

College of Occupational Therapists'
learning and development standards
for pre-registration education



About the publisher

The College of Occupational Therapists is a wholly owned subsidiary of the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) and operates as a registered charity. It represents the profession nationally and internationally, and contributes widely to policy consultations throughout the UK. The College sets the professional and educational standards for occupational therapy, providing leadership, guidance and information relating to research and development, education, practice and lifelong learning. In addition, 11 accredited specialist sections support expert clinical practice.

College of
Occupational
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Key terms

ADL	Activities of daily living.
Aegrotat degree	This is a degree that can sometimes be awarded when a candidate is unable to take his or her examination because of illness or death, and where it has been deemed that the candidate would have otherwise passed. An aegrotat degree will not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the regulatory body or for professional membership to the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT).
Competency	The acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to practise safely in a work setting.
Foundation degree	Foundation degrees are intended to give a basic knowledge in a subject to enable the holder to go on to further study in that field. They are normally offered by universities and further education colleges. The qualification is at Level 5 in the qualifications framework.
Graduate	A student who has successfully met the occupational therapy programme requirements of his or her educational institution.
Interprofessional education	Students from different disciplines actively participating to learn from and about each other. The anticipated outcome of interprofessional education is a development of a working culture of effective collaboration and integration of care across agencies.
Learning agreement	A collaboratively written agreement between a student and educational institution (or practice placement) that identifies what is to be learned, how it will be learned, and how that learning will be evaluated.
Occupational disruption	A transient or temporary state where an individual is restricted from participation in necessary or meaningful occupations.
Shared learning	A specific learning experience where students from various disciplines are brought together to learn in the same location about the same topics.
Step-UP award	Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-UP) awards are a flexible and adaptable range of general and pre-vocational qualifications. They have been devised with the aim of preparing learners for further learning and/or employment.

Acknowledgement

This document draws on previous editions of the College of Occupational Therapists' *Pre-registration education standards* (2009b) and the College of Occupational Therapists' *Curriculum guidance for pre-registration education* (2009a). The concepts and ideas expressed in this document are a development of that previous work and are intended to reflect current practices and service contexts, and to continue to equip graduates who can take the profession into the future.

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Authors' note

The authors would like to remind the reader that The College of Occupational Therapists is not the regulatory body for the profession and that all programmes must continue to meet the requirements and standards of the regulator.

The College is the agent of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and therefore this document complies with the Federation's current standards. This document will be reviewed and refreshed as required to reflect any change in standards for education programmes published by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists.

1 Introduction

The values and beliefs central to occupational therapy have remained largely unchanged throughout the life of the profession; however, the shape and form of our services are dynamic, as are the contexts through which they are delivered. For this reason, and to ensure that occupational therapy graduates are appropriately prepared for their professional careers, it is essential to review and revise, on a regular basis, the documents that guide their education and set the standards for their programmes.

In 2013, the College of Occupational Therapists (COT) continued the cycle of review and revision of two core documents: *Curriculum guidance for pre-registration education* (2009a) and *Pre-registration education standards* (2009b), beginning with a survey of the British Association of Occupational Therapists' membership. Participation was strong, with members across a range of roles and contexts sharing their thoughts and experiences. A working party was tasked with evaluating and considering the responses and using this learning to inform the next iteration of the documents. This single-document format (which reflects one element of the feedback) presents a concise document relevant for occupational therapists in a range of roles.

This document brings together the desired outcomes for education programmes in the form of an 'entry-level profile' for the graduating occupational therapist, along with the standards and requirements that educational institutions must achieve in order to assure the College that the programme is fit for purpose to deliver against the profile. It can be seen that the *content* of programmes is not specified, and that the focus is on *outcomes*. This allows each programme to have a unique flavour that responds to the particular strengths of the education provider and the diversity of student learning styles. Common to all programmes, however, will be acquisition of the core values, beliefs, knowledge and skills fundamental to occupational therapy. In this way, occupational therapy programmes and graduates are not homogenous but rather reflect the richness and diversity of our profession, the contexts in which we practise and the individuals we serve.

That our profession is not static, but instead responsive and evolving, represents a strength as well as a challenge. Our graduates must establish a strong sense of identity as an occupational therapist, have core professional knowledge and skills, demonstrate professionalism and hone leadership skills to take the profession forward. This will require all of those involved in the education of our future workforce – academics, practitioners, managers and placement educators – to help realise this through engagement with the concepts expressed within this document. We hope that its structure and content will facilitate this.

