



ACCREDITATION MATTERS

Vol. 6 - June 2026

Welcome to the sixth edition of *Accreditation matters*. As part of the OTC's ongoing engagement with education providers and assessors, this newsletter brings together key updates, practical insights, and useful resources to keep you informed and supported.

In this issue, you will find the following information:

- Update on OTC Program Accreditation Committee membership
- Advance notice: Revised Criminal History Registration Standard
- Building the capability of the health workforce to recognise and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence
- Publication of accreditation report summaries on the OTC website
- Interprofessional Education Colloquium 2026 – "Empowering voices: Educating health professionals for respectful and inclusive conversations"
- Key insights from the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress 2026
- What we heard from education providers and how we are responding to feedback
- Innovative telehealth ergonomics simulation as practice education
- A new and improved OTC website coming soon

We will also introduce you to Professor Geneviève Pépin, OTC Board member and Chair of the OTC's Program Accreditation Committee.

We welcome your feedback, so if you have any comments about the format of this update, any queries or topics you would like us to address in future updates, please let us know via accreditation@otcouncil.com.au.

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Update on OTC Program Accreditation Committee (PAC) membership

We welcome a new PAC member and OTC Board Director – Ms Nadia Lindop OAM. Nadia brings senior leadership experience across allied health and community sectors, with a strong focus on equitable, culturally safe care in regional and remote Australia. She has extensive experience working with and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, leading and managing allied health teams and strengthening occupational therapy service delivery in complex rural and remote settings. Nadia is passionate about improving access to high-quality health care, strengthening service delivery models, governance and risk management, and supporting a capable workforce that reflects the realities of practice across diverse Australian communities. We look forward to her contributions to the PAC into the future.



OTC Board Director – Ms Nadia Lindop OAM

Advance notice: Revised criminal history registration standard

The Ahpra National Boards have published an advance copy of the revised Criminal History Registration Standard, approved by Health Ministers following consultation and review. The revised standard will take effect from 15 July 2026.

Key changes include clearer expectations that criminal history must be compatible with registration, recognition of the impacts of racism and systemic inequity on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, clearer explanations of how requirements are met, and more detailed consideration of the nature and gravity of offences. A supporting guide to the standard has also been published.

The advanced copy of the revised standard and the guide are available at <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registration-Standards/Criminal-history.aspx>.

Further information is available from the related news item at <https://www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au/News/2026-05-01-Advance-copy-Criminal-history-registration-standard.aspx>.

Building the capability of the health workforce to recognise and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence: Ahpra joint statement

The OTC has joined with Ahpra, National Boards, and accreditation authorities in issuing a joint statement about workforce capacity to respond to family, domestic and sexual

violence (FDSV).

The Joint Statement can be accessed at <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Resources/Family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/Joint-statement-Building-the-capability-of-the-health-workforce.aspx>.

Its purpose is to demonstrate collective commitment to developing a health workforce that can recognise FDSV, respond effectively and compassionately, and contribute to improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities affected by violence, aligning with the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2034.

Ahpra's Independent Accreditation Committee is currently exploring the development of common professional capabilities on FDSV that could apply across all health professions and inform and strengthen inclusion of relevant content in entry-level education.

Practitioners are also being encouraged to prioritise recognising and responding to FDSV in their continuing professional development.

Publication of accreditation report summaries on the OTC website

The OTC made the decision to publish summaries of accreditation reports some time ago, and has been awaiting advice from Ahpra's Independent Accreditation Committee regarding the appropriate timing and approach. That advice has now been received. Ahpra's advice is for agreed minimum reporting requirements for all accreditation authorities in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), ensuring a uniform standard across health profession accreditation bodies within the NRAS. This approach aligns with the OTC's commitment to transparency and collaboration.

Subsequent to final feedback from providers of occupational therapy programs, the OTC will begin publishing summaries of accreditation reports on its website, with the expectation that this will include summary reports from accreditation assessments undertaken in the first half of 2026.

