

College of Occupational Therapists Pre-registration Education Standards

Third edition

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Introduction

The British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) is the only professional body for occupational therapy in the United Kingdom. Through its membership of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), BAOT is the only professional body with the delegated authority to confer WFOT approval to programmes in the United Kingdom that lead to a professional entry-level qualification in occupational therapy.

WFOT approval of a pre-registration programme in occupational therapy in the United Kingdom is conditional to BAOT accreditation via the processes of the College of Occupational Therapists (COT or the College). It is important to note also that COT accreditation may only be granted to pre-registration programmes that are approved by the Health Professions Council.

The BAOT owns the professional body of knowledge for both historical and contemporary occupational therapy education and practice in the UK, as well as the occupational therapy professional and education philosophy. It works actively with the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, the Council of Occupational Therapists in the European Community (COTEC), and the European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE) in identifying and responding to current and emerging issues that affect professional education and practice at both European and international levels and that impact locally in the United Kingdom.

The College of Occupational Therapists, a subsidiary of the British Association of Occupational Therapists, was established for the promotion of the science and art of Occupational Therapy and the better training and education of practitioners. *It has the power to provide, support and encourage education, instruction and training in Occupational Therapy, and related activities, to promote uniformity in curricula in the training of persons intended for that profession ...* (Memorandum of Association – College of Occupational Therapists Limited). In relation to a programme of study leading to a professional qualification in occupational therapy, therefore, the College of Occupational Therapists has a responsibility for establishing standards to ensure that graduates from its accredited programmes are provided with the professional philosophy, knowledge and skills that would equip them for global, contemporary, safe and effective professional practice.

The *role* of the COT in relation to the standards is:

- To develop and maintain education and professional standards through its accredited education programmes.
- To guide and advance professional knowledge towards excellence and evidence-based practice.
- To promote standards of best practice.
- To develop professional learning and practice through leadership and innovation.

The COT Pre-registration Education Standards

The College of Occupational Therapists' Pre-registration Education Standards (henceforth referred to in this document as the 'Standards') are dynamic quality indicators against which the College would make a judgement on an individual programme's suitability for professional body accreditation. They incorporate the minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists set by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists. Graduates from COT accredited programmes therefore should be able to demonstrate enhanced attributes and fitness for professional practice that would enable them to seek professional employment locally, nationally and internationally.

The COT Standards support and facilitate the development of a curriculum leading to professional body accreditation (including WFOT approval) and regulatory body approval. They cover four main areas:

- Programme management and resources standards.
- Curriculum standards.
- Learning, teaching and assessment standards.
- Quality assurance and monitoring standards.

These main areas will apply to both the academic and the practice learning components of all programmes. Each standard has a list of criteria and associated guidance on the evidence required by the College to satisfy the Standards. Briefly, the College of Occupational Therapists Standards are as follows.

Standard 1: Programme management and resources standards

The institution's policy and procedures on the employment of the appropriate number of suitably qualified academic, professional practice learning and support staff with suitable experience, and on the provision of learning resources are able to:

- *Facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes by students.*
- *Monitor the observance of the professional code of ethics and conduct.*
- *Support the student experience.*
- *Enable the update and further development of the education programme.*
- *Influence service delivery.*
- *Contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.*

Standard 2: Curriculum standards

The curriculum content, design and delivery reflect the occupational therapy philosophy based on a sound educational rationale and the principles of the professional code of ethics and conduct. Graduates from the programme will be fit for contemporary and safe professional practice and able to identify their professional development needs.

Standard 3: Learning, teaching and assessment standards

The institution uses a range of methods and strategies that:

- *Supports the achievement of the learning outcomes.*
- *Supports the observance of the code of ethics and professional conduct and research governance.*

- *Employs rigorous and robust assessments that enable the student to demonstrate professional competence and safe practice commensurate to the level of study.*

Standard 4: Quality assurance and monitoring standards

The institution's annual quality assurance and enhancement processes include the evaluation of the programme by the professional staff, monitoring and feedback mechanisms, external examining procedures, and evaluation of student performance.

Purpose of the COT Pre-registration Education Standards

The COT Standards are intended to enhance rather than duplicate the standards set by the statutory bodies, currently, the Health Professions Council (www.hpc-uk.org), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (www.qaa.ac.uk), and Skills for Health (www.skillsforhealth.org.uk). Where there is duplication, the professional body wishes to emphasise the significance of the standard in relation to international standards and practice.

The Standards will therefore:

- Enable graduates of the College's accredited programmes to strengthen their professional philosophy and knowledge.
- Provide graduates with the opportunity to acquire the skills required for dynamic occupational therapy practice. The Standards should ensure that service users receive a high standard of professional intervention.
- Benefit the graduates' future professional practice, improve their employability, and provide them with an occupational therapy qualification that would enable them to practise in the UK and WFOT member countries.
- Provide guidance to education providers wishing to develop a programme of study that:
 - Would lead to a named pre-registration occupational therapy qualification.
 - Meets the minimum standards of the regulatory body for national practice.
 - Correctly interprets WFOT standards to reflect local, national and global circumstances.
- Serve as quality indicators for practice education providers who wish to conduct a self-assessment of their department's practice education provision.
- Support the continuing development of occupational therapy educators in both academic and practice settings.
- Ensure that the minimum requirements of occupational therapy stakeholders are met. The College's accredited programmes stakeholders include service users, students, education providers, education commissioners, sponsoring/funding agencies, service managers, potential employers, the Health Professions Council (HPC), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (QAA), the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), and the European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE).

Qualities of the COT Pre-registration Education Standards

The COT Standards:

- Integrate academic theory and contemporary professional practice.
- Include realistic standards that identify and enhance fitness for profession and reflect local, national and international practice and provide a baseline to judge and improve quality.
- Are explicit about the need for programmes to address emerging issues – current examples being social inclusion, entrepreneurship, leadership, and public health – which would prepare students for contemporary practice in a dynamic environment.
- Employ a user-friendly template that provides guidance on evidencing the standards within the curriculum and learning resources documentation.
- Are sufficiently flexible to allow the profession to be proactive in addressing changes in contemporary practice.
- Are supportive to stakeholders without compromising professional standards.

Appendices

(These are also available to download from the College of Occupational Therapists' website: www.cot.org.uk)

Appendix 1 contains a summary of the College's guidance and expectations for pre-registration programmes.

Appendix 2 contains the College's professional requirements and recommendations.

Appendix 3 contains the College's accreditation process.

Appendix 4 is the guidance for the appointment of a director/professional subject lead in occupational therapy.

Key to abbreviations

AP(E)L	Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning
APPLE	Accreditation of Practice Placement Educators
BAOT	British Association of Occupational Therapists
COT	College of Occupational Therapists
COTEC	Council of Occupational Therapists in the European Community
ENOTHE	European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HPC	Health Professions Council
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
WFOT	World Federation of Occupational Therapists

Glossary

Accreditation	This is a quality process used by the College of Occupational Therapists to ensure that a programme of study has met the College's standards for pre-registration education for fitness for the profession (fit for award, practice and purpose).
Aegrotat degree	This is a degree that can sometimes be awarded when a candidate is unable to take his or her examinations because of illness and where it is deemed that had the candidate not been unwell, he or she would have passed. An aegrotat degree will not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council or for professional membership of the British Association of Occupational Therapists.
Andragogy	This is the process of engaging adult learners in the structure of the learning experience.
Educational philosophy	This is the theoretical underpinning of the learning, teaching and assessment strategies and methods utilised on a programme.
Evidence-based curriculum	This is the programme of study where the learning experience draws on practice and theory to support the content offered.
External examiner	This is an examiner from an alternative setting appointed by the HEI whose role is to help the programme team assure the quality of the way the programme is delivered and assessed.
Formative assessment	This is a formal way of assessing a student's ability in a continuous way that does not necessarily transfer to the final grade or pass/fail decision.
Key stakeholders	These are those who are most interested in the development, content and outcomes of the programme, e.g. higher education institution academic quality and standards unit, students, academic staff, local occupational therapy managers and employers, service users, education commissioners, sponsoring bodies.
Lifelong learning	This is the development of the individual as a professional through learning, which involves a supportive process enabling the individual to engage with and acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout his/her career.
Person-centred approach	This is a global term to explain the importance of the service user in the programme design and delivery.

Practice educator/ Professional practice educator	This is the person who is qualified to supervise students while they are on a practice placement. The professional practice educator normally will have undergone a practice educators' course (preferably the COT APPLE scheme or its equivalent) and will be familiar with the assessment regulations and processes in operation at the student's university.
Practice educator courses	These are courses offered to practice educators on the theory and practice of education that may lead to their accreditation as practice educators under the College of Occupational Therapists' Accreditation of Practice Placement Educators scheme (APPLE).
Practice learning outcome	This is a learning outcome set by the HEI, which students must achieve whilst on the practice placement but where the method of achievement is set by the practice placement educator, in conjunction with the HEI and the student.
Practice placement induction programme	This is a programme offered to all students on starting the practice learning experience covering organisational issues essential to the particular placement.
Pre-registration education	This is used to describe every programme of study that may be at undergraduate or postgraduate level, the successful completion of which leads to eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council and professional membership of the British Association of Occupational Therapists.
Professional practice co-ordinator	This is the person who normally co-ordinates the availability of practice placements and practice educators in the local region and regularly updates the higher education institutions.
Professional practice tutor	This is the academic tutor based at the higher education institution who manages and co-ordinates the practice placement learning elements of the programme, including the development of new practice placements and the training of practice educators.
Programme document	This is the document that describes the curriculum, educational philosophy, learning, teaching and assessment strategies employed, resources, regulations and procedures that apply to a programme of study for the particular award.
Role emerging placement	This is a student placement in settings where an occupational therapy service may not normally exist (see the COT Guidance Document – <i>Developing the occupational therapy profession: providing new work-based learning opportunities for students</i> (2006)).

Summative assessment	This is a formal way of assessing a student's ability, which normally relates to the final grade or pass/fail decision.
Supervision	This is the process of facilitating change in the learner that enables the process of assessment without itself being an assessment. Models of supervision refer to the different approaches to supervision, e.g. 1:1, 2:1, long-arm.

Standard 1: Programme management and resources standards

The institution's policy and procedures on the employment of the appropriate number of suitably qualified academic, professional practice learning and support staff with suitable experience, and on the provision of learning resources are able to:

- *Facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes by students.*
- *Monitor the observance of the professional code of ethics and conduct.*
- *Support the student experience.*
- *Enable the update and further development of the education programme.*
- *Influence service delivery.*
- *Contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.*

Criteria	Indicators and guidance	Source of evidence	Criteria met	Observations
1.1 The professional suite of programmes offered by the institution is headed by an experienced occupational therapist with higher education experience, a member who is in good standing with the professional body and able to lead the development of contemporary, creative and innovative occupational therapy and other related education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad range of professional experience, with previous full-time academic appointment in higher education. • Capabilities under COT4 of the College's Post Qualifying Framework. See also Appendix 4: The director of the occupational therapy programme or professional programme lead. • An experienced member of the faculty directly responsible for developing the occupational therapy programme, coordinating the planning and administration of the programme, and supervising overall professional staff performance, and with authority to maintain educational standards. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists who facilitates and supports the active involvement of professional members of staff with the professional body. 			
<p>1.2 The institution employs a number of academic staff and professional practice tutors with suitable qualifications and experience to support and facilitate the entire learning required for professional practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clearly defined staffing strategy for the delivery of the professional programme over the period of accreditation. • The professional backgrounds and experience of academic and professional practice staff are congruent with the philosophy and purpose of the occupational therapy programme, and staff qualifications are appropriate to the level of the final award. • Applied occupational therapy elements of the programme are taught by occupational therapists with a range of professional and academic expertise and appropriate qualifications. • Occupational therapy staff CVs demonstrate active engagement in scholarship and research that contribute to the knowledge and evidence-base of the programme and the profession. • There is a sufficient number of qualified staff to deliver the programme(s), preferably within the COT recommended staff/student ratio of 1:15; there is a sound rationale if the recommended ratio is exceeded. 			
<p>1.3 The staffing strategy is sufficiently robust to resource the students' academic and professional practice experience in both statutory and non-statutory areas of practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An occupational therapist member of staff has overall responsibility for the development of practice learning and opportunities in a wide range of practice settings. 			

Criteria	Indicators and guidance	Source of evidence	Criteria met	Observations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The higher education institution facilitates the development of practice educators under the COT APPLE scheme. • The higher education institution takes responsibility for developing the delivery of the APPLE scheme. • Clearly defined hours are identified for the preparation of practice educators for supervision of students. • Clearly defined teaching hours and strategy for contacting students and supporting their practice-based learning needs are identified. 			
<p>1.4 The staffing strategy takes account of the professional development needs of both academic and practice learning staff to support evidence-based practice and the further development of the programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a programme for staff development and staff CVs demonstrate their engagement with their professional development through research. • There is evidence that staff development activities impact upon the design and delivery of a contemporary and evidence-based curriculum and practice learning experience of students. 			
<p>1.5 The higher education institution demonstrates that there is a sufficient and diverse range of practice learning opportunities to support the curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence that, where possible, each student can expect to gain practice experience with a range of people of all ages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – From different socio-economic and cultural perspectives. – With recently acquired and long-standing occupational needs. – With different aspects of physical and psychosocial functioning. 			

<p>1.6 The educational resources and facilities are appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear resource strategy in place for the delivery of the programme to ensure professional accreditation. 			
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Standard 2: Curriculum standards

The curriculum content, design and delivery reflect the occupational therapy philosophy based on a sound educational rationale and the principles of the professional code of ethics and conduct. Graduates from the programme will be fit for contemporary professional practice and able to identify their professional development needs.

Criteria	Indicators and guidance	Source of evidence	Criteria met	Observations
<p>2.1 The curriculum is designed to develop safe, competent occupational therapists who are fit for contemporary and developing professional practice and that reflects the contribution of occupational therapy in addressing the needs and requirements of current statutory, independent and voluntary sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum reflects current international and national reference standards and benchmarks. • The clear rationale for the curriculum model is based upon a sound educational philosophy that is compatible with the person-centred values of occupational therapy. • The programme document specifies the professional philosophy establishing the connections between occupation, health and wellbeing, and facilitates resourcefulness and self-reliance. • There is a clear rationale for the programme that reflects how it addresses unique local and national needs and priorities. • The induction programme in the academic and practice settings includes orientation to the service setting, including mandatory requirements, e.g. health and safety, and risk assessment issues. • There is evidence that key stakeholders are involved in curriculum development and implementation and that effective mechanisms are in place for consulting with education commissioners, practice educators, employers, practitioners, clients, carers, students and other professions in the design of the curriculum. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence that the curriculum reflects and can incorporate changes to health, social care and occupational drivers. 		
<p>2.2 The programme is designed to assure coherence and progression to entry-level professional competence and integrates academic and practice education elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integrity of the curriculum is reflected by the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout the programme. • Both academic and practice elements demonstrate progression towards professional competence. • The programme document demonstrates the requirement for students to successfully complete the equivalent of a minimum of 1000 hours of assessed practice placement learning in a range of practice settings (see WFOT minimum standards (2002) and COT Position Statement on APEL (2006)). 		
<p>2.3 The curriculum includes opportunities for inter-professional education in academic and practice settings as a means of developing teamwork skills, shared intervention and theory building.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum articulates how inter-professional learning is embedded into the curriculum. • The students' understanding of partnership working for effective service delivery is evident in their academic and practice assessments. • Refer to COT Position Statement on interprofessional education (2004). 		
<p>2.4 The curriculum is designed to facilitate the development of students' research skills to graduate level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum demonstrates how research skills are taught and developed throughout the programme to equip graduates with the knowledge required to conduct research and to be skilled consumers of research. 		
<p>2.5 The curriculum embraces the principles of lifelong learning as an essential part of continuing professional and personal development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describes how the concept of continuing professional and personal development is embedded and nurtured throughout the programme. – Describes how it supports the students' competence to practise. – Describes how students are enabled to document their plans and achievements. – Reflects the profession's current code of ethics and professional conduct. 		

Standard 3: Learning, teaching and assessment standards

The institution uses a range of methods and strategies that:

- *Supports the achievement of the learning outcomes.*
- *Supports the observance of the code of ethics and professional conduct and research governance.*
- *Employs rigorous and robust assessments that enable the student to demonstrate professional competence and safe practice commensurate to the level of study.*

Criteria	Indicators and guidance	Source of evidence	Criteria met	Observations
<p>3.1 The programme document describes the learning and teaching methods and assessment strategy that underpin the professional philosophy of occupational therapy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational programme embodies the beliefs and values of occupational therapy as evidenced in the learning, teaching and assessment methods. • Educational methods are consistent with the view of people as occupational beings (as articulated in the current COT Curriculum Framework). • The learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage independent learning and a sense of professionalism. – Address students' needs in the context of widening participation and social inclusion, taking into account current legislation. • The learning, teaching and assessment methods demonstrate the use of information technology to enable learning in the academic and practice elements of the programme. • The learning, teaching and assessment strategies are outlined in the programme document and student handbook. 			

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme document defines the students' rights, roles and responsibilities and expectations in both academic and practice elements of the programme. 		
3.2 The assessment design and procedures assure fitness for practice, purpose, profession and academic award.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements are in place for students with additional needs to demonstrate their fitness for practice, purpose, academic award and the profession. • The strategy and methods of assessment ensure that all learning outcomes are met. • The code of ethics and professional conduct is observed and procedures for dealing with professional unsuitability are in place. 		
3.3 Appropriate models of supervision are used that enable students to be fit for employment as a professional graduate.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models of supervision are used appropriately to enable students to develop the ability to practise safely and effectively. • The learning agreements between the student and the practice educator identify the learning outcomes for the practice setting. • The strategies for supervision of students on practice placements are sound and robust. • The strategies for support provided to practice educators are sound and robust. 		
3.4 The assessment regulations comply with those of the professional and regulatory bodies.			See Appendix 2. Professional requirements and recommendations for pre-registration education.		

Standard 4: Quality assurance and monitoring standards

The institution's annual quality assurance and enhancement processes include the evaluation of the programme by the professional staff, monitoring and feedback mechanisms, external examining procedures, and evaluation of student performance.

Criteria	Indicators and guidance	Source of evidence	Criteria met	Observations
<p>4.1 Key stakeholders have confidence in the quality assurance and enhancement procedures in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance processes demonstrate rigour and integrity, and enable continuous improvement. • Details of quality assurance processes include feedback from students, service users and stakeholders. • The programme annual report submitted to the College of Occupational Therapists includes the external examiners' reports and the higher education institution's response to their comments and recommendations. • Mechanisms are in place to provide evidence that future employers feel that graduates are fit for practice and employment. 			

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Appendix 1

Guidance and expectations for pre-registration programmes

Guidance and expectations for pre-registration programmes

A Documentation

The format for the definitive document for a programme submitted for accreditation or re-accreditation is the responsibility of the higher education institution. However, where the professional body requires additional information, it is expected that the format will be adjusted to accommodate this, which might include appendices.

The timing of the submission of documentation for accreditation or re-accreditation and the number of copies required may be obtained from the Education Department at the College of Occupational Therapists.

A.1 Programme appraisal

The documentation for a programme submitted for re-accreditation should include a critical appraisal of the programme since its last approval. This should be a maximum of 12 pages in length. Whether the appraisal is submitted as a separate document or incorporated as a section in the main document, it should include the following:

- Strengths and limitations of the programme, including those articulated by the external examiners.
- Feedback on graduate performance.
- The factors that influenced the limitations and changes proposed for the programme being submitted for accreditation.
- A statement on how the critical appraisal has informed the programme philosophy and rationale, and the programme team's vision regarding the new programme.

A.2 Information about the new programme

The curriculum content must conform to the current curriculum framework set by the College of Occupational Therapists. In order to be accredited, the curriculum must demonstrate how it addresses the current requirements of the following:

- World Federation of Occupational Therapists.
- European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education tuning process.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education occupational therapy subject benchmark statements and Skills for Health.
- Standards of Education and Training and Standards of Proficiency of the Health Professions Council.
- Higher Education Qualifications Framework.

The documents should provide details of the following:

- The title of the award that would confer eligibility to the graduate to apply for entry to the Health Professions Council Register. Pre-registration programmes must minimally be at honours degree level, but may be at the level of a postgraduate diploma or master's degree.

- The minimum and maximum duration of the programme and mode of delivery (full time, part time, in-service).
- The education provider's policy on equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion, including compliance with the current legislation on disability.
- Recruitment and selection processes and AP(E)L policy (see COT position statement (2006) on accreditation of prior learning).
- The proposed student intake, which should include the maximum number of students that could be admitted to a cohort.
- The philosophy of occupational therapy education.
- Introduction of the College of Occupational Therapists' Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct in the induction programme.
- The curriculum content, which should reflect national and professional priorities and contemporary issues for the profession.
- Learning outcomes, key skills, learning, teaching and assessment strategies, indicative reading, practice education, assessment schedule and timetable for retrieval, and student progression.
- Rationale and strategies for inter-professional learning and how the integrity of occupational therapy is maintained within the inter-professional learning/education curriculum (see COT Position Statement on interprofessional education (2004)).
- Ways in which service users contribute to programme delivery.
- Student support mechanisms, including compliance with current disability legislation.
- Procedure for dealing with concerns about professional suitability and the university disciplinary and appeals procedures and details of how this information is made available to students.
- Education provider's resources strategy to support the demands and needs of the programme and the quality of student experience.
- Outline of how current physical and staff resources support delivery of the entire programme.
- Professional and academic qualifications and professional interests of each tutor, including the strategy for updating and developing skills and research interests and activities.
- Quality management, monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- A map of how the programme meets the Quality Assurance Agency subject benchmark statements for occupational therapy.
- A map of how the programme meets the National Health Service Knowledge and Skills Framework (DH 2004).

A.3 Admission/entry requirements

There should be evidence that recruitment and selection processes utilise equal opportunity and widening participation principles and give both parties the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on the programme.

Admission/entry requirements to an accredited programme must be clearly documented and conform to the standards of the professional and regulatory bodies in relation to the following:

- Benchmark academic entry requirements for admission to each route to professional qualification for all categories of applicants (including overseas and mature applicants). The subjects and grades as well as alternative admission requirements to promote wide and inclusive entry must be clearly stated.
- Compliance with current legislation pertaining to the accommodation of people with disabilities and additional needs.
- Robust policy and procedures relating to transfer of credits such as Accreditation of Certificated Learning (ACL) and Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L).
- Evidence of a good command of written and spoken English such as GCSE English grade C or normally IELTS 7.
- Mechanisms in place that enable the potential student and the higher education institution to make an informed judgement about the applicant's capacity to complete the programme.
- Enhanced disclosure of criminal conviction from the Criminal Records Bureau or Disclosure Scotland, or the Police Service of Northern Ireland, or the equivalent international arrangements, as appropriate, including the excepted nature of the profession in relation to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and the arrangements for annual declaration.
- The selection process, including, for example, the use of interviews or written work to assess the applicant's potential to undertake and complete the course.

A.4 Student transfer

Modular programme delivery enables students to apply to use accumulated credits gained from one programme to count towards a degree award from another institution or part of the same institution. Transfers from one programme to another may be dealt with under the higher education institution's admission, ACL and AP(E)L procedures.

Students seeking entry to an accredited pre-registration programme, having completed part of an accredited pre-registration programme in another institution, may be required to demonstrate their competence to date through an assessment process as a condition of acceptance by the receiving institution.

A.5 Practice placement learning

The planning and organisation of practice placement learning should ensure that students are exposed to a variety of clients across the life span and to a wide range of practice settings covering health and social care, as well as new and emerging areas of practice. The programme document must contain the following information:

- The requirement for a student to successfully complete a minimum of 1000 assessed hours of practice learning which should be spent using occupational therapy skills and interventions (WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists).
- The timetable for practice education and retrieval.

- The aims and objectives, learning outcomes, modes of assessment and assessment criteria for each practice learning experience as the student progresses through the programme.
- The preparation of students for practice settings and the structure for providing academic and professional support to them while on placement.
- The preparation of practice educators for educating and supervising students, the higher education institution's structure for providing the support needed by both practice educators and students, and the use of APPLE.
- The mechanisms for communication/consultation with practice educators on changes and developments within the programme which may affect practice education.
- The mechanisms for accreditation, monitoring and evaluation of the practice learning experience as an appropriate learning situation for pre-registration students.
- The arrangements for managing the assessment of students in a range of practice experiences.
- The management of the education of students with additional needs in the practice setting.

A.6 Exchange programmes

Where a programme's structure permits periods of study overseas, for example as organised through ERASMUS, it will be important to show that the experience does not compromise basic professional skills and knowledge. The following elements should be described within the documentation submitted for accreditation and re-accreditation:

- How learning outcomes would be assessed.
- How such an experience is complementary to the rest of the programme.
- How it enables the student as graduate to meet the Standards of Proficiency required for registration with the Health Professions Council.

A.7 Student choice

Where students are afforded a choice of modules, module content or other elements within the course, the rationale for the choice must be articulated within the document. The document must clearly state the combination of programme content that may or may not be studied in order to fulfil the requirements for professional qualification.

A.8 Student membership with the professional body

Annual student registration with the professional body for student membership of the professional association is strongly recommended. Student membership of the British Association of Occupational Therapists provides many student services to support their studies and practice experience, which include professional indemnity while on practice settings, subscription to the professional journal, and access to the College of Occupational Therapists' library. The student membership fee is subject to annual review. The documentation should indicate how students will be informed of the procedure for registering with the professional body.

A.9 Resources

A.9.1 Staffing levels

The higher education institution must demonstrate how staffing levels and staff experience and professional qualifications are commensurate with the programme(s) being proposed or delivered.

For new programmes, the documentation should include the higher education institution's strategy to ensure the balance of the appointment of suitably qualified staff, including professionally qualified staff to deliver the programme.

A.9.2 Learning resources (library facilities, equipment and information technology)

A general listing of the library, equipment and information support resources should be provided, listing the core professional literature available to students. This must be related to student numbers and indicate the strategy for review, updating and upgrading.

A.10 Appeals procedure

The appeals policy and procedure operated by the higher education institution in cases relating to both academic and professional suitability of students must be clearly explained. Details of how the information is made available to students must be included in the documentation.

B Course management expectations

B.1 Appointment of professional lead for occupational therapy

All higher education institutions offering pre-registration occupational therapy education must appoint an occupational therapist as professional lead for pre-registration education. He or she will be the point of contact with the College of Occupational Therapists for professional matters relating to programme delivery and quality assurance. (See Appendix 4: The director of the occupational therapy programme or professional programme lead, for details and guidance on the College's expectations.)

The College of Occupational Therapists strongly recommends that a nominated representative of the College should sit on the appointment panels for the post of professional lead for occupational therapy. Proposed dates for the interviews should be notified to the Education Manager (Quality and Standards) as far in advance as possible.

The College's representative offers the professional expertise to assist the appointments panel to carry out its function successfully. The major role of the College representative is to ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate fully their professional knowledge, skill and fitness for the post and to ensure that the best choice is made. The requirements of the higher education institution, the policies of the professional body and the minimum standards of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists should be used in making judgements.

Where the Professional Lead for Occupational Therapy is required to develop a new pre-registration occupational therapy education programme within the higher education institution, the appointed person must normally take up the post at least one year prior to the first intake of students.

B.2 Appointment of lecturers in occupational therapy

Occupational therapists appointed to teach on all accredited programmes must demonstrate suitable professional qualifications and experience. They must be registered with the Health Professions Council and are strongly recommended to be members of the British Association of Occupational Therapists.

B.3 Annual programme report

All programmes accredited by the College of Occupational Therapists must submit their annual monitoring report using the format prescribed by the College. The report must include a copy of the report of the external examiners and a breakdown of the types of practice placement learning settings used during the period covered by the annual report. The Education Department of the COT will advise the final date for submission of the report.

B.4 Changes to the programme

B.4.1 Major changes to an accredited programme

A major change is a significant development that impacts on programme delivery and the COT pre-registration education standards. Major changes would need approval by the College of Occupational Therapists. The request for approval should be submitted to be fully considered sufficiently in advance of their intended implementation date. Examples would include changes in the programme specification, such as a change to the title of the qualifying award or change to programme structure, substantial alteration or additional content or important changes to the pattern of assessments, or delivery of an accredited programme to a satellite site. Matters such as alteration in student numbers in excess of the maximum stipulated, an alteration in staffing levels or balance of expertise necessary for programme delivery, and modifications to physical resources, may also constitute major change.

B.4.2 Minor changes to an accredited programme

Modifications to the programme will be reported annually. The College of Occupational Therapists recognises that all higher education institutions have processes in place for the approval of minor changes. A minor change would therefore need to be approved via the higher education institution's normal processes in consultation with external examiners, and notified to the College of Occupational Therapists through the programme annual report. The College of Occupational Therapists reserves the right to explore the issue further to see whether the modifications change the programme significantly for purposes of accreditation.

B.5 Extension of programme accreditation period

Accreditation of a programme is for a fixed period, normally five years, and this is stipulated at the time that the programme is accredited. An extension of the accreditation period of a programme beyond five years therefore requires full consideration by the College of Occupational Therapists. The formal request for extension must be submitted in writing to the Education Manager (Quality and Standards) and must give reasons to support the request. Approval will be for a specified period and the College shall reserve its right to stipulate conditions. The request normally must be received one year prior to the expected review date.

B.6 Student intake/numbers

A programme is accredited for a given maximum intake of students, which should be stated in the documentation submitted for accreditation. Resources, including those for practice learning, are evaluated on the basis of this number. It is recognised that minor

fluctuations are inevitable; however, an intention to increase the intake above the stated maximum should be notified to the College. Approval for the proposed additional numbers must be sought before additional students are accepted on the programme. The request should be accompanied by a commentary on the impact of the change on physical and/or human resources and an action plan with dates for addressing the issues. (Accreditation may be withdrawn should the higher education institution fail to meet the requirements of the College on resource issues.)

B.7 Delivery of an accredited programme to a satellite site

The delivery of an accredited programme to a satellite site requires prior approval by the College of Occupational Therapists, which may include a visit to the site and/or a discussion with representatives of the programme team and the senior academic management to satisfy the COT that the site can assure that students have appropriate access to resources to support their learning.

B.8 Relocation of an accredited programme (physical move to a new site)

A proposed change in the physical location of an accredited programme must be notified to the College of Occupational Therapists. The reasons for relocation and how this would affect the programme must be given. The College shall reserve its right to undertake an inspection of the new premises to be assured that the institution continues to be properly organised and equipped to deliver the programme to the required standards.

B.9 Relocation of an accredited programme (organisational)

As part of institutional reorganisation, the university may decide to transfer the organisational management of an accredited programme to another faculty or department. This must be notified to the College of Occupational Therapists with a rationale for the change. The College would need to be assured that such a move would not compromise the resources and support to the students, the quality assurance and enhancement of the programme, students' learning experience, and staff support and development.

Appendix 2

Professional requirements and recommendations for pre-registration education

Professional requirements and recommendations for pre-registration education

A Requirements

A.1 Duration of the programme

In order to comply with the requirements for approval by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, the duration of a pre-registration programme will be a minimum of 90 weeks. There is a requirement for a student to successfully complete a minimum of 1000 assessed hours of practice learning, as part of the programme.

Accreditation of prior learning or experience can be considered for equivalence in determining the above in accordance with the accepted ACL or AP(E)L policy and process. Normally, no more than one third of the programme or part of the programme may be subject to AP(E)L in keeping with the COT position statement on AP(E)L.

The College of Occupational Therapists sets the maximum time in which students should normally complete the programme and gain the professional qualification. This is to ensure that those qualifying have currency of professional knowledge for safe practice and the protection of the public.

- Graduate entry programmes of two years' duration should normally be completed within four years.
- Three-year Bachelor's programmes should normally be completed within five years.
- Four-year part-time programmes should normally be completed within six years.

Extension of a student's registration period beyond the maximum time set by the College of Occupational Therapists must have prior approval of the College and must have the support of the higher education institution.

A.2 Assessments

All modules contributing to the professional qualification must be passed.

A.3 Retrieval and failure

The College of Occupational Therapists has a duty to ensure that graduates of its accredited programmes possess the required current knowledge, skills and attitudes to be safe and effective practitioners. The COT regulations on retrieval of failure take account not only of the currency of the programme but also the overall capabilities of the student to demonstrate competence in core academic elements and at integrating theory with practice. The College of Occupational Therapists' accreditation of a pre-registration occupational therapy programme will be conditional to the pre-registration programme adopting the College's regulations on retrieval of failure in both academic and practice education elements of the programme should the higher education institution's own regulations be less stringent.

A.3.1 Academic failure

With the exception of modules or periods of learning relating to practice education, a student may be allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass a module. A student who thus fails a module after the retrieval processes associated with the first attempt are exhausted (and in the absence of extenuating circumstances) may be allowed to re-register for the module on one occasion only, provided that successful completion of the module is within the maximum period for completion of the programme.

Re-registration will provide the student with further academic learning to improve his/her chance of passing the module. The student's progression to the next level will be determined by the programme regulations on progression. Extenuating circumstances and deferrals will be at the discretion of the examinations board and subject to the university regulations.

A.3.2 Practice placement failure

The practice placement is where students will be required to demonstrate their ability to integrate theory with practice and professional competence at their level of study. Successful practice placement learning is important for safe and effective practice and for the protection of the public. Where a student is deemed to have demonstrated unsafe practice, their status on the programme will be considered under A.3.3 below.

With regards to periods of learning or modules related to practice education, no re-registration for these modules is permissible. If the module is ultimately failed when the first attempt and retrieval processes for the module have been exhausted, the student should be required to leave the course. A student may also be denied the retrieval if the failure originally occurred on grounds of professional unsuitability. The practice hours of failed practice education will not count towards the minimum requirement of 1000 hours.

A.3.3 Professional unsuitability including unprofessional behaviour and breaches of the COT Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (failure on grounds of professional unsuitability)

Students can be required to leave the course on grounds of professional unsuitability irrespective of academic achievement. The programme document should include the procedure for investigation of alleged professional unsuitability and for the termination of a student's education on these grounds.

A.4 Exit awards

Where a student cannot complete a programme successfully for the professional qualifying award, the awarding institution has a duty to give proper acknowledgement to his/her achievement.

If the institution wishes to offer other exit awards, the titles of the awards must be stated. The document must clearly state that no exit award other than the professional qualifying award will confer eligibility to apply for HPC registration.

B Recommendations

B.1 Aegrotat degree

An aegrotat degree will not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council. Should the HEI offer an aegrotat degree, the title of the award must be stated in the definitive document and must not include any reference to the protected title of occupational therapist.

B.2 Break in studies

A break in studies for sound reasons may be permitted at the discretion of the higher education institution if supported by the programme leader, provided that the programme is completed satisfactorily within the permitted maximum period from initial registration. A break in studies should normally be limited to one year at any one time.

B.3 External examiners

At least one external examiner must be a registered occupational therapist with an understanding and experience of assessment principles and methods in higher education. Where there are more than two external examiners, the majority must be HPC registered occupational therapists. Although the scrutiny and appointment of the external examiners is the responsibility of the higher education institution, the College of Occupational Therapists shall reserve its right to raise objections to an appointment to a programme accredited by the College. (The College of Occupational Therapists holds an annually updated Register of External Examiners that is available to accredited programmes.)

Appendix 3

Accreditation of pre-registration programmes in occupational therapy

A guide for accreditors and education providers

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1 The purpose of this guidance document

- 1.1 This guidance document is intended to introduce potential occupational therapy education providers to the role of the College of Occupational Therapists in pre-registration occupational therapy education in the United Kingdom and describe the details of its accreditation process.

2 Relationship between the College of Occupational Therapists and the Health Professions Council in pre-registration education

- 2.1 The College sets the quality standards for the accreditation of pre-registration programmes. Education providers that offer occupational therapy programmes that are accredited by the College of Occupational Therapists are assured therefore

that their programmes and graduates using the title '*occupational therapy*' and '*occupational therapist*':

- Are fit for academic award, practice, purpose and profession.
- Conform to the latest curriculum framework of the College of Occupational Therapists.
- Meet the minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists set by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists.
- Are responsive to local, national and global issues that influence the learning requirements of students.
- Are able to demonstrate that the College's professional standards for lifelong learning and the code of ethics and professional conduct are embedded within their programme.

2.2 The Health Professions Council (HPC) is the regulatory body for the allied health professions in the UK. It has been set up by the government to protect the public. The HPC keeps a register of health professionals who meet the HPC standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

2.3 Mutual recognition and respect for each other's specific remit, i.e. 'fitness for practice' for the Health Professions Council and 'fitness for the profession' for the College of Occupational Therapists, are fundamental to the good working relationship between the College and the HPC. This is particularly evident in the planning and conduct of tri-partite approval events that involve the College, the HPC and the higher education institution. The objectivity and professionalism of the College's accreditors and HPC visitors are vital to maintaining this relationship. The education officers of the respective bodies work hard to maintain good communication channels from the planning of the event to the final outcome.

2.4 HPC approval of a programme is a requirement for COT accreditation in view of the College's remit to ensure that a person successfully completing an accredited pre-registration programme is 'fit for the profession' and therefore fit for practice.

3 The accreditation of pre-registration programmes

3.1 The purpose of accreditation is to ensure that:

- Graduates and qualified therapists are fit for the occupational therapy profession at a level beyond the benchmark required for registration with the Health Professions Council and that they meet international standards.
- Graduates from accredited occupational therapy programmes are educated and practise in a manner that is consistent with the values, beliefs and philosophy of the profession, and by so doing demonstrate 'fitness for profession'.
- Education providers who work in partnership with the College will have confidence that their programmes accord with the highest possible standards for occupational therapy education.

3.2 COT accreditation is not intended to award academic credits but to act as an enhanced quality benchmark for potential applicants and employers when considering the merits and effectiveness of a particular programme in meeting the College's 'fitness for profession' criteria.

4 The benefits of COT accreditation

4.1 For the education provider

- Assurance of automatic national and international recognition of the HEI that should enhance student recruitment.
- Inclusion in the *Occupational therapy careers handbook* published annually by the College of Occupational Therapists and distributed to careers advisers in the UK and potential students (viewed online nearly 100,000 times a year).
- Access to unparalleled professional expertise, experience and advice on occupational therapy pre-registration education.
- Recognition of the occupational therapy team as a CPD provider endorsed by the professional body, and free listings of all appropriate CPD offerings on the COT one-stop-shop CPD website, viewed an average of 1,000 times per day.
- Access to advice and information on leading-edge pre-registration and post-qualification education issues through position statements and guidance documents, designed to guide the curriculum and enhance professional knowledge, and developed in conjunction with experienced educators, practitioners and other stakeholders.
- More opportunities to become part of established networks of occupational therapy education providers in the UK and internationally, through which intelligence, advice and knowledge are shared and strategic actions are developed and debated to ensure currency of programmes.
- Increased opportunities to participate in collaborative work with the College at a national level on issues relating to occupational therapy education provision and through the professional body's influencing activities at government level.
- Access to up-to-date knowledge on government legislation and other publications by virtue of the unique position of the College, its education experts and reference groups to receive, search and sift this information. This will be coupled with increased opportunity to debate and respond to the potential impact of new issues relevant to occupational therapy learning and development.
- Access to collaborative work undertaken by the College with other health and allied health professional bodies (e.g. Allied Health Professions Forum, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists), specialist organisations and government agencies (e.g. National Institute for Health and Clinical Effectiveness (NICE)).
- Direct access to the College by occupational therapy staff through committee, board and council membership to influence the learning and development agenda of the professional body.
- International recognition of programmes by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT). Graduates will hold a degree that is recognised by any country* belonging to that federation.
- Access to support and advice to help address local issues in education provider institutions, which are challenging to resolve or need additional professional expertise or support provided by the professional body.

* Subject to the requirements of the individual country's regulating body.

- Opportunity to work in partnership with COT in the development of the professional base to influence the evolution of progressive, cutting-edge occupational therapy, both nationally and internationally.
- Access to COT annual reports and data on student and graduate profiles that are used to compare the HEI's own data against the national picture.
- Opportunity to highlight the benefits of COT recognition in student recruitment marketing materials for the programme.

4.2 For the employer

- Graduates having successfully completed a programme that has passed the professional body's quality assurance of the core components of both theoretical studies and professional practice for safe practice of the profession.
- Graduates with nationally and internationally recognised qualifications beyond the threshold required for registration i.e. Postgraduate Diploma in occupational therapy and MSc occupational therapy (pre-registration).
- Access to COT annual reports on student and graduate profiles that could be used to inform national workforce planning and occupational therapy education commissioning.
- Opportunity to discuss with the COT the local needs of service users that would need to be addressed by the curriculum to ensure the continued provision of quality care.

5 The consequences of non-accreditation by COT

5.1 For the education provider

- Programmes and education providers will not be granted approval by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists.
- The occupational therapy qualification of graduates from non-accredited programmes will not be recognised in WFOT member countries. Potential students may therefore not choose to enrol in these programmes.
- Non-accredited status of programmes will be highlighted in the *Occupational Therapy Careers Handbook*, published annually by the College of Occupational Therapists and distributed to careers advisers in the UK and potential students. Recruitment to these programmes may therefore be affected.
- Members of staff would not be invited to participate in the College's strategic education activities or membership of COT education boards and committees, nor be entered in the Register of External Examiners.
- No access to the regularly updated Register of External Examiners, which includes the entries of experienced educators in the UK who are eligible to be appointed as external examiners.
- No access to COT annual reports on student and graduate profiles, which provide the national picture for a given year.
- No access to professional advice on curriculum development and current leading-edge pre-registration and post-qualification education and practice issues that may enhance programme quality and professional staff development.
- Staff from non-accredited programmes would not be eligible to be a COT accreditor.

6 Preparing the submission document

- 6.1 The College requires the submission of the documentation at least six weeks prior to the accreditation event, or four weeks prior to the re-accreditation event. The College acknowledges that there is common information required by the university, the HPC and the College to be included in the submission document. Therefore the College would not expect the university to produce a separate document for COT accreditation that is different from that submitted to the university and the HPC. However, COT would expect to find incorporated within the relevant sections of the submission document any additional information and specific professional regulations required by the College. These are stated in Appendix 2: Professional requirements and recommendations for pre-registration education. The programme team is advised to cross-reference these regulations and information against their submission document. One example of COT requirements is the requirement for a professional programme lead to be an occupational therapist with relevant and appropriate experience.
- 6.2 For re-accreditation, in addition to the submission document and any other documentation submitted to the HPC, the following information should be submitted:
- Full programme appraisal from the most recent accreditation.
 - External examiners' reports for the last two years.
 - Rationale for changes to the curriculum.

7 The accreditation process

- 7.1 The College believes that occupational therapy programme accreditation and review/re-accreditation are collaborative processes between the College and the HEI. It is not considered to be in the best interests of either party for a programme to fail to achieve COT accreditation. Thus, the College would do its best to advise the programme team on how COT criteria and standards could be achieved and thereby facilitate the process, where possible.
- 7.2 Review and re-accreditation will normally take place every five years, unless accreditors consider it necessary to re-visit the programme earlier, e.g. a programme with an inexperienced teaching team or a rapid turnover of staff since the last accreditation event, where major changes are being introduced to the curriculum, or if the submitted programme is highly innovative in its content, delivery and/or assessment.
- 7.3 Re-accreditation may either involve a visit to the programme, ideally as a joint event with the higher education institution and the Health Professions Council, or may be undertaken as a 'panel documentation exercise', if no major changes are being developed. The consideration of major changes as interim arrangements may also be subject to a 'panel documentation exercise'. The decision on the process to be observed shall lie with the College of Occupational Therapists' appointed panel.
- 7.3.1 Re-accreditation via a visit to the higher education institution would involve the same processes as the first accreditation of the programme and requires discussion of the documentation with the programme team and

senior management on site, as well as meetings with practice educators and students and an inspection visit to the facilities and learning resources.

- 7.3.2 The 'panel documentation exercise' involves full consideration by the College's appointed accreditation panel of the proposed minor changes. The documentation should state the rationale for the proposed changes and demonstrate how the proposed changes would enhance the overall programme and learning outcomes and the students' learning experience. Any requirement for further clarification would be managed either by correspondence with the programme team or by invitation to a face-to-face meeting with the professional programme lead to discuss the documentation. In the case of the latter, a date will be scheduled for the accreditors to discuss the submission document at COT headquarters to which meeting key members of the programme team will be invited. The accreditors, by mutual agreement with the programme team, will set a separate date for a meeting with current students and a visit to placements, as required.

8 COT accreditation panel members

- 8.1 The College's accreditors are drawn from qualified occupational therapist members of the BAOT with a range of experience in occupational therapy education and practice. OT educators will be from COT accredited programmes. Accreditors may serve as advisers to programme leaders and programme teams. They also assist the College in the quality monitoring of COT accredited programmes.

9 The timetable for accreditation

- 9.1 The College would normally schedule an event to take place not later than June for a programme starting the following September and not later than October for a programme starting the following January.
- 9.2 The COT Education Manager (Quality and Standards) is the first point of contact for information and advice on all aspects of the COT accreditation process and quality monitoring of programmes. They will also be able to advise immediately whether or not the dates proposed are acceptable or make alternative suggestions.
- 9.3 Education providers are strongly advised to contact the COT preferably 12 months prior to the proposed start date of the programme, or earlier, e.g. as soon as they are successful in their bid for funding the programme. It would be advisable to offer a few possible dates for the event so these could be entered in the accreditation events diary and ensure the availability of the appropriate accreditors. While it would be preferable and practicable to have a joint event with the HPC, the HEI may choose to hold separate events for the regulatory body and the COT. The timetable and contents are generally similar to those suggested by the HPC for both events.



Figure 1 Flowchart for accreditation of pre-registration programmes (new programmes)

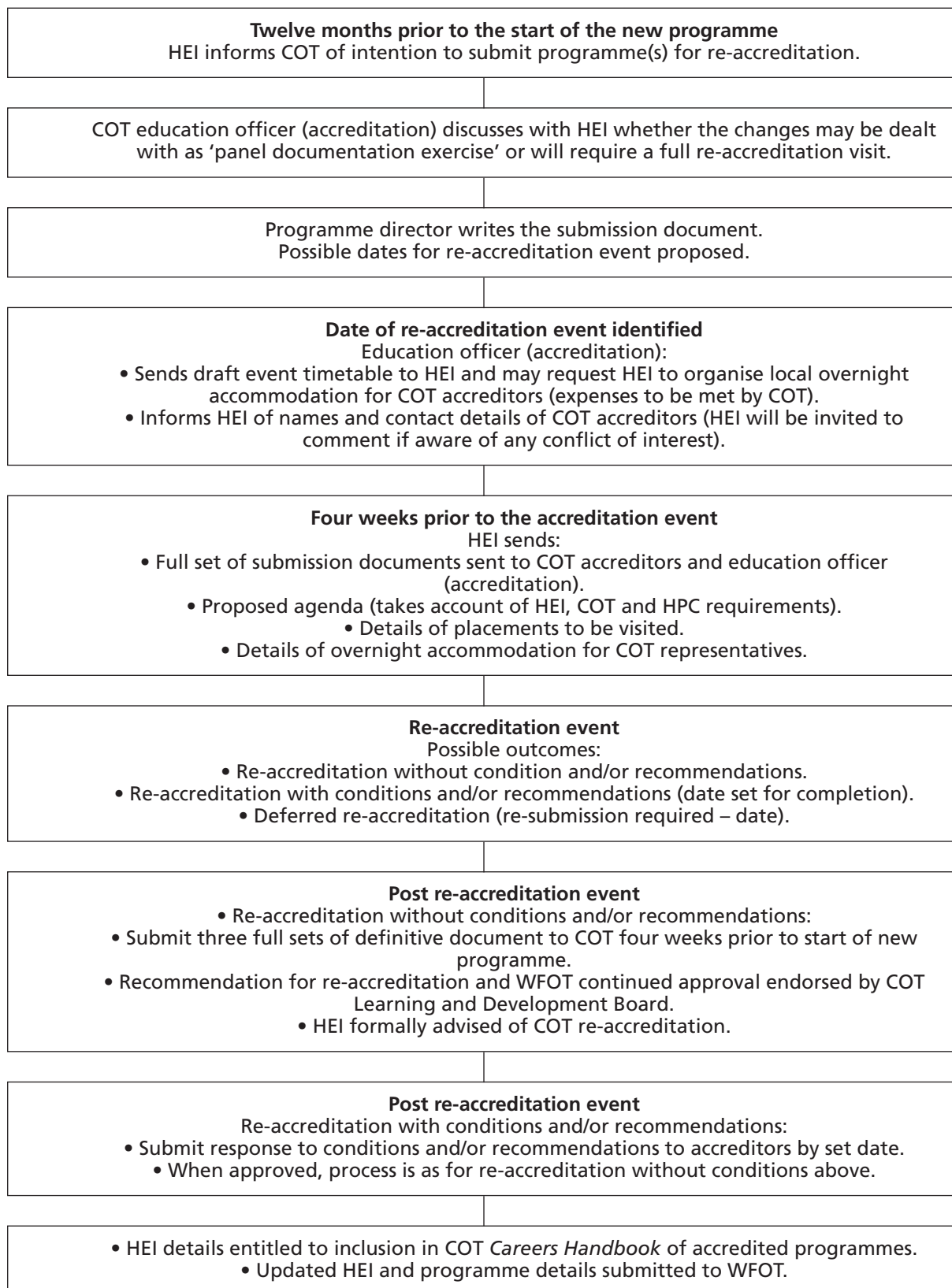


Figure 2 Flowchart for review and re-accreditation of pre-registration programmes

<p style="text-align: center;">Agenda for accreditation event (Chaired by HEI)</p> <p><i>Day 1 agenda to include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with full panel to share identified issues to raise with the Programme Development Team (PDT) – (venue/time: to be decided by the university). <p><i>Day 2 agenda to include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agenda setting with the full panel.• Inspection tour of the accommodation, resources and facilities.• Meeting with university senior management (Dean of Faculty; Head of School) to explore resources issues.• Meeting with PDT to discuss issues on curriculum, practice education and programme regulations.• Private meeting of COT accreditors (if needed).• Private meeting of COT accreditors to formulate decision (may be in partnership with HEI representatives).• COT feedback to full panel.• Feedback to PDT.

Figure 3 COT model agenda for an accreditation event (new programme)

<p style="text-align: center;">Agenda for re-accreditation event (Chaired by HEI)</p> <p><i>Day 1 agenda to include the following:</i> am: COT accreditors visit practice placements, if required (accompanied by staff).</p> <p><i>Days 1 and 2 to cover the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspection tour of accommodation, resources and facilities.• Meeting with students.• Meeting with full panel to share issues to raise with programme team (venue/time: to be decided by the university).• Meeting of full panel (agenda setting).• Meeting with university senior management (Dean of Faculty; Head of School) to explore resources issues.• Meeting with practice placement educators.• Meeting with programme team to discuss issues on curriculum, practice education and regulations.• Private meeting of COT accreditors (if needed).• Private meeting of COT accreditors to formulate decision (may be in partnership with HEI representatives).• COT feedback to full panel.• Feedback to Programme Development Team. <p><i>Please note that the final agenda will be by mutual agreement of participating stakeholders.</i></p>

Figure 4 COT model agenda for a review and re-accreditation event

10 Accreditation outcomes

10.1 The COT accreditors will give a feedback of their recommendation to the full panel, which the chair may verbally convey to the programme (development) team before the end of the event. The outcome may be either:

- Accreditation with no conditions and/or recommendations.
- Accreditation subject to conditions and/or recommendations.
- Deferred accreditation (re-submission required and date agreed).

10.2 Where accreditation is granted with conditions and/or recommendations, the accreditors will set a date by which the conditions must be met. The programme team may consult the accreditors for advice on how the COT conditions and recommendations may be achieved.

10.3 The final recommendation for accreditation will be submitted to the nearest meeting of the Learning and Development Board for endorsement. The education officers will send formal advice to the HEI and the announcement will be published in the College's publication, *Occupational Therapy News* (OTN).

11 Common pitfalls of accreditation

Failure to observe the requirements of the College has led to the delay in the accreditation of a few programmes. Some common pitfalls have been:

- The appointment of practitioners with little or no background or experience in higher education to the post of programme director/professional programme lead. This has resulted in the development of a programme with no coherent occupational therapy education philosophy and a curriculum with a limited range of occupational therapy tools presented to students.
- A narrow or specialist approach to the design of the programme as articulated in its education and/or occupational therapy philosophy that would disadvantage a student's learning experience.
- Assessments failing to match the learning outcomes for each level.
- Absence of or failure to demonstrate in the document the process for monitoring and investigating a student's professional suitability and unsuitability.
- Regulations that do not conform to the College of Occupational Therapists' guidelines.
- Lack of clarity of resources.
- Failure to demonstrate in the documentation how the COT standards for education are met (cross-referencing).
- Failure to observe the College's position statement on lifelong learning in relation to professional staff's continuing professional development and scholarly activities.

12 Visits to practice learning sites

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 The College of Occupational Therapists will reserve the right to visit practice learning sites, which is an important part of programme accreditation and re-accreditation. During the period of accreditation, the external examiners' reports provide evidence of the academic standards of a programme but they do not always cover practice education.

12.1.2 While it is recognised that a visit to one or two sites may provide only a limited picture of the standards of practice education for any one HEI, these visits serve as one of the means by which the College of Occupational Therapists via its accreditors is able to gather evidence that a pre-registration programme meets the College's standards. These visits also serve to demonstrate the value that the College places on the contribution of practice educators to the education and professional development of occupational therapy students.

12.2 Purpose of the visit

12.2.1 The purpose is not to review the occupational therapy department or the practice learning site itself (if in a role emerging setting) but to assess any of the following:

- The education, training and experience received by students.
- The range of practice opportunities available.
- The type of practice experience.
- The models and nature of supervision.
- Pastoral support available to students.
- The range of resources and facilities on site to support independent learning.
- The preparation of the students for the practice setting.
- The induction and orientation to the unit provided to the student.
- The preparation of the practice educator prior to supervising a student.
- The management of the assessment of students.
- The relationship between the practice setting and the HEI.
- Mechanisms for feedback and evaluation.

12.3 Timing of visits

12.3.1 When will visits to practice learning sites take place?

- *Newly accredited programme:* the visit to practice learning sites will take place after the start of the programme, which may be any time after students have commenced their first long practice learning experience. The date of the visit will be arranged by mutual agreement between the practice tutor at the university and the visiting accreditator(s).
- *Re-accredited programme:* visits to practice learning sites may form part of the re-accreditation event and will be timetabled to occur normally prior to the panel meeting. In the case of a programme being submitted for re-accreditation via a 'panel document exercise' meeting, the visit will be scheduled preferably before the meeting.

12.4 What happens after the visit?

The visiting accreditor(s) will give a verbal feedback to the practice educator(s) and a written feedback to the occupational therapy programme team at the HEI and to the COT Learning and Development Board, which may be shared with the practice educators.

Appendix 4

The director of the occupational
therapy programme or
professional programme lead

The director of the occupational therapy programme or professional programme lead

The director of the occupational therapy programme or professional programme lead (henceforth referred to in this document as 'director') is the person directly responsible for developing the occupational therapy curriculum, co-ordinating the planning and administration of the programme, and supervising overall professional staff performance.

1 Qualifications

- 1.1 Education: The director/professional programme lead is a graduate of an occupational therapy school or programme of training, which is recognised by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and complies with its minimum standards. She/he will normally have a relevant qualification that is higher than the qualification that graduates of the programme will be awarded.
- 1.2 Experience: The director must have wide-ranging professional experience in areas related to professional practice, administration and teaching, demonstrate current or at least recent experience in higher education environment, and the ability to manage the occupational therapy education process.

The director must be a member of the profession who is actively engaged in activities of the professional body *and* be on the current register of the Health Professions Council.

2 Qualities

- 2.1 The director must be a visionary leader and be able to inspire staff and students.
- 2.2 The director must be able to deliver contemporary, creative and innovative occupational therapy and other related educational programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

3 Duties

- 3.1 The director shall normally be a senior member of the faculty. She/he will have responsibility for the development of the occupational therapy programme and must have the authority to maintain educational standards.
- 3.2 The director shall have the responsibility for:
 - Keeping herself/himself and her/his staff informed of current professional advancements and quality of care.
 - Recognising the changing needs of the profession and making appropriate changes in the occupational therapy curriculum to meet the needs of total client care.

- Ensuring the availability of qualified staff, physical resources and facilities that conform to the minimum standards of the professional body for meeting the needs of students towards professional qualification.
- 3.3 The director shall have administrative responsibilities for the occupational therapy education programme that may include hiring and deployment of staff, appointment of external assessors, delegation of administrative duties attached to the organisation of lectures, practice education and placements, assessments, etc.

4 Appointment

The appointment of the director should normally be on a full-time basis.



College of Occupational Therapists 'Essential' publications provide fundamental information on the occupational therapy profession. They are applicable to all occupational therapy staff in any field and at any stage of practice or education.

College of Occupational Therapists Pre-registration Education Standards

The Pre-registration Education Standards have been developed to serve as dynamic quality indicators against which the College of Occupational Therapists can judge an individual programme's suitability for professional body accreditation. The standards support and facilitate the development of an occupational therapy curriculum, leading to approval by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, and are suitable to meet the requirements of the regulatory and statutory bodies in the United Kingdom. They cover four main areas:

- Programme management and resources standards.
- Curriculum standards.
- Learning, teaching and assessments standards.
- Quality assurance and monitoring standards.

These standards are intended as a reference document for, among others:

- Education providers (higher education institutions) that offer or intend to offer pre-registration occupational therapy programmes.
- Education purchasers with an interest in managing, contracting or funding occupational therapy education that ensures graduates are fit for academic award, practice, purpose and profession.
- Practice placement educators, managers and potential employers concerned about the standards and quality of occupational therapy education received by students and potential employees.
- Students seeking pre-registration programmes that will prepare them to be confident, effective and reflective members of the profession and for international practice.
- Service users and other agencies with an interest in the standards set by the professional body.

This publication also includes the College's requirements, recommendations and guidance in all of the areas covered.

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