



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Occupational Therapists Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency and Practice Placement Criteria

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Supporting CORU documentation

The following documents must be read in conjunction with each other by applicants for recognition of professional qualifications:

- The application form for recognition of international qualifications
- Guidance notes for recognition of international qualifications
- Standards of proficiency and criteria for practice placements

Background

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of a Occupational Therapists Registration Board, whose functions include establishing and maintaining a Register. Registration will allow a person to use the protected title.

The object of the Occupational Therapist Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among occupational therapist registrants (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)).

Statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of occupational therapy and will ensure that members of the public are guided, protected and informed, so that they can be confident that occupational therapist providing services are properly regulated and qualified for the job.

This system of statutory regulation is designed to ensure professional conduct and the maintenance of high standards of professional education and training among the occupational therapists, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector or are self-employed.

All applicants who hold professional qualifications gained outside the Republic of Ireland (ROI) must first have their qualification recognised by the Occupational Therapists Registration Board before an application for registration can be made.

Standards of proficiency and Irish approved qualifications

One of the functions of the Occupational Therapists Registration Board is to set the standards of proficiency for Occupational Therapists. The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards required for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession in Ireland. They are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional attributes for the safe practise of the profession. The standards of proficiency are the standards required for all entrants to the register.

Irish approved qualifications for entry to the register are at the following levels:

- **Occupational Therapy (Honours) Bachelors Degree NFQ Level 8**
Professional qualification undergraduate programmes combine an academic degree with occupational therapy practice education.
- **Occupational Therapy Masters Degree NFQ Level 9**
Entry to an occupational therapy Masters Degree (professional qualification) requires a three year Bachelors degree (or equivalent).

The Occupational Therapists Registration Board set standards for the delivery of education and training in Ireland for Occupational Therapists. It approves and monitor programmes against these

standards. Graduates from an approved programme meet the Standards of Proficiency for occupational therapists and are eligible to apply for registration. Please see the CORU website for the list of current approved Irish programmes.

Recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside Republic of Ireland

If you were awarded your qualification outside the (ROI) and are interested in working here you must firstly apply to the Occupational Therapists Registration Board to have your qualification recognised. **You cannot apply for registration until your qualification is recognised.**

The Occupational Therapists Registration Board is designated as the Competent Authority under European Union (EU) legislation - Directive 2005/36/EC for the purposes of recognition of professional qualifications for applicants from the European Economic Area (EEA).

A Competent Authority under EU legislation is any authority or body e.g. regulatory body or professional body empowered by the State to validate professional qualifications. The Registration Board may also recognise professional qualifications from outside the EEA.

For further detailed information about Directive 2005/36/EC log on to the European Commission website: www.ec.europa.eu. Please also read the CORU Guidance notes regarding application for recognition of international qualifications

Standards of proficiency

This section sets out the standards of proficiency required of graduates from an Irish approved programme for the safe and effective practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public and are required for entry to the Register.

They are also the standards of proficiency required of applicants with professional qualifications obtained outside ROI.

All applications for recognition of professional qualification (s) obtained outside of the ROI will be assessed against these standards of proficiency. Applicants must demonstrate to the Registration Board that their professional qualification(s) including any additional education and training and / or work experience gained in the profession meets the minimum standards of proficiency required. Evidence must be provided as part of the recognition application process.

The standards of proficiency explain the key obligations for a graduate in the profession and are accompanied by specific indicators, which provide more detail. The standards are highlighted in bold i.e. 2.1 with the specific indicators listed below them i.e. a, b, c...

These standards of proficiency are the intended learning outcomes which a professional qualification must meet. A diverse range of potential programmes and programme learning outcomes will be compatible with these standards.

