If you register too early for NBCOT, you may get charged an extra fee by NBCOT to process your application again after you are qualified.
2. UW-L is very quick about sending in transcripts once they have been requested (usually less than a week). There are no shortcuts, nothing anybody can do to speed this up. This is already very, very fast. There are some universities that only release transcripts 2 times a year and students just must wait. That is **not** the case at UW-L.
3. You will see something about a DVF form (degree verification form). We TYPICALLY do not qualify to use that at our school, so ignore that section in the directions. I cannot do anything about using that form or speeding up getting a transcript for you. The sooner you apply for a transcript after graduation, the faster it will get sent to NBCOT.
4. There is a section on the application to request that 2 pieces of information be sent to a state licensing board. First, recall that all state licenses are based on passing the NBCOT exam, but that alone will not result in a state license. There will be other steps to getting a state license (detailed on each state's website).
 - a. One piece of information you may have sent to the state(s) is your NBCOT scores. That is called the Official Score Transfer. You can ask for that to go to as many states as you want (\$40/state), and you may ask for it when you sign up for the exam or after you have passed the exam. If you know where you want to work, it would be easier to ask (and pay for) it to be sent when you are

registering for the exam. Then you do not have to remember to do it afterward. However, if you are not sure about which state you want to work in, it may make more sense to ask for your score transfers when you have more clarity about where you want to go.

- b. The other piece of information is an Eligibility Confirmation Notice. This is a notice to the state that you are eligible to sit for the NBCOT exam. Please note, that this also may not be done until after you graduate since you will not be eligible until you officially graduate. This is required by some states when applying for a temporary license. So, check out the state license requirements for the state you are interested in to determine if you need to have this information sent.
5. The program will purchase the NBCOT StudyPack to assist with studying for your board exam. They will be available to you in your NBCOT account mid-October.
6. If you “like” the NBCOT Facebook page, you can see the questions that they post each week. These are actual questions that have been retired from the exam.
7. The NBCOT website has many free study aids including a video game type of study guide. Check it out for a variety of ways to study.

Recall, that **you really DO need to study** to be successful on this exam. The only reason people have failed in the past (other than a family or medical crisis) has been because of failure to study sufficiently. There is a blackout period for NBCOT at the end of the year so the soonest you can take the exam will be early January and that will give you some time to study. There are some study hints on our program website as well.

Good luck to all of you. The Certificant Examination Handbook is full of information, and they have been good if you call with questions too. We would very much appreciate it if you checked the box to release your scores (no expense to you) to the program if you should fail the exam.

If something should happen and you do not pass the exam, please don't let embarrassment stop you from contacting us. There are some things we can do that will help you be successful the second time around, so please let us help you.

Exam Preparation Tools:

- UWL purchases each of you the OTR NBCOT StudyPack: <https://www.nbcot.org/Products/studypack>
 - This includes:
 - Full practice exam
 - Practice tests
 - Mini tests
 - Practice sims
 - Flashcards
 - Knowledge match
 - Study guide (electronic version)
- **Occupational Therapy Knowledge Exam (OTKE) (PURCHASED BY PROGRAM)**
 - You received an e-mail from Lizzie Dickman with your log-in
 - You will receive another email with your results
 - Use your results to build your study plan
 - Review scores with validated domain, task, and knowledge statements (handout). Identify areas under 60% as those needing attention on fieldwork.
- **The NBCOT Official Study Guide**
 - Electronic version is included in your StudyPack
 - Includes test-taking strategies, specifics of the exam, 100 sample questions with rationale for answers, and an OTR exam readiness tool