2 Occupational therapy into the future

2.1 Defining occupational therapy

Occupational therapists view people as occupational beings. As occupational beings, people are intrinsically active and creative, needing to engage in a balanced range of activities in their daily lives in order to sustain health and wellbeing. People shape, and are shaped by, their experiences and interactions with their environments. They create identity, purpose and meaning through what they do and have the capacity to transform themselves through conscious and autonomous action.

The purpose of occupational therapy is to enable people to fulfil, or to work towards fulfilling, their potential as occupational beings. Occupational therapists promote activity, quality of life and the realisation of potential in people who are experiencing occupational disruption, deprivation, imbalance or isolation. We believe that activity can be an effective medium for remediation, facilitating adaptation and re-creating identity.

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) encapsulates this view with their definition, as follows:

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

(WFOT 2012)

2.2 A vision for the occupational therapy profession

Occupational therapists are a professional group that works with people across the wellness spectrum and through the life span. It is a profession that holds at its core a belief that occupational fulfilment facilitates health and wellbeing. From established traditional services within health and care sectors, occupational therapists have extended their reach. Now, in addition to working with those beyond the remit of statutory services, occupational therapists provide health education and promotion. In these settings the occupational therapist's focus is always to enable individuals and communities to establish ways of living that are personally meaningful and sustainable and which support the achievement of people's occupational aspirations.

To ensure that the worth of occupational therapy is recognised and valued by individuals and by potential commissioners, the profession must become a stronger advocate for itself. To achieve this, the workforce must:

- Steadfastly embrace the power of occupation to transform lives as the central tenet of the profession. This belief should be at the core of our professional identity as occupational therapists and must be visible to others.

- Ensure that this belief underpins all activities of occupational therapists and should be drawn on to bring about transformational change to the benefit of individuals and communities who may access occupational therapy services now and in the future.
- Gain a system view of the contexts in which occupational therapists might practise, acquire political astuteness and hone leadership skills to ensure that occupational therapy continues to be relevant and beneficial during changing service structures and design.

2.2.1 The role of the College for this vision

The College of Occupational Therapists is the professional body and steward of the profession in the United Kingdom. It has delegated authority to confer the approval of the WFOT on pre-registration occupational therapy programmes in the United Kingdom, and the College of Occupational Therapists' accreditation of any pre-registration programme is the mechanism for conferring this approval. As such, it must ensure that these programmes:

- Remain compatible with the TUNING competences for Europe (Tuning Occupational Therapy Project Group 2008) and the WFOT *Revised minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists* (WFOT 2002).
- Shape the current and emerging practice of occupational therapy, safeguarding occupation as the founding value.
- Promote the development of a dynamic occupational therapy workforce that is fit for the present and the future.
- Support the development of professionals committed to practising in an evidence-informed manner, and to reviewing and extending the profession's evidence base.
- Produce graduates who have comparable values, knowledge and professional attributes derived from the education process.

The College also emboldens education providers to work with practitioners, service users and students, and to be creative in the development of curricula that reflect, and are responsive to, professional, political, health and social drivers.

2.2.2 The role of occupational therapy education for this vision

In its role as steward of the profession, the College of Occupational Therapists holds responsibility for the profession's central philosophy. The two statements below express this:

1. *The centrality of occupation in human life.* Occupation is essential both to individual health and wellbeing and to the health of communities and populations. Occupation is both the goal and the main tool of occupational therapists in their efforts to fulfil their professional purpose. Occupation must, therefore, be the core of the occupational therapy curriculum, into which all other subjects are integrated. The centrality of occupation in human life and in the occupational therapy curriculum must be made explicit.
2. *Transformation through occupation.* The purpose of occupational therapy is to transform the occupational lives of individuals, groups, communities and societies. In order for students to experience the transformative potential of occupation it must be demonstrated as central within the curriculum.

It is the responsibility of the local education provider to ensure that this philosophy shapes their programme design and delivery. It is also the responsibility of the education provider to enable future development of the profession by ensuring that the graduating workforce is equipped to practise in changing and dynamic environments.

