

American Occupational Therapy Association
250 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y. 10019

AOTA REQUIREMENTS OF A TRAINING PROGRAM

FOR

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS*

February 1965

The American Occupational Therapy Association (hereinafter referred to as AOTA) has established requirements for the preparation of occupational therapy assistants. Programs meeting these requirements must be formally endorsed by the AOTA to enable their graduates to be certified as occupational therapy assistants. Such assistants are trained to work under the supervision of registered occupational therapists.

The AOTA's Committee on Occupational Therapy Assistants serves as a consulting, reviewing, and evaluating body, working in liaison with the local program and the education office of the AOTA.

I. NEED

There must be an established need for occupational therapy assistants in the geographic area. Such a need may be ascertained by a survey of hospitals or agencies in the area which are present, or potential, employers of assistants.

II. SPONSOR

Training programs for assistants may be conducted by individual hospitals, medical, or social agencies; state, county, or city agencies; or regional groups.

To be an acceptable location for a training program, sponsoring hospitals and/or agencies should be staffed with properly accredited personnel appropriate to the setting. The existence of recognized educational and/or ongoing in-service training programs for other disciplines indicates an educational commitment.

III. LIAISON WITH AOTA

A statement of intent to initiate an occupational therapy assistant training program should be forwarded to the AOTA as soon as practicable. It should be accompanied by the tentative dates of the initial program to insure the visit of a survey team prior to the completion of the first class. Communication with AOTA should be maintained in order to avoid problems that may hinder or delay endorsement of the program.

On-site consultation may be arranged by AOTA. The requesting agency will bear the expense of this service. This assistance can be helpful in preliminary planning, when developing program content, or where there is a limited number of registered occupational therapists to assist in program development.

*This document replaces and combines "Requirements of an Acceptable Training Program for Occupational Therapy Assistants," Rev. Nov. 1962, and "A Guide for the Development and Administration of the Training Program for Occupational Therapy Assistants," Rev. Oct. 1961.

IV. PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND CONSULTING BODIES

Experience has shown that the strength and effective operation of any program are dependent upon the professional and community resources brought to bear during planning and implementation. These resources must also be available to the program director during continuing operation of the program. Functions which shall be their concern include planning, implementation, and consultation on professional, educational, financial, and public relations matters.

This requirement shall be met by the establishment of one or more committees whose charge shall include initial development of program, selection of trainees, professional advice, and maintenance of standards. In addition to occupational therapists, membership of these committees shall include physicians, members of allied disciplines, and community leaders. Terms of service of committee members shall be of sufficient length to provide continuity. The director of the training program shall be an ex officio member of these committees, and may serve as chairman of ad hoc and subcommittees, e.g., admissions.

V. STAFFING

The director who administers the training program shall be a registered occupational therapist, qualified by education and experience to administer and teach the principles and practices of occupational therapy.

A minimum of two additional registered occupational therapists shall be included on the occupational therapy teaching staff. They may be employed full- or part-time, or may be on loan from other institutions.

The program can be enriched by utilizing additional registered occupational therapists to assist with instruction.

The instructor of specialty skills shall have no more than fifteen trainees in a single workshop session. It is essential for trainees and faculty members to maintain close working relationships.

A member of the occupational therapy faculty shall be responsible for auditing classes given by other specialists for effective coordination and integration of program content. Each series of lectures shall be audited at least once.

Supervisors during the practical experience phase of the program are faculty members and shall be registered occupational therapists.

Physicians and representatives from other appropriate disciplines who conduct lectures, discussion groups, clinics, and/or demonstrations shall be qualified in their specialty.

VI. RESOURCES

The training program shall have assurance of adequate financial support for effective implementation.

Depending upon the individual situation, the budget shall provide for: consultants' fees; salaries for administrative, teaching, and secretarial staff; honorariums; teaching aids and reference materials; supplies and equipment; overhead (rent and utilities); travel; and expenses associated with endorsement of the program.

VII. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Adequate facilities and equipment for efficient teaching shall be provided.

