MYTHBUSTING ONLINE EDUCATION

Why everything you think you know about online education is wrong
Distance education is by no means new, but it may surprise you to know that it goes as far back as 1728, when Caleb Phillips advertised his mail-based short hand lessons. As technology changed, different education options developed. In the 1950s, The University of Houston offered lessons on public television, running from 13 to 15 hours of lessons per week.

The first fully web-based accredited university was established in 1996. Since then, online learning platforms have evolved to meet higher educational standards and provide students with an exceptional education.
According to a 2013 Gallup Poll, adults thought poorly of online-based programs compared to community and four-year colleges and universities.

**What are the most commonly cited reasons not to take online courses?**

- Limited or no interaction with faculty
- Lower quality of education
- Online education is easier, therefore not as valuable
- Weaker student community
- Employers won’t accept degrees earned online
**CORRECTING THE MISCONCEPTIONS**

» **Limited or no interaction with faculty:** Online learning platforms allow as much interaction with professors as you would find in a traditional classroom. Online faculty provide office hours and means of contact for students, as well.

» **Lower quality of education:** Many online programs are adapted from traditional programs on a campus, ensuring a quality education. You’ll even earn the same degree. So long as the program is accredited, you’ll be receiving a quality education.

» **Online education is easier, therefore not as valuable:** Some argue that online programs require more self-discipline than traditional classrooms and could be considered more difficult. The value in the online program is in the education you receive that will prepare you for your future career.

» **Weaker student community:** Advances in some online learning platforms allows students to easily connect with one another to set up study groups and discuss homework.

» **Employers won’t accept degrees earned online:** Accreditation ensures the program meets the education standards set forth by the accrediting body, so employers will accept the degree.

Continue reading to learn more about the advantages of online education.
CHOOSING AN ONLINE PROGRAM

Learn how to decide what online program fits your needs
WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN AN ONLINE PROGRAM?

All education is not created equal. Whether you’re attending a traditional four-year college, earning your associate’s degree part time or attending school online, you want an education that is worth your time, money and effort. When you look for the right online program, keep in mind some of these crucial questions:

» What is your education timeline?
» Is the school accredited?
» Can you easily reach out to a counselor or advisor with questions?
» Are your professors readily available?
» What classes will you take?

We will take a closer look at each of these important factors.
YOUR TIMELINE

Your timeline is an important factor when considering your education. If you are fresh out of high school, you may be able to commit to a traditional school year beginning in the fall. However, you may be returning to school and seeking a completely new career. You’ll want a timeline that is flexible, with multiple start dates.

It’s important to factor in your expected graduation date. You may not be able to put a career on hold for four years while you earn your degree. Take a look at the school’s outlined curriculum to determine the length of time you will spend earning your degree.
Accreditation is one of the more important factors when choosing your school. Accreditation means the university and/or program has been validated and meets the higher learning expectations of various accrediting agencies established by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

An accredited school ensures you are receiving a quality education and your degree will be accepted by future employers. An easy way to spot a scam or a degree mill is by checking their accreditation, which should be listed on the state’s education website or on the university’s website.
ACCESSIBLE COUNSELORS AND ADVISORS

» Applying and attending a new university comes with a lot of questions. Make sure you have access to counselors and advisors throughout the application process and during your education. They will be with you step-by-step to answer any questions you have about the program. Your advisor can also help establish your education timeline and ensure you have met all the requirements for acceptance into programs.

» Without an advisor or counselor, your online education will be much more difficult. You want to find a program that doesn’t leave you to your own devices.
ACCESSIBLE FACULTY

» Part of what makes an exceptional online program is committed and accessible faculty. You will want to be able to speak with your teachers in regards to exams, lectures and other course material. How can you be expected to master material without a faculty member to guide you?

» Be sure to ask about the accessibility of the professors when you look into an online program.
REQUIRED COURSES

» Before you commit to a program, take a look at what courses you will be taking. Some universities may require a slew of core classes which you already completed and could require an additional four semesters of study.

» Seeing the courses you can expect to take will also prepare you for what’s ahead. You can plan out your semesters based on which classes you think may be more challenging.
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ST. CATHERINE

How we meet and exceed your educational expectations with our online OTA program
WHAT MAKES ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY DIFFERENT

An unparalleled and challenging education

St. Catherine University offers an education unlike any other. You will complete your degree through challenging and comprehensive online courses, as well as hands-on training in the simulation labs and clinicals, where you’ll be interacting with your professors and classmates.

At St. Catherine University, your education will consist of more than just watching recorded lectures and taking computer-generated exams.

St. Catherine’s OTA program will challenge you to grow and provide you with the academic framework to build your OTA career.
The online OTA program was created to ensure you are completely prepared for your career as an occupational therapy assistant. Your four semesters of full-time study will consist of all necessary courses, 60 hours of lab work and 720 hours of fieldwork. Both your fieldwork and lab work will allow you to practice the theoretical concepts you learn in class.
ENGAGING COURSES

» Mastering material is about more than just sitting there and mindlessly absorbing endless lectures. Our cutting-edge online learning platform provides clearly outlined learning objectives, so students know exactly what will be expected of them in each course.

» Students will be involved in interactive presentations, live lectures, video posting and class discussions. The chat feature allows students to engage with both their professors and other students, meaning online study groups and answers to your questions are just a click away. The lab and fieldwork components where you will be practicing the theoretical coursework will keep you engaged with professors, students and real patients.
Here’s an example of the online learning platform:
Our interactive learning platform allows you to learn through constant engagement. You will reinforce your learning through hands-on experience. Your four semesters of full-time study will consist of all necessary courses, 60 hours of lab work and 720 hours of fieldwork. Both your fieldwork and lab work will allow you to practice the theoretical concepts you learn in class.
WHAT TO EXPECT EACH SEMESTER

SEMESTER 1
» Role of the OTA
» Human Occupations I
» Human Occupations II
» Group Dynamics & Leadership
» Arts and Artists
» Lifespan Developmental Psychology

SEMESTER 2
» Clinical Conditions
» Client Support Skills
» Health Justice
» Aging
» Therapeutic Applications 1
» Level 1 Fieldwork
WHAT TO EXPECT EACH SEMESTER

SEMESTER 3

» Human Ecology
» Therapeutic Applications II
» Practice Models/Professional Issues I
» Short Story
» Power and Social Change
» Level II Fieldwork

SEMESTER 4

» Practice Models/Professional Issues II
» Therapeutic Applications III
» Ethical Problems in Health
» Immigrants and Refugees
» The Christian Journey
» Level II Fieldwork
HIGH-QUALITY, PERSONALIZED EDUCATION

Earning your degree online does not mean you are settling for a lower-quality education. Online courses require self-discipline, and the shortened time frame requires absolute dedication to your studies.

Online courses provide a flexibility you won’t see in a traditional classroom setting. The curriculum is highly structured, with set exam times and due dates for coursework. So long as you meet these requirements, your work can fit around your schedule.

St. Catherine University is fully accredited, so you are assured an education that meets the academic standards set out by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
AN ADAPTED PROGRAM

» St. Catherine University’s online OTA program is adapted from the traditional OTA program offered at St. Catherine’s campus. The program was developed with the help of the faculty to develop stronger programs for the online portion.

» The content you would learn in a classroom is reformulated specifically for the online learning platform. You’ll still receive the same quality education, but now it is more flexible.
COMMITTED FACULTY

Every course you take at St. Catherine University has a completely dedicated staff member. Your professor will be able to answer all of your questions and is available to hear any feedback you may have. Your instructors will be present during both your labs and your clinicals, advising you on procedures, equipment use and patient care.

St. Catherine’s instructors are committed to providing a high-quality education to each student.

Qualified and engaged

» The faculty for the online program are dedicated professionals. Faculty must meet certain standards in their online classrooms. Professors will provide students with outlined office hours, as well as a means of accessing him or her, so students can meet their professors one-on-one whenever necessary. Professors are all expected to inform students of their response times, and all have bios on the online learning platform.

Not Just Professors

» Plenty of support is available at our sites, so you will always have access to help.
ENGAGING PEERS

» You won't be going through the OTA program alone. Not only will you be able to engage with your fellow students in online chat rooms, but you’ll be attending labs and fieldwork with them as well.

» Not only will engaging with your classmates help reinforce your studies, but it provides you with important connections that you can use down the road when looking for open OTA positions.
Although it may be true that when you are taking your online classes you won’t be sitting next to your peers, that doesn’t mean you won’t have interaction with them throughout your education.

Not only will you be able to chat with your classmates about homework and the theories you’re learning in the unique online format, but you will also be attending labs and clinicals with them. You will be actively engaged with your peers.
HOW ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY COMPARES

OUR PROGRAM

» Graduate after four semesters of full-time study
» No need for a bachelor’s degree
» First online OTA program in the United States
» Combined online and hands-on learning

OTHER ONLINE COLLEGES

» You set your own schedule, which may mean later graduation dates
» May require a bachelor’s degree
» Online only
Now that you know what you can really expect from a quality online education, you can feel confident when applying for St. Catherine’s online OTA program.

Contact us today to speak to an advisor and get started on the admissions processes.

Follow St. Catherine’s online OTA program on social media to keep up to date on all of the news, including start dates, deadlines and blogs.