



**HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA, PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND MEDICAL ORTHOTICS/PROSTHETICS**

MINIMUM STANDARDS OF TRAINING FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TECHNICIAN

Introduction

All Occupational Therapy Technician courses to be offered at tertiary training institutions must be approved by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The Convenors of these programmes must be registered Occupational Therapists /Occupational Therapy Technicians, with relevant skill to teach on tertiary level due to years of experience. Appropriate human material and financial resource allocation is a requirement. All programmes will be evaluated by the Board on a five-year cycle to ensure that graduates meet the requirements of the profession and of the standards and outcomes determined by the Board.

The primary function for the Occupational Therapy Technician is to implement intervention prescribed by the Occupational Therapist for the management of individuals and group programmes within different settings. This category of worker is trained and appointed to assist the Occupational Therapist in the provision of therapeutic and rehabilitative services.

Services must be provided under the supervision of a registered Occupational Therapist. The Occupational Therapist, according to legislation, retains overall responsibility and accountability for treatment received by each patient. Occupational Therapy Technicians have an important role to play in health service delivery in general and form an integral part of Occupational Therapy services at all levels of health care provision.

Training Requirements:

Educational objectives should be flexible enough to accommodate changes in our society and advances in knowledge about Occupational Therapy. The curriculum should make students receptive to change and encourage interest in continuing education. Syllabi should be designed with reference to the scope of the Occupational Therapy Technician. Each higher

education institution should arrange for the effective integration of the appropriate course subjects.

Organization of the course:

Training will be offered by accredited Higher Educational Institutions(HEI). Each programme will be evaluated every 5 years by evaluators appointed by the Professional Board. The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- All OTT students must be registered as Occupational Therapy Technician students with the Professional Board on commencement of their training by the Educational Institution.
- An OT or OTT should be chair/head/convener of the programme and OTs and/or OTTs should teach all occupational therapy related content.
- OTT students must be supervised during clinical practical work/fieldwork by registered occupational therapists/OTT
- Students' final clinical evaluations must be done by Registered Occupational Therapist/ Occupational Therapy Technicians

Duration of the course

The duration of the course shall be two (2) academic years, with a minimum of 2,400 notional study hours to cover the curriculum content.

Curriculum

The programme should comprise a balanced mix of primary, professional and clinical courses. The weighting should be at least 50% clinical and 25% professional content.

Clinical Practical Work

A minimum of 1,000 hours for clinical practical work per OTT student is required in a variety of facilities and a minimum of 350 of these hours must be spent in a community setting. Clinical fieldwork should include primary health care and clinical practical work within secondary and tertiary settings. It should include work with all age groups and the handling of persons with mental and physical disabilities.

Clinical Supervision

Adequate and appropriate supervision must be in place for each student before training commences and must be available for the duration of the course. Each student must receive on-site supervision by a clinical supervisor (registered Occupational Therapist or Occupational Therapy Technician), preferably on a daily basis.

Course Content:

Exit-level competencies should be as follows:

I. Health and Introductory concepts

- Identify the factors and/or barriers in the community contributing to or affecting health and wellness of individuals and groups
- Be able to identify the role of the Occupational Therapy Technician at various levels of the health care system with reference to levels of service delivery [e.g. hospitals, rehabilitation centres, district health system, community health centres, Primary Health Care facilities]
- Explain the impact of human development, age, gender, and socio-cultural factors on occupational performance.

II. The Human Body

- Explain basic anatomical and physiological structures as these relate to function and occupational performance.
- Use terminology pertaining to anatomical, physiological and psychological structures (e.g. body movements, body regions, joint movements, and anatomical structures) correctly in order to facilitate effective teamwork and effective intervention.

III. Human Behaviour

- Explain basic psychological components and social factors which impact human behaviour and occupational performance (e.g. trauma, poverty, abuse).

IV. Common Health Conditions

- Describe the basic causes, symptoms, treatment, precautionary measures pertaining to common health conditions.