The standards of proficiency are grouped under six domains:

- Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability
- Domain 2: Interpersonal and professional relationships
- Domain 3: Effective communication
- Domain 4: Personal and professional development
- Domain 5: Provision of quality services
- Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Criterion:

Graduates will:

1. Practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession to the highest standard

Specific Indicators:

- a) Act in the best interest of service users at all times and within the boundaries of their professional proficiencies
- b) Respect and, so far as possible, uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process.
- c) Provide and articulate professional and ethical practice.
- d) Practise in accordance with current legislation applicable to the work of occupational therapists.
- e) Contribute to the development of effective, ethical and equitable policy and practice, regarding issues addressed by Occupational Therapy.
- f) Understand the implications of and adhere to the duty of care for service users and professionals.
- g) Understand the principles of professional regulation and the provisions of the Occupational Therapists Registration Board's *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.
- h) Manage themselves, their practice and that of others in accordance with the Occupational Therapists Registration Board's *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

2. Practise in a non-discriminatory way

- a) Acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups.
- b) Promote equality and respect, without prejudice, and practise in a culturally competent, non-discriminatory and inclusive manner.
- c) Assist in the development, promotion and implementation of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers with particular reference to the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.
- d) Demonstrate a commitment to human rights and occupational justice.
- e) Recognise how the social determinants of health impact on people's health and wellbeing.

3. Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

- a) Respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given.
- b) Understand confidentiality within a team setting.
- c) Understand the limits of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse.
- d) Be aware of data protection, freedom of information and other relevant legislation.
- e) Understand the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing.

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

4. Understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

- a) Demonstrate competence in gaining informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions.
- b) Understand issues associated with informed consent with individuals with lack of capacity.
- c) Maintain accurate records relating to consent.
- d) Respect the rights, values and preferences of the service user.
- e) Recognise the shared expertise that exists between the professional and the service user.
- f) Understand the circumstances where individuals lack capacity to give consent and where assent may be needed.

5. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care/service

- a) Recognise personal responsibility for one's actions and be able to justify reasons for professional decisions made.
- b) Understand the need to maintain the highest standards of personal/professional conduct.

6. Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

- a) Know the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice or refer to another professional.
- b) Recognise the need for consultation and/or supervision.
- c) Be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the situation.
- d) Be able to initiate appropriate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative.
- e) Recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions.

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

7. Recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly

- a) Understand the demands that are placed on occupational therapists in a given field and the skills required to practise effectively with the workload and available resources.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to manage own time effectively.
- c) Be aware of responsibility to bring to the attention of management situations where unrealistic/unachievable demands are made of staff.

8. Understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

- a) Understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice.
- b) Understand the importance of maintaining their own physical and mental health.
- c) Understand the importance of keeping knowledge, skills, attitudes and proficiencies up to date over a lifetime of practice.

Domain 2: Interpersonal and professional relationships

Criterion:

Graduates will:

1. Work, in partnership, with service users and their relatives/carers, and other professionals

Specific Indicators:

- a) Demonstrate capacity to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team.
- b) Demonstrate capacity to engage service users and carers in assessment and intervention to meet their needs and goals.
- c) Recognise and understand the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users.
- d) Be able to make appropriate referrals.
- e) Seek, document and effectively use feedback from service users about their Occupational Therapy service experience to improve the service.

2. Contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of teams (multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, multi-service or inter-agency)

- a) Demonstrate professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams.
- b) Demonstrate an understanding that relationships with professional colleagues can impact on service delivery and therefore should be based on mutual respect and trust.
- c) Recognise and understand the benefits of positive team working, dealing constructively with obstacles and team conflict to ensure the best outcomes for service users.

Domain 3: Effective communication

Criterion:

Graduates will:

1. Demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, listening, giving advice, instruction and professional opinion

Specific Indicators:

- a) Understand how communication skills affect the interaction with service users and how channels of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.
 - b) Demonstrate the ability to produce jargon-free clear, concise and objective written communication and reports.
 - c) Be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including listening skills, with service users and others.
 - d) Demonstrate an appropriate use of information technology relevant to Occupational Therapy.
 - e) Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain therapeutic relationships with service users and their relatives/carers where appropriate.
 - f) Understand the importance of and demonstrate effective communication with other (inter-disciplinary) colleagues and management.
 - g) Advocate for the provision of occupational therapy services for the benefit of service users.
 - h) Be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.
 - i) Understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary in an appropriate format to enable them to make informed decisions.
- #### **2. Understand the need for effective communication throughout the provision of care to the service user**
- a) Recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to facilitate the active participation of service users in order to involve them in meaningful occupation.
 - b) Show effectiveness when communicating with service users and an ability to manage change, resistance and conflict.
 - c) Demonstrate competence in presenting professional judgements and information in a variety of contexts.