- **NBCOT ASPIRE**
 - **OTR Self-assessment tool** https://secure.nbcot.org/ReadinessTools_prod/Default.aspx?Testid=2 **FREE**
 - Four different tools: general practice, pediatrics, physical dysfunction, mental health
 - Organized by the task, knowledge, and skill statements of the domains and helps you identify your perception of your skills/knowledge in each of these areas
- **Knowledge Match game** <http://www.nbcot.org/match-game>
 - Included in your NBCOT StudyPack
 - **DEMO:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRzGJrTVBg0&feature=youtu.be>
- **NBCOT Exam Prep Flashcards APP** <http://www.nbcot.org/flashcards>
 - Included in your NBCOT StudyPack
 - All mobile devices: iTunes and Google
- **NBCOT Facebook Page (FREE)**
 - Study questions on Mondays, Answers on Thursdays, and Rationales on Fridays
 - New question every week for both OTR and OTA. Question up for only a week
 - Friend NBCOT on Facebook and you will get the questions each week.
- **NBCOT Practice Examinations**
 - Included in your NBCOT StudyPack
 - Two Exams: Multiple Choice and Multi-Select Scenario Sets
 - Take after you study and several weeks before you are scheduled for the exam
 - Take from your home computer
 - Will receive an e-mail from Emilee Mielke or Lizzie Dickman in late October or early November with log-in information
 - Use results to guide your final studying
 - **Tutorials**
 - One for multiple-choice and one for multi-select scenario sets
 - Experience with how the exam works on a computer

NBCOT Study Options:

- The OTR test exam blueprint (OTR Validated Domain, Task & Knowledge statements)
- The free entry-level self-assessments (available online and on the NBCOT mobile site)
- Exam preparation courses
- Structured study groups or “study buddies”
- Study guides and practice tests
- Course notes and textbooks
- Use the study tools on the NBCOT webpage <http://www.nbcot.org/aspire>
- When you feel you are ready, take the **two practice examinations included in the StudyPack.**
- Use the exams to practice timing, level of your preparation, familiarity with questions, etc.
- Study at least 2 additional weeks before taking the exam.
- Take the tutorials at NBCOT.org

Taking the Board Exam:

- Watch the video from Prometric that covers what to expect when you take the exam. The link to this video is on the NBCOT.org website.
- Arrive 30 minutes early
- Bring your Authorization to Test Letter (ATT) you will receive from NBCOT when registered
- **ID must be current** (not expired)
- **The name on your ATT letter must match the name on all forms of ID.** If you recently got married, make sure everyone has the correct name and your ID has the correct name as well.
- If fail to appear or appear more than 15 minutes past the scheduled time or without proper ID, they can reschedule for an additional fee of \$175.00

- Two fingerprints will be taken
- Will need to pull out front and rear pockets for inspection before going into the test room
- Cell phones, notes, and cameras are prohibited.
- Lockers are provided
- No food or gum
- Once in the testing room, you cannot put on or take off a sweater/coat/jacket or put a hood up over your head. A sweater or jacket must be worn at the time of check-in.
- Glasses, earrings, hearing aids, insulin pumps, wheelchairs, and canes are allowed but will be inspected before admittance to the testing room.
- Read the latest security on the Prometric link from NBCOT.org

Certification Exam FAQs:

Q: How do I apply to take the certification exam?

A: You can apply online by going to www.nbcot.org and clicking on the “student” link. There is an account that you must set up and a Candidate Handbook that you download to help you complete the exam application.

Q: When do I apply to take the exam? Should I wait until my fieldwork is completed? Is there a deadline?

A: You should apply for the exam around 2-3 weeks before completion of the program if you want to take your exam right away. There is no set deadline to apply, so if you want to wait longer, you can do so. However, realize that you will NOT be eligible to take the exam until you have completed all your requirements for the Master of Science degree (meaning you have graduated! – or DVF form under rare circumstances) and the necessary paperwork is processed.

Q: What paperwork needs to be submitted to NBCOT? Does it matter what order they are sent in?

A: NBCOT requires that you submit your application to take the exam, pay the necessary fees, and have official transcripts submitted. It DOES matter what order they are submitted. Therefore, you must follow this process: submit your application to NBCOT **first**. Next, request that your final transcripts be sent from UWL to NBCOT. You must pay a fee for the service.

Q: What is the Degree Verification Form in the NBCOT Candidate Handbook?

A: A DVF is a form that is used only for graduates who finish all requirements for graduation weeks or months before an official school graduation date. Typically, the DVF form does not apply to you, as there is no gap between the completion of your courses and graduation.