V. Process followed by the OTT within the OT Process

a) Screening

b) functionally informed observations¹

c) Treatment/Intervention

d) Referral

VI. *Knowledge of occupation as therapeutic modality*

- Explain the history, basic philosophy and scope of occupational therapy.
- Name and explain the steps of the Occupational Therapy process.
- Screen occupational performance problems correctly and report results to supervisor
- Interpret referral and/or prescription provided by a supervising Occupational Therapist correctly.
- Prepare treatment area to execute intervention in a safe and effective manner according to the protocols specified by the Occupational Therapist.
- Demonstrate clear knowledge and skill to facilitate occupational performance of patients/clients.
- Modify and grade treatment as specified in the protocol prescribed by the Occupational Therapist.
- Observe and report in verbal / written formats.
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of appropriate activities with due consideration of human development, gender, cultural, religion and socio-economic conditions.
- Demonstrate implementation of sessions and programmes directed at the improvement of occupational performance.
- Assist the occupational therapist to provide rehabilitation, preventative and promotive or palliative programmes for individuals and groups

¹ Also called observation in action. Involves detailed observations during performance of an activity.

VII. *The use of occupation as intervention*

- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the categories of Occupational Performance Areas
- Identify appropriate activities to improve occupational performance of patients/ clients
- Effectively present activities by using the correct techniques/applying the correct procedures
- Explain basic principles of activity analysis
- Implement treatment under supervision of an Occupational Therapist with selected activities from the occupational performance areas of personal management, work, leisure and play for individuals and groups
- Demonstrate competency in skills during the execution of various activities
- Explain the use and value of prescribed protocols and competently apply the directives as indicated in the protocol
- Apply handling skills and precautionary measures according to the protocols.

VIII. *Community Based Rehabilitation and Primary Health Care*

- Describe Primary Health Care Approach and Principles and the appropriate use thereof during service delivery with the district health care system.
- Describe the environment and identify the factors which assist/limit health and occupational performance, adjusting the environment to ensure optimal occupational performance of the individual or group
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of community development including community entry procedure, structure and profile of the community, outreach programmes, income generating projects and support groups
- Demonstrate ability to effectively enter into a community setting, negotiate with relevant structures/stakeholders, identify basic health/rehabilitation needs and report on this to the occupational therapist

- Demonstrate ability to develop and /offer community-based programmes such as health promotion, routine preventative and rehabilitative programmes according to occupational therapy protocols/guidelines
- Have knowledge of and demonstrate ability to assist with the integration of persons with disabilities into the community
- Identify resources and refer patients/clients to the appropriate resources
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct visits within different settings and give appropriate feedback
- Demonstrate knowledge of the process for application of a disability/care grant
- Facilitate the establishment of support groups and income generating projects
- Transfer required skills to the care providers
- Identify and appropriately use resources in community settings to the benefit of individuals and groups
- Show sensitivity to cultural diversity and needs

VIII. Assistive Devices:

- Select materials, tools, equipment, procedures and precautionary measures for basic activities to improve occupational performance
- Effectively use various basic tools, materials, equipment and machines (set up, operate, maintain).
- Oversee the continued use and maintenance of assistive devices prescribed by an Occupational Therapist.
- Instruct individuals to effectively use, care, repair and maintain assistive devices, and wheelchairs

- Effectively use therapeutic apparatus under supervision of the Occupational Therapist and record/give appropriate feedback

Administration

- Demonstrate a working knowledge of departmental administration including: ordering, correct store procedures for materials, apparatus, organize, recording materials, maintaining stock records, stock control and inventories, filing reports, accurate record keeping, effective time-management
- Execute different administrative tasks effectively according to the workplace protocol

VII. Ethics and Professional Behaviour

- Demonstrate the appropriate attitude and sound understanding of the professional and ethical responsibilities and principles as stipulated in the rules and guidelines of the HPCSA.
- Explain basic legal regulations regarding health care
- Demonstrate an understanding of the scope, role limitations and core skills of an Occupational Therapy Technician as related to that of an Occupational Therapist.
- Understand and apply the process of informed consent
- Recognise ethical dilemmas/issues and deal with those commonly confronted with in service delivery areas or situations
- Conducts him/herself in a professional and ethically responsible manner during clinical work, in all dealings with patients/clients, caregivers and colleagues.
- Behaviour in keeping with Code of Ethics, ethical rules and patient rights charters, Batho Pele principles

VIII. Teamwork

- Function effectively within different types of teams as a team member, demonstrating an inherent understanding of own specific role and responsibilities and the roles and responsibilities of other team members in different settings

- Execute delegated tasks to actively contribute to effective teamwork.
- Follow appropriate communication channels according to the protocol in each work environment.