For education providers, these summaries will offer insights into accreditation outcomes and common themes, helping programs benchmark their practices, identify areas for improvement and stay informed about sector-wide expectations.

For other stakeholders, such as current and potential students, employers, consumers of occupational therapy services or the wider public, the reports will give greater transparency to the accreditation decision-making process.

By sharing these summaries, the OTC aims to enhance stakeholder confidence and support continuous quality improvement in occupational therapy education.

Interprofessional Education Colloquium 2026:

“Empowering voices: Educating health professionals for respectful and inclusive conversations”

The Australian Pharmacy Council Interprofessional Education Colloquium in Canberra on Ngunnawal Country in May 2026 included educators, students, policymakers, consumers and practitioners from a range of health professions. OTC attendees included Ms Vonda Malone, Director and Ms Anne Szadura and Ms Simone Harvey from the OTC Secretariat.

Topics included lived experience of the health system, the use of simulation, respectful interprofessional communication, and activities of the Griffith University Physiotherapy Deadly Curriculum working group set up to integrate First Nations Knowledges into the program.



Dr Rebecca Waters, Curtin University
Photo credit: Australian Pharmacy Council

A highlight of the content on simulation was a presentation by Dr Rebecca Waters from Curtin University, which outlined learnings from large scale clinical simulations for students which have strengthened students' confidence and readiness for practice.

It was noted authentic learning opportunities were particularly important to support the increasingly diverse student cohorts, which often result in students requesting accommodations in teaching, learning and assessment, without scaffolding these accommodations for work readiness and workplace success.

The project team also included Dr Claire Morrisby, Associate Professor Merrolee Penman, Ms Sally Hunter and Ms Julie Brayshaw (from Curtin University) and Dr Jennie Brentnall (The University of Sydney) as well as clinicians and industry partners who were involved in both the design and delivery.

Key insights from the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress 2026



L-R Margaret Cook-OTC, Angela Thynne-OTBA, Anne Szadura-OTC, Rebecca Singh-OTBA

Associate Professor Margaret Cook, Chair, OTC and Ms Anne Szadura, CEO, represented the OTC at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) Congress held in Bangkok from 8 to 12 February 2026. The OTC had an exhibition booth jointly with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (OTBA), with significant interest being received over the four days about occupational therapy practice in Australia and the recognition of international qualifications.

The Congress provided valuable insights for the OTC into emerging international directions for occupational therapy education, practice and accreditation. Of note are:

- the confirmation that the WFOT revised Minimum Standards (2026) will come into full effect in 2028 (the WFOT Education standards are incorporated into the OTC Accreditation Standards)
- the strong emphasis on the importance of in-person learning and diverse practice education experiences, including explicit statement that the range of student practice education experiences always includes people with primary mental health needs, as well as people with physical health needs
- discussion regarding simulation and online fieldwork, which recognised their value and reinforced these should complement – not replace – direct practice, with simulation generally recommended to comprise no more than 20 to 30 per cent of placement hours. (The OTC's current simulation guidelines indicate a maximum of 200 hours, that is, 20 per cent)
- online-only entry level education programs will not meet the Minimum Standards, that is, all programs require some in-person teaching and learning activities
- The established WFOT benchmark of 1,000 hours of practice education remains unchanged.

Another key theme of interest to the OTC was language and culture. Some delegates advocated for the adoption of “cultural humility” rather than “cultural competence”, reflecting evolving thinking about culturally responsive and reflective practice.

We note the revisions to the WFOT Standards will be a focus of discussion at the August ANZCOTE/ANZOTPEA meeting, and look forward to feedback from this meeting, which will inform a review of the OTC accreditation standards.

Overall, the Congress underscored the importance of balancing innovation with quality and rigour, while ensuring occupational therapy education remains responsive to community needs, workforce realities and global trends.