Q: I'm filling out my application and am having trouble with a couple of questions. How do I know where to find the answers to my questions?

A: All your answers are found in the NBCOT Candidate Handbook. When you apply online, you can download it from the NBCOT website. It tells you how to fill out each area on your application.

Q: I've submitted my application and requested my transcripts. How do I know all the necessary paperwork has been received by NBCOT?

A: You can always check online to see the status of your application by going to www.nbcot.org. Log in with your username and password that was set up at the time you applied for the exam. If there is a discrepancy between what you submitted and what NBCOT says they have received, you must contact NBCOT. If there is a problem with your transcripts, contact the registrar's office at UWL.

Q: What is an ATT letter? How long does it take to receive it and who sends it to me?

A: An ATT letter is an “Authorization to Test” letter. It is received by each applicant who has completed the application process and is eligible to take the certification exam. You will not receive this letter until your application, transcripts, and fees are received and processed. This takes a few days after all the necessary components are submitted. Please note that your ATT letter is **emailed** to you using the email address you gave to NBCOT when you applied. After you receive the letter, you can schedule an appointment to take the exam. The letter is sent by NBCOT.

Q: Do I have to wait until a certain date to take the exam?

A: You can take the exam any time after you have received your ATT letter. You cannot schedule an appointment before receiving it. Please know that the ATT letter is valid for only 90 days from the date on the letter. If you do not take the exam by the 90-day period, it will expire, and you will have to pay a substantial fee to have another one issued.

Q: *Where do I take my exam?*

A: Your exam is taken through a Prometric Test Center. They are located nationwide. You can schedule an appointment online at www.prometric.com. It doesn't matter where you take the exam because the exam is consistent at every location in the U.S. Schedule it where it is most convenient. Please note that testing centers can and do get busy and you may have to wait for an open appointment. During peak testing periods, some graduates have reported waiting 30 days to get an available appointment.

Q: *How long will I have to wait to get my exam results after I take the exam? Can I start practicing OT when I get my results?*

A: The exam is scored on a regular schedule, which is posted on NBCOT's website (scroll down to the bottom of the main page). If you take the exam three days before the posted scoring date, your exam will be scored on the next scoring date. If taken 1-2 days before a scoring date, it will not be scored on the next scheduled scoring date. You can log in to your NBCOT account online and see the results of your exam. You cannot begin practicing OT until you have received your official passing NBCOT result **and** have received a state license. Candidates find out their online results on the scoring date, typically around 8 a.m.

Q: *I hate to ask this, but what if I fail the exam on my first try?*

A: Failing is hard to think about, but it can happen. A common issue behind failing the exam is, 1) the student did not consistently study or delayed their studying until a couple of weeks before the exam, 2) focusing more on work and less on studying, and 3) significant anxiety during the exam, causing an inability to concentrate and reason through exam items. Your ability to succeed on the exam is greatly enhanced by regular studying and preparations, attending an exam preparation course, and studying with others. The national pass rate is tracked for each program by how many students pass within one year of graduation. If you should not pass, NBCOT provides information through the online portal that includes your score report and how to reapply for the exam. You must wait 30 days until you can retake the exam and you must pay to retake it. There is no limit to how many times you can take the exam and you do not need to do any remediation for an exam failure.

State Licensure FAQ's:

Q: *How do I apply for a state license? Do I even need one?*

A: Every state in the U.S. **requires** a license to practice O.T. In Wisconsin, you can visit their website at <https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Professions/OccupationalTherapist/Default.aspx>. You can download your application materials online. Please note that you will not receive your license until all the necessary materials are submitted, fees paid, AND the state has received verification from NBCOT that you successfully passed the NBCOT exam. If you want to hold a license in a state other than WI, visit <http://state.aota.org/reglist.aspx> for a list of all state regulatory agencies. NBCOT sends your test score results to the state(s) you designate when you apply to take the exam with NBCOT. You must pay for this. If you do not pay to have your score results sent to the state, you cannot get a state license. Most important to keep in mind about a state license – you **CAN NOT** practice O.T. in almost every state of the U.S. (including Wisconsin) without your state license in hand. **Unless you are holding it in your hand, you cannot practice!**

Q: *How soon should I apply for a state license?*

A: If you want to practice soon after graduation, you should apply early! WI requires you to mail your application, but you can fill out the forms early to save time. WI also requires that you provide a date you are sitting for the NBCOT exam to complete the application process. You cannot schedule your NBCOT exam without completing NBCOT's application process and receiving the ATT letter. WI allows you to log in online to see the status of your application.

