

**COUNCIL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
REGISTRATION BOARDS
(AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND) INC

(COTRB)**

ONGOING COMPETENCY MODEL

Adopted October 2004

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	Page 1
(a) Preamble	Page 1
(b) Continuing Competence	Page 1
(c) Established Models	Page 2
2. Proposed Model	Page 3
3. Components of the Model.....	Page 4
(a) Self Declaration	Page 4
(b) Professional Development Plan.....	Page 4
(c) Professional Portfolio.....	Page 5
(d) Competency Audit.....	Page 5
Attachment 1 – Application for Renewal/Enrolment.....	Page 6
Attachment 2 – Activity Development Plan.....	Page 8
Attachment 3 – Professional Portfolio	Page 9
Attachment 4 – Supervisor’s Form	Page 11

1. Introduction

(a) Preamble

Occupational therapists registered to practice in Australia are regulated in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. They must be accountable to the community for providing quality care through safe, ethical and effective practice, and for maintaining the competence necessary for practice.

Occupational Therapy takes place within dynamic environments. Occupational therapists who are licensed to practise are expected to be able to demonstrate competence within their area of practice. Rising consumer expectations, demographic and social changes, changing relationships between health workers, new technology, a greater focus on research and evidence based practice, and new therapeutics allowing a greater capacity to treat a range of health problems underpin the need for occupational therapists to maintain their competence.

Today, there is increasing demand for greater accountability from all health professionals for the outcomes of their practice. Employers also have the responsibility to ensure that those they employ are competent and safe to practice.

It is reasonable for the public to expect that health professionals, including occupational therapists, maintain their competence to practise. In states and territories with occupational therapist registration boards, the regulatory authority of the board serves to promote and maintain standards of occupational therapy practice, in the public interest, in accordance with legislative requirements. The accountability of regulatory authorities is to carry out their functions in line with their respective legislation. Occupational therapist regulatory authorities are responsible for ensuring that, in the interest of the public, occupational therapists provide high standards of competence and conduct in their practice.

(b) Continuing Competence

The following key principles underpin the model for Occupational Therapy ongoing competency:

- (i) Self-assessment of competence is an ongoing process whereby an occupational therapist examines his or her practice against national competency standards accepted by the regulatory authorities for registration. Self-assessment is likely to include reflection, critical incident analysis, peer review, and evaluation of client and patient outcomes. On the basis of self-assessment, the variety of methods occupational therapists may use to maintain competence and to improve practice may include informal and formal learning; participation in and utilisation of evidence based practice and research, or other professional activities.
- (ii) Occupational therapy regulatory authorities retain the authority to implement a system for determining continuing competence that is relevant to their jurisdiction and legislative framework.

- (iii) Competence is the combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective and/or superior performance in a profession/occupational area¹. Continuing competence is the ability of occupational therapists to demonstrate that they have maintained their competence in their current area of practice.
 - (iv) The Code of Ethics for occupational therapists in Australia² (OT Australia) and the Codes of Professional Conduct for occupational therapists in Australia³ (Registration Boards) makes reference to the need for occupational therapists to maintain standards of practice and the responsibility of each occupational therapist to maintain the competence necessary for current practice.
 - (v) The occupational therapy regulatory authorities have agreed that action taken in relation to their responsibility regarding continuing competence to practise would be underpinned by the following two principles:
 - That a process of self-declaration be the basis for determining the continuing competence of an individual practitioner, and,
 - That this is implemented within a quality improvement framework.
- (c) Established Models

The information for the development of this Ongoing Competency Model has been drawn largely from two sources:

- Australian Nursing Council National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario Quality Assurance Program.

References

1. OT Australia (1994) – Australian Competency Standards for Entry-Level Occupational Therapists.
2. OT Australia (2001) – Code of Ethics.
3. Codes of Conduct & Practice of Registration Boards in Australia where they exist (refer to individual Boards).
4. Australian Nursing Council Inc. (2003) – A Study to Identify the Indicators of continuing Competence in Nursing
5. College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario Quality Assurance Program (2002).

