

# MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COURSES OF TRAINING IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Presented and formally adopted at the  
Annual Meeting of the American Occupational Therapy Association  
at Milwaukee, October 30th to November 1st, 1923

Reprinted from Archives of Occupational Therapy  
Vol. III, No. 4, August, 1924

The American Occupational Therapy Association has been urged for several years past to promulgate standards for the training of occupational therapists. Through the efforts of several committees which have reported at annual meetings, very careful and comprehensive studies of the matter have been made. After serious consideration, the board of managers has decided that the time is ripe for the publication of the minimum standards of training which the studies indicate as being requisite and necessary at this time.

The board realizes that from time to time in the future it may be advisable to change these standards, probably in the direction of an increase in the requirements in several phases. It is believed, however, that the standards as now issued provide a fair and workable basis for the training of occupational therapists, and that they represent the consensus of opinion on the subject of the great majority of those interested. It must be remembered that, on the one hand, the association had to consider the views of some members who believe that a much longer course of training should be required. On the other hand, the success of many workers who were trained in one or other of the numerous short courses, established to meet the urgent needs of the war hospitals, led some members to believe that a very much shorter course would suffice. Opinions varied also on the standards for admission to training courses. The board of managers has given serious consideration to the various views expressed and has endeavored to avoid the Scylla of placing the requirements so high that too few students would undertake the training, and, on the other hand, the Charybdis of lowering the standards of the work by making the requirements for training too low.

The board further recognizes the fact that the association will doubtless be called upon to decide whether certain schools shall be "recognized" as meeting the standard requirements. It is believed, however, from past experience that all the existing schools will welcome the establishment of definite standards. In point of fact, the studies and inquiries made by the committees of the association have already resulted in a general adherence to certain standards.

It is further believed that it will be advisable, in the near future, to establish a national register of qualified occupational therapists, a duty that might well be undertaken by the association. Graduates of schools that offer courses in accordance with the standard training requirements would be automatically eligible for enrollment on this register, although it might be well to require that graduates provide, in addition, evidence of satisfactory service in some phase of occupational therapy for one year subsequent to graduation.

As with registration in allied professions, arrangements will probably have to be made to admit to the register occupational therapists already at work on production of evidence of satisfactory service for a given period.

The board includes in its preliminary statement a reference to the need for the establishment, at one or more points in the country, of short, intensive training courses for postgraduate work. Many occupational therapists have expressed a desire for summer courses which would not only offer medical and general lectures in what may be termed the theoretical side of the subject but would provide opportunities for training in the arts and crafts. From the inquiries received on this matter, it seems likely that if such a course could be established at, or in connection with, one or more of the training schools, many workers would welcome the opportunity to improve their professional knowledge and skill.

## I. Prerequisites for admission.

### 1. Age.

Candidates for admission to training courses shall be of such an age that they will be not less than twenty years old at graduation.

### 2. Education.

All candidates must produce evidence of having received a high-school education or its equivalent. In addition, it is desirable that all candidates shall have taken at least one year of special training in some field, such as pure or applied art and design, arts and crafts, social service, or advanced academic work in some specified subject; but successful employment or actual commercial experience in such lines may be accepted in lieu of training in a school or other institution in this regard.

### 3. Character.

All candidates will be required to present evidence of good character and general fitness.

### 4. Health.

A medical certificate of good physical and mental health must be presented.

### 5. Probationary Period.

Training schools may reserve the right to exclude a student at the end of a period of thirty days from the time of admission if, in the opinion of the faculty, the student has not shown aptitude for the work, or has not the proper personality, and is, therefore, not likely to succeed as an occupational therapist.

### 6. Credits.

The allowance of credits for previous special training is properly a matter for which individual training schools will make suitable regulations.

## II. Length of course.

The minimum length of course shall be twelve calendar months. The hours of work and lectures shall be not less than six daily.

## III. Content of course.

1. The course shall include not less than eight months of theoretical and practical work, and not less than three months of hospital-practice training under supervision.

### 2. Theoretical Work.

The theoretical work shall include lectures on the following subjects: The several principal fields of medicine and surgery; psychology; physiotherapy (with demonstrations); medical social service (with demonstrations); psychiatric social service; social relations (general sociology); the several types of hospitals, as general, mental and nervous, tuberculosis; hospital ethics and management, with particular reference to the relations between the occupational therapist and the hospital organization; personal hygiene; mental hygiene; the history and theory of occupational therapy; the history and development of arts and crafts and their relation to civilization; the theory of design; the history and development of art; modern industry and the factory system; the relation of occupational therapy to vocational rehabilitation, including the working of the Federal Industrial Rehabilitation Act; diseases of children.

Not less than seventy-five hours shall be given to lectures. It is particularly desirable that adequate instruction shall be given in :

- (a) Psychology, normal and abnormal.
- (b) Anatomy, kinesiology, and orthopedics.
- (c) Mental diseases.
- (d) Tuberculosis.
- (e) General medical cases, including cardiac diseases.

3. Practical Work in Arts and Crafts.

Training in arts and crafts shall include work in the following subjects: Woodworking, including toy making, wood carving, and brush making; weaving, including spinning, hand-and-foot-power looms, up to six-harness looms; basketry, including work in willow, rattan, raffia, cane, rush, and fiber; metal work and jewelry, including sheet-metal work in tin, copper and brass; leather work, including simple book-binding; mat and rug making; plastic work, including modeling in clay and composition, pottery and cement work; needle crafts, including petit point and simple garment making; stenciling and block printing; dyeing, including batik and tied work; knotting, netting, and cord work; applied design; mechanical drawing.

Not less than 1080 hours shall be devoted to instruction and practice in practical handiwork, including drawing and design. It is particularly desirable that considerable time be devoted to, and adequate instruction provided in the following crafts and their subdivisions: Woodworking, weaving, basketry, metal work and jewelry, drawing and applied design.

Schools are at liberty to arrange that work in minor crafts may be done out of school hours.

Throughout the course, some properly qualified member of the staff should be given the duty of interpreting, in terms of practical work, as far as may be possible, the theoretical lectures, especially those on psychology.