- A. Adequate facilities shall include office space for the director and staff, space suitable for lectures, a workshop area, study space for students, and an easily accessible library. Such things as good lighting, sinks, electrical outlets, telephones, and readily accessible toilet facilities shall also be provided. The library shall contain books, pamphlets, and periodicals to supplement classroom teaching. Provision shall be made for annual acquisitions and subscriptions.
- B. Adequate equipment shall include tools and supplies in sufficient quantity to insure a good learning situation. Audio-visual aids shall be available.

VIII. TRAINING PROGRAM

A. Admission Requirements shall be:

- 1. Education: Senior high-school graduation or high-school equivalency. (Satisfactory job experience and appropriate recommendations may occasionally be substituted for two years of education when the situation and potential of the applicant warrants.)
- 2. Health: Good physical and emotional health.
- 3. Age: Minimum age of eighteen years. Applicants over fifty-five years of age will not ordinarily be accepted unless exceptionally well qualified.
- 4. Personal Characteristics: Intelligence, maturity, emotional stability, flexibility, and ability to establish and maintain effective interpersonal relations.

B. Admission Procedures shall include:

- 1. A personal interview with the program director, or his designate.
- 2. Submission of the following: an application form, written personal references, validation of education, and a certificate of health. The validation of education, personal references, and the certificate of health need not be resubmitted if already available in the employment records of the agency sponsoring the training program. It is suggested that an Employer Reference Form and Medical Reference Form be used in programs that accept applicants from the community. Sample forms are attached which may be duplicated.
- 3. Final selection of trainees which shall be the responsibility of the admissions committee.

C. Public Information

The hospital or agency offering the program shall provide a descriptive pamphlet or outline of the training program for the information of potential trainees.

To avoid misinterpretation of the purpose and status of a program, all press contacts and publications, including the one prepared for the information of potential trainees, shall be approved by the advisory committee or by the director of the program. Avoid statements that might lead the reader to believe a program

1. prepares trainees to work without proper supervision
2. has been endorsed prior to such action by the AOTA
3. has been, or will be certified when, in fact, it is the graduates of endorsed programs who are eligible for certification.

D. Trainees

1. The number of trainees accepted shall be determined by the number of personnel available for the training program and the facilities of the hospital or agency.
2. The director and the advisory committee shall reserve the right to drop a trainee at any time for any cause deemed sufficient.

E. Length of Program

Training programs for occupational therapy assistants shall be a minimum of 430 clock hours, to be allocated in accordance with the program outline requirements for the designated area.

	Psychiatry	General Practice
Didactic Instruction	160	190
Skills	125	95
Practical Experience	145	145

The duration of the program shall be no less than 12 nor more than 18 consecutive weeks.

F. Program Content

Program outlines for training occupational therapy assistants in general practice and psychiatry have been developed and are available in separate documents. The didactic subject areas in the outlines are required, but allowance is made for an adjustment in the number of hours devoted to a given subject to accommodate the local situation and area of emphasis.

For clarity in presentation, the didactic subjects, skills, and practical experience have been presented in separate blocks of time. In actual experience and for ease in learning, however, these may be rearranged and integrated.

G. Centers for Practical Experience

Centers used shall have the setting, case load and program to provide a well defined practical experience.

1. Hospitals or agencies conducting the training program may integrate the didactic instruction and practical experience within their own center.
2. When the practical experience is not given within the same hospital or agency, the centers used for this purpose shall be carefully selected by the director of the training program and/or appropriate committee. Any occupational therapy department utilized shall have a competent, registered occupational therapist, qualified to supervise trainees.
3. Supervisors of trainees shall be familiar with the content of didactic and skills phases of the program in order to facilitate correlation of all phases of training.
4. Pertinent information concerning the trainee shall be made available to the supervisor of practical experience prior to the trainee's arrival.
5. Reports covering the trainee's performance, adjustment, and attendance shall be submitted to the training program director upon completion of the practical experience.
6. The ratio of registered occupational therapists to occupational therapy assistant trainees shall be maintained at a level in keeping with good educational practice to insure an optimum learning experience for each trainee.