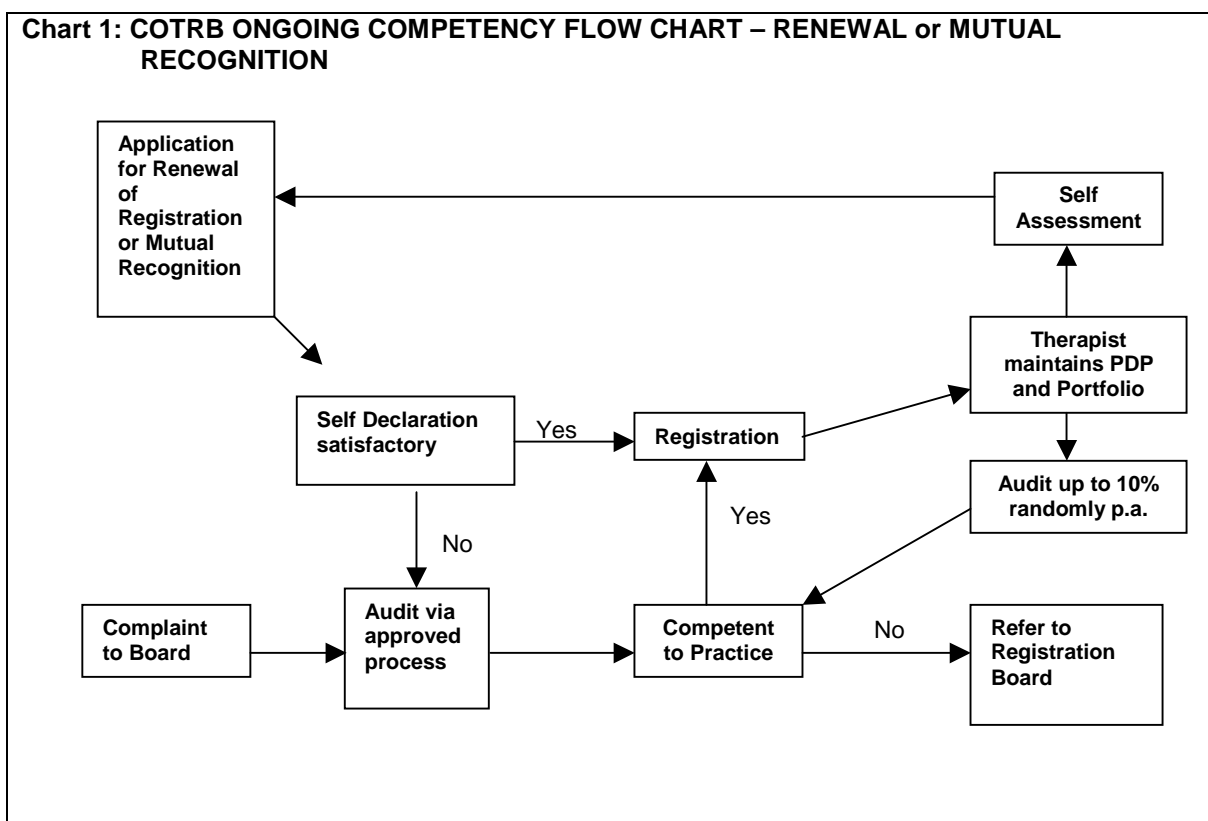
2. The Proposed Model

The Proposed Model for Ongoing Competency reflects growth and changes in a therapist's working practice.

Chart 1 shows the components of the Registration and Ongoing Competency processes, that is:

- Self Declaration (arising from self-assessment of competence).
- Professional Development Plan
- Professional Portfolio
- Competency Audit

Chart 1 outlines the process for Renewal of Registration in the proposed model. The processes for New Registrations including the processes for therapists, who have not practised for six months in the last five years, are already established by the Boards. It is not planned that these be altered under the proposed model. The model is for ongoing competency with the annual renewal of registration, not the initial or re-joining processes.



3. Components of the Model

(a) Self Declaration

(i) Main Factors:

The self-declaration is a statement by a therapist that their professional skills are such that they are competent to practise. Therapists making the self-declaration will be undertaking a continuous process of self-assessment and have a Professional Development Plan as evidence of this professional competency.

(ii) Details of the Self-Declaration:

Six questions will form the basis of the self-declaration. While the questions will be consistent across all boards the individual Boards will adapt the format and wording to meet their own processes or legislation.

Attachment 1 is an example of a template Application for Renewal of Registration / Enrolment, adapted from the Occupational Therapy Board of the Northern Territory documents. These have been adapted from the process developed by the Australian Nursing Council National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse and the Enrolled Nurse.