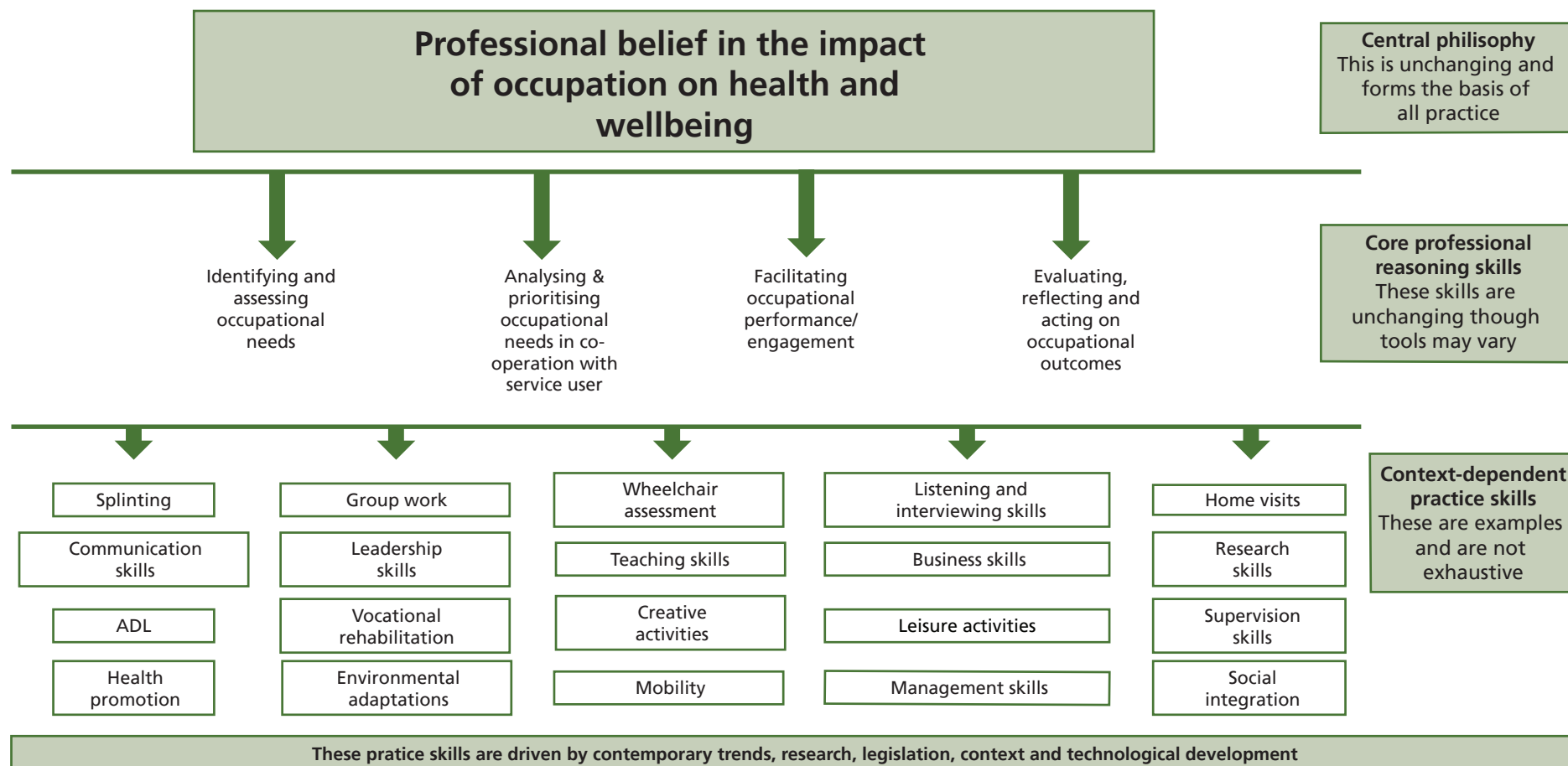
For the profession to continue to move forward, students must develop competence in three areas:

1. *Professionalism*: including a strong professional identity; established values and beliefs in occupational therapy; professional attitudes and aspirations and critical thinking and capability.
2. *Knowledge*: including understanding of the nature and importance of occupation to individuals, communities and populations; the relationship of occupation to health and wellbeing; the professional purpose of occupational therapy and how occupational therapy works to improve health and wellbeing.
3. *Skills*: including a broad range of thinking and reasoning skills; occupational therapy process skills and skills in the analysis and use of activities as therapeutic media.

The relationship between knowledge and core skills is shown in Figure 1. Technical skills are contextually driven and some may be experienced and developed outside the educational institution in practice education and honed and developed as a practitioner.

The overarching demonstration of students' competence in these three areas will be the achievement of the occupational therapy entry-level profile in order to confer the ability to apply to the United Kingdom regulatory body for inclusion on its statutory register. Graduates will thus be better prepared for future practice within whichever context enables them to impact on people's occupation, participation and wellbeing.

Figure 1 Relationship between knowledge and core skills



3

The occupational therapist entry-level profile

Occupational therapy graduates should be prepared for and capable of practising as an occupational therapist and have confidence in their professional identity to practise autonomously. Achieving this will require a range of professional and practical knowledge, skills and competencies that will be underpinned by the core values, beliefs and attitudes of an occupational therapist. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate an informed commitment to the philosophical and theoretical concepts that form the foundation of occupational therapy, most notably the occupational nature of human beings and the impact of occupation on health and wellbeing.

The following statements are intended for use in curricula as a common profile of the profession's expected graduate competencies.

3.1 Knowledge and understanding of occupational therapy

The graduate is able to:

- i. Explain the relationship between occupation, health and wellbeing and the factors that facilitate or challenge participation in occupations.
- ii. Synthesise theories from occupational science and other relevant bodies of knowledge to form the foundation of reasoned professional practice.
- iii. Appraise the complexities of theories and research and apply evidence-informed understanding of occupation to a changing society.
- iv. Explain the impact of occupational disruption in relation to the occupational performance of individuals, groups and communities, and the value of restoring opportunities for participation in occupation.
- v. Practise in healthcare, social care and community settings in relation to physical and psychosocial needs.
- vi. Engage in cogent and reasoned debate in relation to occupation and occupational therapy in order to critically evaluate the impact of intervention.

3.2 Professional and ethical reasoning and practice

The graduate is able to:

- i. Identify the occupational needs of individuals, groups and communities and make informed judgements about complex issues through professional reasoning and the selection, modification and application of theories, models of practice and approaches.
- ii. Apply professional reasoning skills to identify appropriate activities, skills and techniques for the facilitation of occupational engagement, respecting the relevant rights, needs and preferences of those involved.

- iii. Through creative and innovative practice, implement and evaluate occupational therapy strategies to address occupational need(s).
- iv. Work in partnership with individuals, groups and communities using occupation to promote participation, health and wellbeing.
- v. Critically appraise personal practice and occupational therapy service delivery to ensure that the focus is on occupation and occupational performance and that it takes account of the political and social context of the service.
- vi. Prepare, implement and review all documentation and communications related to occupational therapy practice to ensure that they effectively justify professional actions and outcomes.

3.3 Professional relationships and partnerships

The graduate is able to:

- i. Appreciate and respect diversity, individual differences, cultural beliefs and customs and their influence on occupation and participation.
- ii. Build effective therapeutic relationships and collaborations as the foundation for occupational therapy.
- iii. Create and sustain appropriate collaborative working practices.

3.4 Professional autonomy and accountability

The graduate is able to:

- i. Comply with the regulatory standards of conduct, performance and ethics and the College of Occupational Therapists' code of ethics and professional conduct.
- ii. Display resilience and resourcefulness, confidence in self-management, self-awareness and evaluation of self, along with knowledge of personal potential as an occupational therapist.
- iii. Adhere to employer regulations and relevant local/regional/national/European policies, procedures and legislation.
- iv. Be accountable for personal professional practice and outcomes.
- v. Understand and apply the principles of leadership and management to occupational therapy services, including establishing or contributing to the review and ongoing development of occupational therapy practice guidance and guidelines.
- vi. Demonstrate a professional commitment to enhance occupational therapy practice through lifelong learning and reflection with critical review.

3.5 Scholarly practice in occupational therapy and occupational science

The graduate is able to:

- i. Understand the role of evidence-informed practice and accept responsibility to contribute to its development.

