



POSITION STATEMENT

Competency and Maintaining Competency

Introductory statement of the purpose of this paper

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) recognises the essential requirement for occupational therapists to practise in a competent manner. Competence reflects that a practitioner must practise in a reasonable manner consistent with current local practice. WFOT recommends that all practising Occupational Therapists adhere to this Position Statement within their scope of practice.

To ensure that individual occupational therapists 'do no harm', the WFOT recommends that occupational therapists are required to maintain their knowledge, skills and performance through a process of life-long learning.

Competent occupational therapy practice facilitates transparency of the profession to our internal and external stakeholders.

Statement of the position being taken

The WFOT promotes the essential requirements for all occupational therapists to practise competently within all aspects of their professional work.

The WFOT recommends that competencies are defined through collaboration between occupational therapy practitioners, educators, member associations and society.

The WFOT encourages member associations to define the recommended competencies within their local context and to establish mechanisms to implement and to monitor their defined competencies.

Statement of the significance of the position to occupational therapy

All Member Countries of the WFOT must meet the WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (2002).ⁱ These Standards underpin the essential competencies to practise occupational therapy. It is expected that all WFOT Member Countries will also have a framework that is used to assess competency to practise in that country. The WFOT also endorses the core, management and leadership competencies as defined by the WHO.ⁱⁱ

This Position Statement relates to the WFOT prioritiesⁱⁱⁱ to develop and promote a standard of excellence in occupational therapy practice.

The WFOT *Code of Ethics*^{iv} states that occupational therapists have the responsibility to “participate in professional development through life-long learning and apply their knowledge and skills in their professional work which is based on best available evidence”. This principle facilitates competent practice to ensure measurable safe outcomes.

Statement of significance of the position to society/client

The WFOT acknowledges that competence to practise is linked with the profession's contribution to quality service provision for all. Each person receiving services from an occupational therapist is entitled to a standard of excellence in occupational therapy practice. Adherence to the principles in this paper will ensure the awareness of occupational therapists and occupational therapy students of the requirement for safe competent practice.

This WFOT position statement is aligned to the WFOT document *Entry Level Competencies for Occupational Therapists* (2008),^v to the World Health Organisation (WHO)^{vi} *Global Competency Model* which defines effective professional behavior and to the TUNING Europe Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Occupational Therapy.^{vii}

Conclusion

This WFOT Position Statement recommends that occupational therapy member associations define the recommended competencies within their local context and that individual occupational therapists are competent to practise.

The WFOT recommends that occupational therapists competently respond to changing environments and new demands within their clinical practice and research. This will ensure that occupational therapy practitioners provide a quality service for all people availing of occupational therapy services in all societies. References:

ⁱ WFOT (2002). *Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists*. WFOT. www.wfot.org

ⁱⁱ World Health Organisation (WHO) *Global Competency Model*.

<http://www.who.int/employment/competencies/en/> ⁱⁱⁱ WFOT (2007). *Strategic Plan 2007-2012*. WFOT. www.wfot.org

^{iv} WFOT: *Code of Ethics* (revised 2005). WFOT. www.wfot.org

^v Burnett, T., et al. (2008): *Entry Level Competencies for Occupational Therapists*. WFOT. www.wfot.org

^{vi} World Health Organisation (WHO) *Global Competency Model*.

<http://www.who.int/employment/competencies/en/> ^{vii} COTEC and ENOTHE 2008

http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/Publications/OCCUPATIONAL_THERAPY_FOR_WEBSITE.pdf