(b) Professional Development Plan

(i) Main factors:

The Professional Development Plan provides evidence of commitment and ideas for competency for:

- Relevancy to work practice or situation
- Goal setting around competency for the development and maintenance of knowledge and skills
- Development of a living document that reflects developing work roles or new positions

(ii) Details of the Professional Development Plan:

On the basis of self-assessment, the variety of methods occupational therapists may include in their Plan to maintain competence and to improve practice includes informal and formal learning; participation in and utilisation of evidence based practice and research, or other professional activities.

A suggested format for the Plan is shown in **Attachment 2**. The therapist is free to choose the format for the Plan; eg. An AccOT Plan, a workplace Professional Development Plan or other format decided by the therapist.

(c) Professional Portfolio**(i) Main factors:**

The Professional Portfolio has features of:

- Maintenance of a portfolio reflecting activities and processes to accompany the Professional Development Plan. The portfolio will usually record achievements alongside the Plan and incorporate requirements for continuing education and supervision/mentoring.
- Therapists undertaking the AccOT Program will be maintaining an appropriate portfolio
- A recording or achievement scale that reflect progress through the use of a Professional Development Plan

(ii) Details of the Professional Portfolio:

It is expected that all registered therapists will maintain a Professional Portfolio as a record of their competencies. Again, the format of the Portfolio is to be decided by the therapist and this may be the portfolio maintained by the therapist under the requirements of the AccOT Program.

Attachment 3 is a further example of how a Professional Portfolio may be formatted. This example has been largely adapted from the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario Quality Assurance Program [http://www.coto.org/pages/registrants/quality_assurance.html]

(d) Competency Audit**(i) Main factors:**

The Competency Audit incorporates processes currently undertaken by the Registration Boards for new registrants who are not new graduates. The individual Registration Boards will decide on the percentage of therapists to be audited each year.

The Audit shows evidence of practice audited by supervisor or appropriate person alongside the person's job specification or alongside competency criteria that the Boards adopt (refer **Attachment 4**).

(ii) Options for the Competency Audit:

An audit under the proposed ongoing competency model will involve the registered occupational therapist providing:

- (a) A professional development plan and a signed supervisor's form that the evidence is being achieved.

OR

- (b) A professional development plan and a professional portfolio that provides evidence of achievement of the professional development plan (if there is not a third party available).

[BOARD NAME][registrant's name
and address]**APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION/ENROLMENT
[renewal period]****1. HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS?**

Postal address (if different to above)

Name (if changing your name refer to notes overleaf)

.....
.....
..........
.....
.....**2. DECLARATION (please refer to explanatory notes overleaf)****I DECLARE** (please tick the appropriate response):I am competent in the areas in which I practise Yes No I am physically and mentally fit for safe practice Yes No I have had no criminal convictions recorded against my name since
my last application (excluding convictions for minor traffic offences) Yes No I adhere to the OT Australia Code of Ethics and the Registration
Board Code of Conduct as exists Yes No I have practised as an Occupational Therapist for at least 6 months
in the past five (5) years Yes No I have an active Professional Development Plan Yes No **STATEMENTS MADE BY ME ON THIS FORM ARE TRUE AND CORRECT IN EVERY
PARTICULAR**

Signature: / / 20

***If you could not answer "Yes" to all statements, or are uncertain of your status,
please refer to the explanatory notes overleaf*****3. PAYMENT DETAILS**

Please circle method of payment: Cheque / Cash / Money Order / Credit Card / BPay

4. REMOVAL FROM THE REGISTERI hereby request the Registrar to remove my name from the Register

Signature: / / 20

5. CONTACT DETAILS

Work Phone: Mobile Phone:

Home Phone: Email:

You will only be contacted if essential details are missing from your application form.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. IF CHANGING YOUR NAME

When changing your name it is necessary for you to provide documentation supporting your request for the change, eg. copy of marriage certificate or a Statutory Declaration.

2. DECLARATION

The Board has endorsed OT Australia's Code of Ethics (copy available at www.ausot.com.au) and the Registration Board's Code of Conduct or equivalent (copy available from the Board's website). You may use these documents to assist you in completing the declaration.

If you have a mental or physical health condition, please attach details.

If you have been convicted of a criminal offence since your last application, please attach details.

If you are unable to answer any of these questions, or your answer is "No", please contact the Occupational Therapy Registration Board for further assistance.

3. REMOVAL FROM THE REGISTER

If you no longer wish to hold registration in [..State/Territory..], please sign and date Section 4 overleaf to remove your name from the Register, and return this form to the Occupational Therapy Registration Board:

[Board address and contact details]

Professional Development Plan

The Professional Development Plan Form provides evidence of commitment and ideas for competency.

Time Line	Objectives	Activities/Strategies	Evidence

ATTACHMENT 3

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO (Example)

Professional Portfolios provide evidence of competency of registered occupational therapists.

The purpose of maintaining a portfolio is to:

- Provide a framework for recording your practice activities, and support reflective practice
- Provide evidence of your achievements and competence
- Provide a comprehensive plan for professional development

The following should be included in your portfolio:

- Professional Development Plan
- Professional Development Achievements Form. This provides evidence of activities that have met Plan objectives over the past 12 months
- Review of performance from your supervisor within the last 12 months. The review should cover the basic elements required by the Registration Board and indicate areas of achievement toward professional development

Organisation of Portfolios:

Professional Portfolios can be individualised to suit your work position and professional style, and categories may vary accordingly. The list is not exhaustive. Categories for organising your documents related to professional practice are suggested in the list below.

Background Information:

- Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- Copy of Qualifications
- Job Description(s) – previous and current
- Achievements or Awards
- Business cards, brochures
- Lists of Committee or Board participation
- Lists of publications, workshops, in-service presentations

Professional Development:

This section may have subdivisions according to the range of activities carried out; eg. work related study; Supervision; Quality Assurance Activities

- Professional Development Plan
- Protocols for practice, Business plans
- Quality improvement activities
- Documentation of policies and processes (performance reviews, supervision, reporting practices)
- Reference lists of relevant journal articles
- Needs assessments of new programs
- Lists of assessments used/ screening tools
- Minutes of meetings, sample documents (referrals, reports)
- Course certificates (First Aid, Occupational Health and Safety)
- Learning/reflective journal
- Work activities contributing towards professional development objectives
- Plans for supervision, mentoring, and other support as needed

Important Documents:

- Grants or scholarships
- Certificates of achievement
- Literature review
- University assignments relevant to practice
- Theses/ research reports, published articles
- Contracts awarded

The last section may be used to store documents you think are important, and which do not fit well under other categories. Plastic sleeves may be useful for keeping bulkier documents.

Professional Development Achievements

A Professional Development Achievements Form can be placed in the Portfolio. The form is a checklist for recording the activities that indicate competency and includes the date of achievement and the activity.

Date	Activity	Supervisor Comment

Reference:

College of Occupational therapists of Ontario: Quality Assurance
http://www.coto.org/pages/registrants/quality_assurance.html

[BOARD NAME]

[Board address
and contact details]

SUPERVISOR'S FORM / AUDIT

To be completed by the Occupational Therapist's immediate supervisor (OT or non-OT)

1. SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

.....
(Surname) (First Name)

Postal Address:

..... Postcode:

2. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST FOR WHOM YOU ARE COMPLETING THIS PROFORMA DOCUMENT

.....
(Occupational Therapist's Surname) (Occupational Therapist's First Name)

Occupational Therapist's Address:

..... Postcode:

3. DECLARATION

I DECLARE (please tick the appropriate response):

I am a registered Occupational Therapist and holder of a current annual practising certificate Yes No

I have been in a position in the last 12 months to personally observe the Occupational Therapy practice of the above occupational therapist Yes No

I have conducted a review of the Occupational Therapy performance of the above occupational therapist in the last 12 month period. I have sighted the therapist's Professional Development Plan and attest that sufficient evidence of activity towards achievement of objectives has been provided Yes No

AND I further declare that:
(Name of occupational therapist you are providing information for)

is competent to practise as an Occupational Therapist Yes No

[Comment:

AND

I declare that I am the immediate supervisor or mentor of the above Occupational Therapist and have been in a position to observe their professional performance Yes No

[Comment:

AND

I have had sufficient professional contact with the above Occupational Therapist to enable me to make this declaration Yes No

[Comment:

Signature:

Date:

Position Held:

Employer:

Contact Telephone Number: