



**HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, MEDICAL ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS AND ARTS THERAPY**

**GUIDELINES REGARDING STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The professional board for Occupational Therapy, Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics and Arts therapy (OCP Board) regulates the following professions:

Occupational Therapy (OT)  
Medical Orthotists and Prosthetists (OS)  
Art Therapy, Drama Therapy, Music therapy and Movement therapy (AT)

Mid-level workers  
Occupational Therapy Technicians and Assistants (OTT / OTA)  
MOP Technicians, Assistants and Orthopaedic Footwear Technicians (OSA / OB)  
Community Arts councillors (Comm-AC)  
Orientation and Mobility practitioners (O&M)

Students at Board-accredited centres or enrolled at accredited training providers in all of the above-mentioned professions must register with the HPCSA. As such the HPCSA has a regulatory responsibility towards student-practitioners.

The OCP Board is responsible for all regulatory aspects related to the above-mentioned professions including setting minimum standards of training. The professional boards report to the Council of the HPCSA.

Your training provider will provide you with the rules regarding your behaviour and conduct to which you must adhere. These rules work in conjunction with the board's rules thus you are accountable to your training provider and the HPCSA.

**2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to describe the standards of professional conduct and ethics for student-practitioners registered with this Board.

These student specific guidelines will help to prepare you for the standards of professionalism required once you are qualified and will assist you to engage in best practice while still a student.

We have adapted these student guidelines from the guidelines for good practice in the health care professions of the HPCSA.

**3. STUDENT CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

As a student studying to become a professional in a regulated profession, you have certain responsibilities and as part of your programme you will be expected to meet high standards of conduct and ethics

**3.1 Clinical education / Supervision**

You should:

- Always consult with your clinical educator / supervisor before consulting with a patient

- Never interact with a patient without the necessary guidance from your clinical educator / supervision
- In a laboratory setting, never operate machinery without direct supervision

### 3.2 Communication

You should:

- Always introduce yourself as a student practitioner
- Be respectful and polite to patients, fellow students, supervisors and educators
- Inform the training provider should you experience any difficulties which may affect your conduct, practice and learning
- Engage responsibly with communication when using social media
- Always treat everyone as equal and not discriminate because of your personal views
- Communicate appropriately and effectively with patients and professional

### 3.3 Respect

You should:

- Show respect to your patients by being dressed neatly and appropriately
- Be punctual and prepared for appointments with patients and clinical educators / supervisors
- Address your patient, clinical educators/ supervisors, fellow students, community service practitioner and other members of the multi-disciplinary team in a respectful and culturally appropriate way
- Develop an appropriate professional therapeutic relationship characterised by maintaining professional boundaries

### 3.4 Duties to Patients

You should:

- Always act in the best interest of the patient and ensure their well-being by putting the patient's need before your learning needs
- Respect the dignity and privacy of patients
- Familiarise yourself with the charters regarding patient rights

### 3.5 Consent

You should:

- Acquire informed consent to assess and treat a patient after providing them with the information regarding their assessment and treatment
- Acknowledge the patient's right to request treatment from a registered independent practitioner and not a student
- Acquire parental informed consent when treating minors and assent from the minor
- Professionals should never withhold information, unless disclosing such information could cause harm to the patient

### 3.6 Confidentiality

You should:

- Inform the patient that you have to disclose their information to your supervisor
- Not disclose any information regarding your patient without their approval
- Get help from your supervisor when you have to report sensitive issues about your patient to legal authorities
- Exclude any identifying information about your patients when compiling academic reports, research or assessments.
- Adhere to local policies or guidelines on confidentiality produced by your education provider or practice

### 3.6 Knowledge and Skill

You should:

- Only practice and perform tasks at the level and scope of your training and profession
- Request assistance when needed
- Engage pro-actively when feedback is given to you

- Acknowledge the limits of your professional knowledge and skills
- Strive to improve the standards of your performance as a student
- Refer a patient to another professional when the limit of your knowledge and skill is reached in collaboration with your clinical educator / supervisor
- Get help from your clinical educator / supervisor to refer emergency cases
- Not be employed as a locum (independent practitioner), in your profession

### 3.7 Record keeping

You should:

- Ensure that patient records and clinical notes are clear, accurate and up to date
- Patient records should be initialled and signed by both student and supervisor
- Ensure the safe keeping of patient records
- Adhere to the policies regarding patient record keeping of the training provider and clinical site
- Never remove patient records from the clinical site

### 3.8 Safety

You should:

- Abide by the occupational health and safety act where applicable
- Limit the risk of harm to patients, yourself and colleagues by following universal precautions as well as safety protocols of the clinical site

### 3.7 Honesty and Trust

You should:

- Be truthful that you are a student with your interaction with patients, clinical educators / supervisors and other members of the MDT including student practitioners
- Reference all sources you consult in compiling your clinical reports, case studies and research
- Be truthful about your clinical hours and clinical logs
- Provide honest reflective feedback to the training provider about your clinical / learning experiences

## 4. UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENT

4.1 In the event of unsatisfactory performance of a student, a written report should be submitted by the stakeholder to the Board with recommendations for either –

- De-registration
- Suspension until further notice

4.2 Should a student become mentally or physically impaired as required professionally, the matter should be reported to the Health Committee of Council. The Health Committee will investigate the circumstances and will provide guidance on the treatment and rehabilitation of the student or deal with the matter as circumstances dictate.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

6.1. Ensuring registration

The stakeholder is obliged to provide the candidate with details concerning registration

6.2. Assessment processes

The information regarding the assessment processes and the execution thereof have to be provided to the student prior to the assessment.

6.3. Appropriate Supervision

Stakeholders should take the responsibility to ensure that appropriate supervision is applied.

6.4. Student Support and Welfare

Adequate student support structures should be in place to ensure the welfare of students.

- 6.5. Ensuring that HPCSA ethical rules and regulations are adhered to.
- 6.6. Adequate training  
To ensure that the student receive adequate training according to the minimum standards for training.