



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte  
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +  
Social Care Professionals

# Occupational Therapists Registration Board

## Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists

## About this Document

**CORU is a multi-profession regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.**

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out the Occupational Therapists Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists.

**This document should be read in conjunction with:**

- Occupational Therapists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes: Information for Education Providers
- Programme Information Guidelines for Education and Training Providers.

### Freedom of Information and Data Protection

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council is subject to the Freedom of Information and its records are subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2004.

Any personal data received by CORU will be used for the purpose of programme approval and monitoring and shared with those involved in these processes.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Standards of Proficiency.....	5
Criteria for Education and Training Programmes.....	5
Approval and Monitoring of Programmes.....	5
Standards of Proficiency.....	6
1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability.....	6
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking.....	8
3. Safety and Quality.....	10
4. Professional Development.....	12
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills.....	13

## Introduction

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The objective of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

- The **approval** of education and training programmes (Section 48) – this allows a Registration Board to determine if it is satisfied that a programme which applies for approval is suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration in its register.
- The **monitoring** of approved programmes (Section 49) – this allows a Registration Board to satisfy itself as to the continuing suitability of the education, training, assessment and examination, and clinical training and experience provided by any education and training programme approved by the Board.

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduates for entry on to the register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Registration Board.

### There are two types of requirements:

- **Standards of proficiency** are the threshold standards set by the Registration Board for entry to the register. The standards of proficiency provide detail on the knowledge and skills that all graduates must possess at entry to the register.
- **Criteria for education and training programmes** are the set of requirements set by the Registration Board related to how a professional education and training programme is designed and managed. The criteria are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession.

## Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register. Rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for Occupational Therapists under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

## Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register. These criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed. The criteria are detailed in a separate document called the *Occupational Therapists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*.

## Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet all of the Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the Occupational Therapists Register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

If a programme is not approved, the associated qualification will not be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Monitoring is a requirement of all approved programmes and is conducted not less than once every five years. Qualifications may be removed from the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law if the associated programme does not meet the Board's requirements under monitoring. Students graduating from a programme not listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law are not eligible to apply for entry to the Occupational Therapists Register.

# 1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

## Graduates will:

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1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession
2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional
3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference
4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure
5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process
6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care
7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* for the profession issued by the Registration Board
8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups
9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers
10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given
11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting
12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse
13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation
14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing
15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained

16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity
17. Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made
18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate
19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources
20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing

## 2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

### Graduates will:

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1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user
2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs
3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns
4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-management of their own health and wellbeing, where appropriate
5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required
6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation
7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession
8. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements
9. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality
10. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice
11. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management
12. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users
13. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

14. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting
15. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

### 3. Safety and Quality

#### Graduates will:

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1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs
2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment
3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests
4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process
5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals
6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments
7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user
9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews
10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns
11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement
12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines

13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines
14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies

## 4. Professional Development

### Graduates will:

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1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for their own professional development
2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice
3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice
4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately
5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice
6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

## 5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

### Graduates will:

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1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the practice of the profession
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological sciences including anatomy, human development, social and behavioural sciences, occupational science and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing, function, disease, disorder, and dysfunction and be able to apply this to the practice of occupational therapy with consideration to the person – environment –occupation relationship.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical concepts underpinning occupational therapy including the occupational nature of individuals, families, groups and communities
4. Be able to discuss the origins and development of occupational therapy, including the evolution of the profession towards the emphasis on occupation based practice and on autonomy and empowerment of individuals, groups and communities
5. Demonstrate an understanding of occupational science in the context of occupational therapy practice including the person-environment-occupation relationship and person-environment-occupation relationship to health, development and well-being
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the Person Factors in occupational performance areas and engagement including motor, sensory, cognitive, perceptual, psychosocial and spiritual and be able to apply these to practice
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the Environment Factors in occupational performance and engagement including social, physical, cultural and institutional and be able to apply these to practice
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the Occupation Factors in occupational performance and engagement related to the classification of occupation and to the components of occupation and be able to apply these to practice.
9. Understand and apply a human rights based approach (HRBA) to one's work including the promotion of the service user's participation in their own care; ensure clear accountability; apply principles of non-discrimination; support other staff members to empower service users to realise their rights; be aware of the legality of actions within a service including the need to comply with any relevant legislative requirements including adhering to human rights obligations

10. Demonstrate an understanding of the wide range of occupations and activities used as part of occupational therapy intervention and understand the importance of using occupations and activities that reflect the occupational needs of the service user
11. Be able to identify, select and implement specific and appropriate occupations and activities in practice
12. Be able to discuss the effects of occupational dysfunction and deprivation on the health of individuals, families, groups and communities and the importance of optimising health and wellbeing through engagement and participation in occupation
13. Be able to analyse and grade activity and occupation and be able to adapt environments to enhance occupational participation and engagement to positively influence the health, well-being and function of individuals, families, groups and communities in their occupations, everyday activities, roles and lives
14. Understand the role and purpose of building and maintaining therapeutic relationships as a tool in the delivery of occupational therapy across the lifespan in a variety of contexts and understand the need to establish a client centred therapeutic relationship as the basis for change and enabling participation and engagement in occupation
15. Be able to select and use an appropriate occupational therapy conceptual model to guide practice and be able to select and use appropriate practice models and approaches to address the person-environment-occupation relationship
16. Be able to apply assessment, goal setting and intervention strategies collaboratively with service users across the lifespan who are experiencing recently acquired and/or long standing health issues which affect their performance and engagement in their everyday occupations in a variety of acute, rehabilitation and community settings
17. Recognise the role of advocacy in promoting the needs and interests of service users and be able to understand and apply the concepts of advocacy in addressing the occupational needs of individuals, groups and communities
18. Be able to provide adequate instruction and supervision of occupational therapy interventions when delegating tasks to others
19. Understand the principles and dynamics of group work in a range of settings and understand the role of different facilitation techniques to improve outcomes and enhance the participation of service users in occupation

20. Be able to select and use appropriate assistive technologies and therapeutic modalities for the service user's occupational needs and functional level; be able to give adequate instruction for their use; and be able to assess the safe use of these by service users
21. Be able to use manual handling skills appropriately; be able to identify the need for and be able to use aids for manual handling in a variety of practice settings
22. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice
23. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice
24. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision and on an individual's health and wellbeing
25. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical skills
26. Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research
27. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision