



OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY ASSOCIATION
of the PHILIPPINES, Inc.

OTAP Position Statement on Advanced OT Competencies

Introductory Statement of the purpose of this paper

Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines (OTAP) recognizes the need of occupational therapists to enhance their competencies and pursue graduate studies. Occupational therapists with advanced occupational therapy (OT) competencies can take the lead role in improving the profession to respond to various national and international trends. It is essential that an OT practitioner maintains his or her current knowledge of legislative, political, social, cultural issues that affect the profession (OTAP, 2003).

To ensure that individual occupational therapists improve their competency and maintain a high standard of practice, OTAP recommends that occupational therapists pursue continuing education.

Statement of the position being taken

The OTAP upholds to safeguard and advance the education and training of occupational therapists in accordance with the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

The OTAP promotes pursuance of advanced study and research in occupational therapy.

The OTAP encourages practitioners to be abreast of new developments in the profession, and have key roles in facilitating the exchange and dissemination of knowledge among occupational therapy professionals.

The OTAP recommends that OT practitioners be critical and reflective in terms of the advanced OT competencies to be pursued. OT practitioners need to evaluate the educational program for advanced OT competencies based on several standards and existing positions.

Statement of the significance of the position to Philippine occupational therapy

Occupational Therapy as a profession can be enhanced through advanced studies and research. It is therefore crucial that educational programs for advanced OT competencies are at par within national and international standards.

All graduate OT education programs will be considered newly opened, though offered with existing undergraduate programs. As such, OTAP, being a member organization of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), recommends that all educational institutions interested in opening educational programs for advanced OT competencies refer to WFOT's Advice for the Establishment of a New Program for the Education of occupational therapists (WFOT, 2004).

In relation to WFOT's advice on new programs, OTAP promotes that the educational program for advanced OT competencies be ***over and above*** (more specifically those with existing undergraduate programs) the following essentials:

- Has a established curriculum and track based on a clear understanding of the ***local health and welfare needs*** and as to ***how OTs can*** meet those needs
- Is supported by the Commission on Higher Education
- Allied with other government institutions, national groups of people with disability, existing WFOT-approved graduate education program.
- Has specific liaison with relevant practice settings (e.g. fieldwork settings and/or reputable research-related groups) and local occupational therapists
- Has specific liaison with OTAP.

WFOT further states that to be an occupational therapy educator requires a master's **or** doctoral degree at the undergraduate level. OTAP therefore promotes that the educators for the educational program for advanced OT competencies have sufficient educators with doctoral degrees, which is commensurate with other Philippine and international academic programs (WFOT, 2008).

OTAP further promotes that the educational institution offering the educational programs for advanced OT competencies ***openly addresses*** its adherence to the above mentioned standards and positions.

Statement of the significance of the position to society/client

Occupational therapy is a client-centered health profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement (WFOT, 2012).

The OTAP upholds to cooperate with government and other health organizations on issues pertaining to the national health care program of the country (OTAP, 2008).

It is therefore crucial that an educational program for advanced OT competencies promote Filipino health and well being of our clients, most importantly our countrymen through occupations.

The OTAP further advocates to educational institutions to provide continuing education opportunities that will promote national responsiveness, global competitiveness, and lifelong learning in the context of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Integration. It is important to promote the need for educational programs that can balance service to our increasing OT health care demands amidst ASEAN Integration. This stance is in further support of the WFOT position statement regarding recruitment of OTs from international communities, while acknowledging the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community Integration by 2015 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008; WFOT, 2008). Our government further emphasizes on the goal of continuously improving the quality of the country's reservoir of registered professionals through continuing professional development (Professional Regulation Commission/PRC Resolution No. 2013-774)

Conclusion

This OTAP position statement promotes the need for OT practitioners to pursue advanced studies and consequently improve the OT profession and healthcare service provision for Filipinos.

This OTAP position statement recommends that OT practitioners be reflective and critical in pursuing advanced OT competencies with reference to WFOT and OTAP-related documents.

The OTAP recommends that educational institutions opening a program for advanced OT competencies refer to, review, and adhere to the WFOT Advice on opening a new OT program, even though they have existing undergraduate programs. It is important that the educational program for advanced OT competencies is over and above the WFOT advised essential.

The OTAP further advocates to educational institutions to provide continuing education opportunities that will promote national responsiveness, global competitiveness, and lifelong learning in the context of ASEAN Integration. **It is important that we primarily promote health and well being of our fellowmen.**

The OTAP further recommends that the educational institution offering the program for advanced OT competencies *openly addresses* the OT community in terms of its adherence to related standards and positions.

References

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