Q: *How long does it take to get a state license?*

A: It depends on the state. Most state agencies indicate it can take up to 60 days to get a license and multiple parts must be completed. If you have an OT job secured or in process, please inform your employer of this timeframe. During peak graduation times for OT programs in the area, the state can take even longer than 60

days to process your application. The best way to ensure your license arrives as quickly as possible is to make sure you apply correctly, completely, and early.

Q: What about a temporary license? Can I work under temporary licensure before getting a permanent license?

A: Every state varies. In Wisconsin, you can apply for a temporary license to practice, but you must have graduated first. You cannot practice while finishing your degree requirements. In WI, you can use a temporary license for up to two practice locations, and you must have an affidavit signed by a licensed OT in the state of WI affirming he/she will be providing supervision at the specific practice site. A WI temporary license is good for up to 6 months and it expires the day you are notified of passing or failing the certification exam and cannot be renewed. Refer to guidelines published on the state's websites and on the license application materials for more information on temporary licensure. You can also refer to AOTA's website for a handout on temporary licensure by state by searching for "temporary license".

Q: The state has an application form that requests verification of my education? How do I get that verified?

A: Send the single form to the O.T. Dept. at UWL, and we will take care of verifying your graduation. Be sure to fill out the portion that is to be completed by the applicant only and do not fill out any portion that is to be completed by the school. That will delay your application process. Do not give us blank forms to complete. You must complete your portion first before we can fill out our portion. After completion, we will send it to the appropriate place indicated on the form. Please do NOT send your entire application to us. Remember that education verification forms **cannot** be filled out ahead of your graduation date. They must be completed after. The state of WI allows the #1570 form (Certificate of Professional Education) to be emailed by the school.

Q: Do I have to take an exam to get my state license?

A: The state of Wisconsin requires you to take an open book test, which asks questions regarding the administrative codes of the state regarding OT practice. All answers are found in the administrative code book online and you pass if you receive an 88% or higher. That test is completed online. Each state is different in its requirements, so be sure to read your state materials carefully.

Q: Finally, who do I call when I have problems?

A: The best advice is to first read your Candidate Handbook provided by NBCOT and information provided by the state on their websites to answer your questions. If you still have questions after this, please contact the following people as listed below. Though it is tempting to call the O.T. Dept. each time a problem arises, please try to find the answer first by reading this handout, the materials from NBCOT, and the state, and calling them when questions arise. Most questions and concerns are solved there. The O.T. department cannot call NBCOT, or the state licensure boards on your behalf due to privacy laws.

- For concerns about the status of your NBCOT application, contact NBCOT at (301) 990-7979 or info@nbcot.org.
- For issues with transcripts, call or email the UWL registrar's office
- For state licensure issues, call the state numbers provided on their websites.
- If you have exhausted all other means of solving problems with the organizations above and still have an unresolved issue, call or email the UWL OT department. Please note that the OT department cannot call any regulatory agencies on your behalf due to privacy laws. We can only provide general guidance and suggestions.

References:

NBCOT Certification Exam Handbook

https://www.nbcot.org/-/media/PDFs/Cert_Exam_Handbook.pdf

NBCOT Scoring Information & Calendar

<https://www.nbcot.org/scoring>

WI Licensure Website

<https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Professions/OccupationalTherapist/Default.aspx>

NBCOT® Degree Verification Policy

<https://www.nbcot.org/dvf>

Polly's "Graduation and Beyond 2024" PowerPoint from Professional Seminar.