- ii. Actively seek, critically evaluate and generate a range of information and evidence to justify occupational therapy practice and ensure that it is informed, current and relevant.
- iii. Select and justify designs, methods and ethics appropriate to research in occupation and occupational therapy.
- iv. Disseminate research findings in a variety of appropriate ways within and beyond the profession.

3.6 Leadership in occupational therapy

The graduate is able to:

- i. Consult and advise on facilitating occupational therapy practice, and advocate for the right of individuals, groups and communities to have their occupational needs met.
- ii. Contribute to the development of existing and future occupational therapy practice, embracing and facilitating change in order to respond appropriately to meet the needs of service users and relevant stakeholders.
- iii. Engage in a continuous process of evaluation and improvement of the quality of occupational therapy provision, involving users of services where appropriate and communicating results to others.
- iv. Act with political awareness and proactively seek out and influence relevant local and national policies and legislation that impact on occupational therapy services.
- v. Recognise and respond to the business needs of occupational therapy services, including quality considerations.

3.7 Promotion of occupational therapy

The graduate is able to:

- i. Take a proactive role in the development, improvement and promotion of occupational therapy as a profession and as a service to individuals, groups and communities.
- ii. Identify potential opportunities for service provision in areas new to the profession.
- iii. Collaborate with individuals, groups and communities to promote and develop the health and wellbeing of their members through their participation in occupation.

3.8 Employability

The graduate is able to:

- i. Recognise and articulate his or her professional and personal abilities in order to facilitate employability.
- ii. Be fluent in describing his or her professional identity in a language appropriate to a range of stakeholders, and able to explain the aims and potential benefits of occupational therapy across a wide range of contexts.

4 Standards for higher education institutions

4.1 Standard 1: Programme management and resources standards

Essential requirements	
For work-based learning programmes, the status of student (as opposed to employee) must be clearly defined and agreed through a tripartite contract between the employer, the employee/student, and the higher education institution (HEI).	
Standard	Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The profession-specific suite of programmes offered by the institution is headed by an occupational therapist with higher education experience. The individual is a member who is in good standing with the professional body and is capable of strategically leading the development of contemporary, creative and innovative pre-registration occupational therapy programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Have a broad range of professional experience, demonstrating previous substantive academic appointment in higher education.– Input into strategy for the development and delivery of the programme, recognising the changing needs of the profession.– Have authority to maintain the College of Occupational Therapists' pre-registration education standards.– Be a member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) and facilitate and support the active involvement of professional members of staff with the professional body.– Possess capabilities under the leadership level of the current College of Occupational Therapists' Post Qualifying Framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each accredited pre-registration occupational therapy programme within the suite at the institution will be led by an occupational therapist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Be a member of the BAOT.– Be responsible for ensuring that the standards and essential requirements for pre-registration are met.– Ensure that the programme is aligned to the entry-level profile.– Hold direct responsibility for developing the occupational therapy programme, co-ordinating the planning and administration of the programme.

Standard	Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution employs a sufficient number of staff with suitable qualifications and experience to support and facilitate the learning required for professional practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has a clearly defined staffing strategy for the delivery of all elements of the professional programme over the period of accreditation. The strategy demonstrates currency and awareness of the broad contexts of occupational therapy practice. • The professional backgrounds and experience of academic and practice learning staff are congruent with the philosophy and purpose of the occupational therapy programme. • Staff qualifications are appropriate to the level of the final award. • Professional occupational therapy elements of the programme are taught by occupational therapists with appropriate expertise and qualifications. • Occupational therapy staff CVs demonstrate: (i) active engagement in scholarship and research that contributes to the knowledge and evidence base of the programme and/or the profession; (ii) active engagement with the profession and/or BAOT. • A robust strategy for staffing is in place to ensure that all aspects of the programme are well resourced and supported, with appropriate levels of qualified occupational therapy staff for the profession-specific, professional skills and practice-based learning components.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staffing strategy takes account of the professional development needs of both academic and practice learning staff to support evidence-based educational practice and the further development of the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence that staff development activities impact upon the design and delivery of a contemporary and evidence-based curriculum and practice learning experience of students. • The HEI has a policy for the ongoing development of its academic occupational therapy team. Staff CVs demonstrate engagement with professional and educational development through a range of developmental activities, including research where appropriate. • The HEI can demonstrate a commitment to working in partnership with practice learning staff to support on-going professional and educational development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational resources and facilities are appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear resource strategy in place for the delivery of the programme to ensure professional accreditation.