- d) Understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users and their families where necessary.
- e) Understand group dynamics and roles to be able to facilitate group work in order to maximise change, support and learning within individuals, groups and communities.

Domain 4: Personal and professional development

Criterion:

Graduates will:

1. Understand the role of reflective practice in relation to personal and professional development

Specific Indicators:

- a) Understand the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection.
- b) Be able to reflect critically on personal practice in order to be able to improve it.
- c) Be aware of the need to ensure that personal life experiences and personal value systems do not impact inappropriately on one's professional decision making or actions.
- d) Understand the role, purpose and function of supervision and the importance of seeking supervision of practice.
- e) Actively avail of opportunities for feedback, mentoring and support from colleagues in order to continuously improve personal practice.
- f) Take responsibility for personal and professional development.
- g) Maintain a record of and critically review a personal development plan which takes account of personal and professional needs and review critically at regular intervals.
- h) Identify and avail of opportunities to promote professional development of self, colleagues and teams and the broader development of the Occupational Therapy profession.
- i) Understand the role of performance management as part of on-going professional development and effective service delivery.
- j) Understand the role of continuing professional development and demonstrate commitment to life-long learning.
- k) Recognise the need to contribute to policy and development of the profession.
- l) Recognise the contribution and value of research in developing evidence informed practice.
- m) Recognise the potential of Occupational Therapy in new and emerging areas of practice.

Domain 5: Provision of quality of services

Criterion:

Graduates will:

1. Be able to collaboratively identify and assess service users' needs

Specific Indicators:

- a) Be able to gather appropriate information.
- b) Understand the philosophical and theoretical basis of and the variety of approaches to assessment and intervention in Occupational Therapy.
- c) Select and use appropriate assessment techniques: undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment.
- d) Select and use appropriate standardised and non-standardised assessment tools and outcome measures relevant to the identified occupational needs and **agreed** goals of service users.
- e) Analyse and critically evaluate the information collected and revise as necessary in collaboration with service users.

2. Formulate and deliver plans and strategies to meet identified needs of service users

- a) Develop, modify and implement appropriate plans, interventions and strategies that are outcome-based, and in accordance with best available evidence, agreed international/national guidelines, protocols and pathways, where available in collaboration with service users.
- b) Identify needs and advocate for the resources required to meet the needs of service users.
- c) Understand the need to agree goals and priorities in collaboration with service users, based on the results of assessments and in relation to occupational needs.
- d) Select as appropriate, the specific occupations and activities for use as therapeutic media, taking into account the particular occupational needs of service users.

3. Use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate action

- a) Recognise the value of research and apply research skills to the systematic evaluation of Occupational Therapy practice in an ethical manner.
- b) Engage in evidence informed practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit/review procedures.
- c) Be aware of a range of research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate actions including evidence informed practice.
- d) Demonstrate sound clinical/professional decision-making, which can be justified even when made on the basis of limited information.
- e) Demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving.

Domain 5: Provision of quality of services

Graduates will:

4. Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- a) Understand the need to adjust/adapt their practice as needed to take account of new developments and changing contexts.
- b) Demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to Occupational Therapy.

5. Formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

- a) Understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors.
- b) Be able to formulate specific and appropriate care or case management plans including timescales.
- c) Be aware of the wide range of occupations and activities used in intervention and how these should reflect the service user's occupational needs and identity.

6. Conduct appropriate assessment and intervention processes safely and skillfully

- a) Provide flexible occupational therapy services that are safe, cost effective and of the highest quality, and that meet the varied needs of service users and carers.
- b) Understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care, including minimising the risks when working alone
- c) Empower service users to manage their well-being and recognise the need to provide information and advice to the service user on self-management, where appropriate.

7. Implement best practice in record management

- a) Keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.
- b) Document the outcome of all assessments and intervention plans including un-met needs, and communicate these to all relevant persons.
- c) Understand the need to use accepted terminology in making records.

Domain 5: Provision of quality of services

Graduates will:

8. Monitor and review the on-going effectiveness of individual and group activities and modify them accordingly

- a) Gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that help to evaluate the responses of service users to their interventions.
- b) Evaluate intervention plans using tools and recognised outcome measures that are relevant to service user's goals. Grade, modify and revise intervention plans as necessary and in collaboration with the service user.
- c) Recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement of programmes.
- d) Recognise important factors and risk management measures, learn from adverse events and be able to disseminate learning.
- e) Make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, including onward referrals to other agencies or professionals, and record decisions and reasoning.

9. Be able to evaluate, audit, and review practice

- a) Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement and participate in these where appropriate.
- b) Be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including the use of appropriate outcome measures to evaluate and improve outcomes.
- c) Monitor and evaluate performance by conducting regular audits and reviews in accordance with national guidelines/international best practice and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews.
- d) Understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection.
- e) Recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Criterion:

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to Occupational Therapy

Specific Indicators:

- a) Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological, psychological and social sciences, human development, occupational science and other related sciences to Occupational Therapy.
- b) Understand basic sciences in the context of occupational therapy practice:
 - Anatomy
 - Physiology
 - Psychology
 - Sociology
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical concepts underpinning occupational therapy specifically the occupational nature of individuals, families, groups and communities.
- d) Understand occupational science in the context of occupational therapy practice
 - Person-Environment-Occupation relationship.
 - Person-Environment-Occupation relationship to health, development and well-being.
- e) Understanding the Person Factors in occupational performance areas and engagement such as but not limited to:
 - Motor
 - Sensory
 - Cognitive
 - Perceptual
 - Psychosocial
 - Spiritual
- f) Understanding the Environment Factors in occupational performance and engagement such as but not limited to:
 - Social
 - Physical
 - Cultural
 - Institutional

g) Understanding the Occupation Factors in occupational performance and engagement such as but not limited to:

1. Classification of Occupation:

- Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
- Productivity
- Leisure
- Play
- Social Participation
- Rest and Sleep

2. Components of Occupation

- Roles
- Use of Time
- Habits
- Interests
- Lifestyle
- Quality of Life
- Motivation

- h) Demonstrate knowledge of health, development, well-being, disease, disorder, function and dysfunction, appropriate to the Person –Environment-Occupation Relationship and apply this in the Practice of Occupational Therapy.
- i) Understand the effects of occupational dysfunction and deprivation on the health of individuals, families, groups and communities and the importance of restoring health and wellbeing through the engagement and participation in occupation.
- j) Be aware of 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.
- k) Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence informed practice.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- 2. Have knowledge of how occupational therapy principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and know how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of individuals, groups or communities**
 - a) Be able to use the body of knowledge of occupational therapy across a range of practice areas and with a diversity of service users, to assess and provide services to individuals, families, groups and communities who experience difficulties in the following areas:
 - Occupation, Activities and Participation
 - Environment
 - b) Be able to establish a client centred therapeutic relationship as the basis for change and enabling participation and engagement in occupation.
 - c) Be able to select and use an occupational therapy conceptual model to guide practice and select and use appropriate practice models and approaches to address the person-environment-occupation relationship.
 - d) Apply assessment, goal setting and intervention strategies collaboratively with the service user/s, and this may include but not limited to:
 - Activity and occupation
 - Person, group or community functioning
 - Human and non-human environment
 - Person-environment-occupation relationship
 - e) Be able to analyse and grade activity, occupation and adapt environments to enhance occupational participation and engagement and positively influence the health, well-being and function of individuals, families, groups and communities in their occupations, everyday activities, roles and lives.
 - f) Facilitate effective individual and group interventions.
 - g) Be able to use information and communication technologies including assistive technologies, in accordance with service user's needs.
 - h) Understand structure, function and trends of health, social, education and other services that influence occupational therapy practice in Ireland.
 - i) Have knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations, policies, national guidelines, practice standards that guide and influence occupational therapy practice in Ireland.
 - j) Be able to understand and apply the concepts of advocacy in addressing the occupational needs of individuals, groups and communities.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- 3. Have knowledge and understanding of the skills and elements required to maintain service user, self and staff safety**
 - a) To understand the need to ensure assistive technologies and therapeutic modalities are appropriate to the service user's occupational needs and functional level, and that adequate instruction is given on their safe and appropriate use.
 - b) Provide adequate instruction and supervision when delegating tasks to staff, students, assistants and others on occupational therapy interventions.
 - c) Understand the principles of risk management and the need to have adequate clinical governance structures in place