IX. RECORDS AND FORMS

Permanent records shall include:

A. Justification of need for establishment of training program for occupational therapy assistants.

B. Agency Credentials

Resumé of factors to confirm professional status of agency; accreditations held by the agency; and number of professional personnel and their status.

C. Staff Credentials

A file shall be maintained on each member of the permanent staff, supervisors of practical experience, and guest lecturers. Records on qualifications shall contain information on general and professional education, professional experience, and membership in professional organization. A suggested Faculty Qualification Form is appended and may be duplicated.

D. Trainee Records

A file shall be maintained on each trainee. The file shall include admission forms (see VIII, B, 2), attendance, grades, performance evaluation (see sample form attached), and other pertinent material. It shall be available to the survey team at the time of initial endorsement and the reendorsement visits.

E. Minutes of meetings of advisory bodies.

X. ENDORSEMENT PROCEDURE

Request for endorsement must be submitted to AOTA as soon as practicable. (See III.)

- A. The application form for endorsement of the training program is available upon request from the Education Division, American Occupational Therapy Association, 250 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y. 10019.

When request for endorsement is received, the director of the program will be sent the required number of forms to be completed. Each form must be accompanied by:

1. A brief description of the sponsoring agency including its resources and facilities.
 2. A statement of the reason for the establishment of the training program.
 3. A syllabus of the training program that includes the title of each unit, its objective(s), scope, and depth.
 4. A complete description of procedures to be used in evaluating the trainee in didactic, skills, and practical experience phases of the program.
 5. A description of each center to be used for practical experience.
- B. The survey team consists of two registered occupational therapists who have an understanding of both the educational and clinical practice areas. Their on-site survey must be made while the training program is in session. It will require a minimum of two full days. Additional time may be needed if there are several practical experience centers to be visited. Such time may be requested either by the AOTA or the sponsoring agency.
1. Preliminary arrangements shall be made by the training program director to insure that the survey team has adequate time for the following:
 - a. Conference with the program director.
 - b. Conference with the advisory committee chairman or his representative.
 - c. Conference with key instructors.
 - d. Private conference with the trainees as a group.

- e. Observation of teaching facilities and equipment, including those in associated hospitals and agencies.
 - f. Auditing class sessions when possible.
 - g. Review of required records and forms. (See IX.)
 - h. Visits to centers for practical experience where the following information shall be available.
 - 1) Number and qualifications of personnel supervising trainees.
 - 2) A brief description of the program including average number of patients treated per day.
 - 3) A brief description of the center, if separate from the location of the training program.
2. The training program director shall have available:
- a. Topical outlines of course content.
 - b. List of teaching techniques used.
 - c. List of reading assignments.
 - d. List of recommended student reference and resource material.

An effective way of meeting the above requirements, a. through d., is to have each instructor and lecturer complete a form. (A suggested "Unit Outline" is appended and may be duplicated.)

- C. Following the survey visit, the team submits a report to the Accreditation Committee for action. Copies of the committee's action with recommendations will be sent to the sponsoring hospital or agency. Considerable time may elapse between the survey visit and final action by the Accreditation Committee. If the program receives endorsement, the graduates of the class surveyed and those graduated during the three-year period of endorsement are then eligible to apply for certification.
- D. The agency will be billed by the AOTA at the rate of \$25.00 per day, per person, for the survey visit (see sheet entitled "Fees for Training Program for Occupational Therapy Assistants").

XI. CONTINUING ENDORSEMENT

- A. To maintain endorsement, a training program director is required to submit an interim report on each training program completed to the AOTA within one month of the completion of the program. (See sheet entitled "Training Program Report.")
- B. Reendorsement of the program is required every three years. Procedures to be followed are the same as those described for the initial survey. Implementation of previous recommendations, changes in program content, credentials of added personnel and graduates, and the interim reports will be considered.