4.2 Standard 2: Programme curriculum standards

Essential requirements	
Programme duration:	
The duration of a pre-registration programme will normally be a minimum of 90 scheduled weeks of learning. Where a programme is less than 90 weeks, students must demonstrate relevant prior learning. Acceptable relevant prior learning must be identified in the programme documentation at the point of accreditation.	
Any individual student's period of learning must not exceed the length of the accredited programme plus two years and not exceeding six years. The exception to this is where the institution's regulations require the student to complete his or her programme in a shorter time.	
In exceptional circumstances an extension of normally no more than six months beyond this maximum period may be requested. In such cases the approval of the College of Occupational Therapists must be sought prior to any further study or professional practice experience being permitted.	
Students who complete a foundation degree that serves as an entry route to a pre-registration occupational therapy bachelor's degree with honours are required to complete both programmes within a maximum of six years. The exception to this is where the institution's regulations require the student to complete his or her programme in a shorter time.	
Standard	Criteria
The programme curriculum is designed to develop occupational therapists who meet the entry-level profile and regulatory standards and are fit for contemporary and developing professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme design is based on a clearly articulated occupational therapy philosophy and its values. • The programme curriculum explores the connections between occupation, health and wellbeing. • The programme is able to evidence a strategy for the admission of individuals who hold values appropriate for professional practice as an occupational therapist working with individuals, groups and communities. • There is evidence that appropriate stakeholders, students and service users are involved in curriculum development and implementation. • There is evidence that the curriculum reflects current professional practice climates and is agile in response to changes. • There is evidence that the programme is forward thinking, able to identify professional and political influences and future directions, and to affect and shape the profession into the future. • There is evidence that the programme encourages student participation in professional activities and responsibilities as a foundation for developing professional practice.

Standard	Criteria
The programme is designed to assure coherence and progression towards entry-level proficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clearly articulated educational philosophy and rationale. • There is a clear rationale for the programme design that reflects how it addresses local, national and global needs and priorities. • The curriculum takes account of current national, European and wider international reference standards and benchmarks. • The integrity of the curriculum is reflected in the integration of knowledge, skills and values throughout the programme and across academic and professional practice elements. • Both academic and professional practice elements demonstrate progression towards professional proficiencies. • There is a clear induction to each level of academic study that serves to prepare students and set programme and professional expectations. • Each student must be allocated a personal tutor who is an occupational therapist. The tutor has responsibility for supporting personal and professional development of the student and for providing general academic advice and mentoring through different stages of the qualifying programme. The mechanisms for providing support must be sufficiently robust, flexible and accessible to cater for the needs of the student. • The regulatory body confirms that the programme meets its standards for education and proficiency.
The curriculum includes opportunities for interprofessional and interagency learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum demonstrates how interprofessional and interagency learning is embedded into the curriculum in academic and/or professional settings to develop the attitudes necessary for collaborative practice. • Interprofessional education (IPE) modules must contain a core set of values and include a clear rationale for inclusion in any programme. Assurance must be made that the model adopted is collaborative and involves and values each profession equally. • All participating professions in IPE should contribute to the development of its curriculum and the scope of IPE should be clearly defined. • IPE modules will constitute no more than a third of a pre-registration occupational therapy professional qualification and will be identified at the point of accreditation. Any IPE module identified as contributing to the professional qualification must contribute to the learning outcomes of that programme.

Standard	Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPE must be a productive and relevant learning experience for all students and meet the generic benchmark statements for occupational therapy. • The curriculum recognises and reflects the expectations of the College of Occupational Therapists' current statement on interprofessional education.
The curriculum is designed to facilitate the development of a scholarly practitioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum demonstrates how students develop to be skilled consumers of research, able to apply new understandings to the benefit of service users, the service and the profession. • The curriculum demonstrates how research skills are taught and developed throughout the programme to equip students with the knowledge required to participate in research activities.
The curriculum inculcates the principles of lifelong learning as an essential part of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – describes how the concept of professional and personal development is embedded and nurtured throughout the programme; – clearly explains how students are enabled to document achievements and formulate a future development plan.

4.3 Standard 3: Learning, teaching and assessment standards

Essential requirements
The College of Occupational Therapists' accreditation of a pre-registration occupational therapy programme will be conditional on the implementation of the College's regulations on academic and practice education.
All modules (or equivalent) contributing to the professional qualification must be passed. These modules must be identified at the point of accreditation.
Practice placement
Only one attempt at retrieval is permissible for each period of learning/modules related to practice education. When the first attempt and retrieval process for the module have been exhausted, the student is deemed to have failed the requirements of the course and therefore must be withdrawn from the named award.
A student must be denied a retrieval attempt if the failure originally occurred on grounds of professional unsuitability.
The practice hours of failed practice education will not count towards the minimum requirement of 1000 hours.
External examiners
At least one external examiner must be an occupational therapist with an understanding and experience of assessment principles and methods in higher education. Where there are more than two external examiners, the majority must be occupational therapists.
The appointment of suitable external examiners is the responsibility of the HEI. The College of Occupational Therapists must be advised of all appointments and reserves the right to raise objections to any appointment to a programme accredited by the College.
All modules identified as contributing to the professional qualification must be scrutinised by an external examiner who is an occupational therapist.
Exit awards
A clear statement is made within the programme documentation regarding exit awards where a student does not complete the professional qualifying award successfully.
If the institution wishes to offer other exit awards, the titles of the awards must be stated at the point of accreditation and must not make reference to the protected title of occupational therapist. The programme document must clearly state that no exit award other than the professional qualifying award will confer eligibility to apply for registration with the profession's regulatory body.
An aegrotat degree will not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the professional regulatory body. Should the HEI offer an aegrotat degree, the title of the award must be stated in the definitive document and must not include any reference to the protected title of occupational therapist.
All interim and final awards must be able to demonstrate compliance with the educational standards of the COT, WFOT, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the regulatory body.

Essential requirements	
Accreditation of prior (experiential) learning [AP(E)L]	
AP(E)L must be offered to applicants to recognise previous learning and experience. Appropriate arrangements must be in place to support applicants submitting claims for AP(E)L.	
AP(E)L procedures must be clearly stated, with each application considered on an individual basis and academic judgement applied.	
No more than one-third of the programme or part of the programme may be subject to AP(E)L in accordance with the College of Occupational Therapists' current position statement on AP(E)L. An exception to this requirement is an occupational therapy student who is transferring between education providers. In this instance, the student must meet assessment requirements and requirements of the receiving HEI and be recommended as 'fit for the profession' by the original programme.	
Foundation degrees	
A foundation degree designed as an entry qualification/step-up award to a pre-registration occupational therapy programme must be a coherent programme of study in its own right and clearly demonstrate alignment with the learning outcomes of a bachelor's degree with honours in occupational therapy. The progression route through to a bachelor's degree with honours in occupational therapy must be stated.	
Where generic foundation degrees are used as step-up awards to a pre-registration bachelor's degree programme, the applicant must undergo the standard admissions process to the BSc programme and will be subject to the standard AP(E)L requirements for that programme.	
Standard	Criteria
The programme document, through its learning and teaching methods and assessment strategy, supports the development and achievement of the entry-level profile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational programme rationalises the educational strategy for learning, teaching and assessment methods as a development towards achievement of the entry-level profile. • The learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – foster independent learning and a commitment to ongoing learning and development; – develop professional values, attitudes and behaviours. • The learning, teaching and assessment methods utilise a range of techniques and technologies to address the pedagogic needs of the student body. • The learning, teaching and assessment strategy is transparent to the student. • The programme document defines the occupational therapy student's responsibilities, roles and expectations in all elements of the programme and clearly indicates the consequences of not fulfilling these.

Standard	Criteria
<p>The assessment strategy and methods assure fitness for practice, purpose, profession and academic award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme ensures rigorous and robust assessments that enable the student to demonstrate professional competency and safe practice commensurate with the level of study. • Appropriate support mechanisms, policies and procedures are in place to enable progression of professionally suitable students. • Achieving the learning outcomes of the programme will ensure that students are prepared and suitable for academic award, and fit for purpose and professional employment. • The College of Occupational Therapists' code of ethics and professional conduct is observed. • The programme must have a policy and documented procedures for the investigation of alleged professional unsuitability and for the potential termination of a student's professional programme on these grounds.

4.4 Standard 4: Quality assurance and monitoring standards

Essential requirements	
The College of Occupational Therapists receives timely and complete Annual Monitoring Reports after each year of programme delivery.	
Standard	Criteria
Quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place to monitor the standards of the programme. These are sufficiently robust that the College of Occupational Therapists has continued confidence in the integrity and stewardship of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance processes demonstrate rigour and integrity, and enable continuous improvement of and within the programme. • Quality assurance processes include feedback from external examiners, academic staff, placement educators, students, service users and stakeholders. • Mechanisms are in place to provide evidence that future employers believe graduates are fit for practice and employment.

4.5 Standard 5: Practice placements

Programme standards	
Standard	Criteria
The staffing strategy is sufficiently robust to resource the student's professional practice learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of staff who is an occupational therapist has overall responsibility for the development of practice learning opportunities across a wide range of practice settings. • The HEI has a clearly defined strategy to identify, recruit and retain practice educators, and to facilitate the development of practice educators under the College of Occupational Therapists' Accreditation of Practice Placement Educators (APPLE) scheme (or equivalent). • The HEI takes responsibility for developing and maintaining the delivery of the APPLE (or equivalent) scheme. • There is a clearly defined strategy for administration, contacting students and supporting their practice-based learning needs, and evidence that this is implemented.
There is a progressive programme of practice placement education that facilitates development of competent entry-level occupational therapists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice placement is distributed throughout each year of the programme. • Practice placements will provide the student with the opportunity to experience or implement the occupational therapy process, or aspects of the process, with an individual or group and to gain a wider knowledge of the service provision. • Placements are of sufficient duration to allow integration of theory to practice. • Practice placements must be full-time or, where there is a rationale provided, at least 0.5 whole time equivalent (wte) to facilitate continuity and consolidation of the learning experience. • Credit for the first placement module can be awarded through AP(E)L on evidence of the relevant learning outcomes being met. • The number of placement hours recognised through AP(E)L will be equivalent to the number of hours normally accredited through module completion. • The programme document demonstrates the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' requirement for students to complete successfully the equivalent of a minimum of 1000 hours of assessed practice placement learning in a range of practice settings. This can include hours assessed through accreditation of prior experiential learning. • There are mechanisms and procedures in place to evaluate and monitor the quality of learning environments and to manage situations where students' learning is being affected.

Programme standards	
Standard	Criteria
The HEI demonstrates that there is a sufficient and diverse range of practice learning opportunities to support the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence that the programme strives for each student to gain practice experience with a range of people of all ages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – from different socio-economic and cultural perspectives; – with recently acquired and long-standing occupational needs; – with different aspects of physical and psychosocial functioning; – within a range of organisational settings. • There is evidence that all practice learning settings will facilitate the students' formation of their identity as an occupational therapist, and acquisition of the profession's values and core beliefs. • For students in work-based learning or in-service programmes, practice placement modules must be undertaken outside the students' own work setting, and if possible outside their own employer's organisation.
Appropriate models of supervision are used that develop students to be fit for employment as entry-level occupational therapists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has a clear induction to practice environments that serves to prepare students and share practice educator expectations for professional development. • Models of supervision are used appropriately to enable students to develop the ability to practise safely and effectively in occupational therapy. • Learning agreements between the student and the practice educator specify progressive learning outcomes for the practice setting and are agreed by an occupational therapist. • There are mechanisms and procedures in place to manage students who are not fit for practice. • There is support available from the HEI for both the student and the placement where a student is failing to reach the required learning outcomes or demonstrate fitness for the profession.

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College of Occupational Therapists' learning and development standards for pre-registration education

The College of Occupational Therapists: Learning and Development Standards for Pre-registration Education combines and updates the 2009 'Curriculum Guidance' and 'Education Standards' for Pre-registration Education.

This new publication outlines the standards and requirements for education providers to meet for College of Occupational Therapists accreditation of their pre-registration programmes. It explains the entry-level profile of an occupational therapist and uses this to give guidance on the design of curricula for higher education institutions. The standards support and facilitate the development of a programme suitable to meet the requirements of the regulatory body in the UK, as well as being approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists.

This publication can be used both practically and as a reference tool for education providers, practice placement educators, students, service users, and any other agencies with an interest in the standards set by the professional body.

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