Practice education placements

Criterion:

Practice education enables the student to acquire the standards of proficiency for the Occupational Therapy profession and become safe, competent practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for their work. Learning initially developed within the academic component of Occupational Therapy programmes must be integrated into practice through the experience and supervision offered by structured placements within a variety of relevant settings. A partnership approach between the education provider and the practice education placement is essential. Practice education is an integral component of Occupational Therapy education and training programmes.

Indicators:

- a) Students must spend at least 1,000 hours in practice education placements where the integration of occupational therapy theory and practice takes place and where an occupational therapy process or part of that process is implemented with or for real live persons.
- b) The context (setting) of practice education is deemed relevant because it is linked to graduates knowledge, skills, attitudes and proficiencies for competent practice. Therefore students must complete a minimum of 250 hours within a mental health and/or psychosocial setting and a minimum of 250 hours within a physical/ sensory disability practice setting. One role-emerging placement may be completed during the third or fourth year of a four year programme, and only in the final year of a two-year masters programme.
- c) There must be a minimum of two eight-week blocks of practice education in different settings in which occupational therapists normally practise, at least one of which must be a statutory setting; and placements must be distributed through every year of the programme.
- d) A varied range of placements must be available so that students are exposed to different areas of Occupational Therapy and given the opportunity to practice a range of occupation-based approaches. This must include experience with people of different ages, backgrounds and with a variety of recently acquired and/or long-standing health and/or social care needs.
- e) Placement experience should expose students to a variety of acute, rehabilitation and community services for people who present with health, developmental and/or welfare needs which affect their performance and engagement in their everyday occupations.
- f) The education provider will have a set of requirements for the selection of practice education placements to ensure quality, occupation-based learning environments for students. The educator will work in partnership with the practice placement provider and will make an agreement where expectations and responsibilities are defined explicitly and agreed by both parties on an annual basis.

- g) On-going reviews of practice education placements will ensure that placements provide a safe and supportive environment, high quality occupation-based practice and opportunities for the student to experience direct contact with service users. Students, practice education team, practice educators and placement providers will have a role in this review process.
- h) Supervision will be provided to students by the practice education team and practice educators, who will guide their learning using a collaboratively agreed learning contract. The outcomes of the supervision must be documented.
- i) Students and practice educators* will be fully informed and prepared for the practice placements.
- j) While on placement, contact should be maintained with the student by the programme providers.
- k) Practice educators will have to be registered occupational therapists, with at least one year of relevant practice experience and competence in the area in which they are supervising.
- l) Support and training will be available to practice educators to develop their practice education skills in relation to facilitating students on placement.
- m) Student allocation to practice placements is based on the need to integrate Occupational Therapy theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and proficiencies and to learn to implement an Occupational Therapy process. The knowledge, skills, attitudes and proficiencies learnt in this way should be transferable between situations, contexts and agencies.
- n) Pre-placement requirements including Garda vetting, appropriate health and safety measures including appropriate insurance for the student must be in place before the student commences the placement.
- o) Policies and procedures are in place for the assessment of students on practice education placements, including appeal mechanisms for failed placements. Placement reports should be completed before the end of the placement jointly signed by the practice educator and the student.
- p) A code of conduct for students should be in place whilst on placement.

*Practice –educator refers to the person who is responsible for a students' education during the period of clinical or practical placement.