What we heard from education providers and how we are responding to feedback

We thank all the education providers who participated in the survey conducted in October 2025 on the OTC's engagement with education providers.

This survey was conducted as part of Ahpra's whole-of-scheme annual reporting requirements, which require each accreditation authority within the NRAS to seek feedback on the strength and quality of these relationships. The questions were developed by Ahpra in collaboration with accreditation authorities, including the OTC, to ensure consistency and relevance.

Approximately 63 per cent of education providers responded to the survey, providing valuable insights into how our accreditation processes, communication and engagement are experienced across the sector.

Overall, the feedback was encouraging. Education providers rated the OTC strongly for clear and timely communication, support and guidance, and fair and transparent accreditation processes. Many respondents highlighted the responsiveness of OTC staff, the usefulness of regular updates (including the *Accreditation matters* newsletter), and the value of engagement through forums such as ANZCOTE meetings. Support provided before and during accreditation assessments was also positively noted, with pre-accreditation meetings identified as particularly helpful in clarifying expectations.

The survey also highlighted opportunities to further strengthen our processes and engagement with education providers. Feedback identified opportunities to simplify and streamline some accreditation documentation and guidance materials, improve communication on sector-wide and emerging issues, and enhance visibility of how feedback informs ongoing improvements.

While many respondents described the OTC as approachable and collaborative, some expressed interest in broader and more regular engagement outside formal accreditation activities.

Opportunities were also suggested around further modernising administrative processes and digital systems to improve efficiency and user experience.

We appreciate this feedback and will use these insights to inform our quality improvement initiatives and future planning.

Innovative telehealth ergonomics simulation as practice education

In last year's annual monitoring report, we requested education providers to share with us how they use simulation in their occupational therapy programs. We are pleased to feature the use of telehealth ergonomics simulation by the University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) as an example of simulation activities being used in practice education.

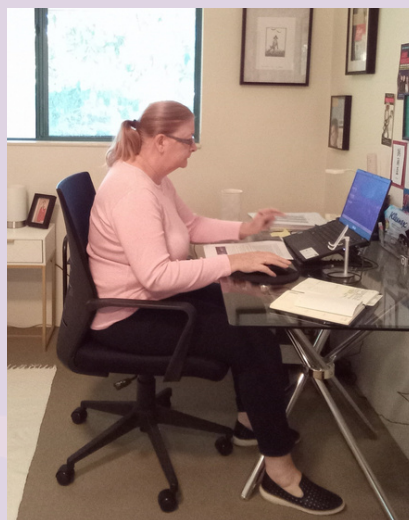
UniSC developed a telehealth ergonomics simulation placement to bridge the gap between early practice education and extended clinical placements. Responding to feedback from industry partners, students and practice educators, this simulation provides a safe, structured environment for skill development, reflective learning and enhanced placement readiness.

Students engage in targeted telehealth and ergonomics workshops that introduce foundational concepts such as workstation setup, privacy and consent, telehealth delivery requirements, assessment tool selection and effective communication in remote service environments. These workshops underpin a simulation modelled on a UniSC student clinic contracted to conduct workplace ergonomic assessments. Simulated clients – trained medical actors – are briefed on realistic job roles, health conditions and occupational performance challenges, creating an authentic clinical experience.

Throughout the placement, students conduct telehealth-based screening assessments, provide ergonomic recommendations, complete SOTAP documentation and deliver written reports. They also participate in clinical supervision with an external occupational therapist and receive ongoing support from

practice educators.

UniSC will conduct ongoing research to further explore the simulation's impact on students' confidence and readiness for external placement, informed by pre- and post-placement survey data.



Client workstation
Image supplied by University of Sunshine Coast

A new and improved OTC website coming soon

We are excited to share that the OTC will soon be launching a new and redesigned website. Created with our users in mind, the refreshed site will offer a more engaging, intuitive and user-friendly experience.

The new website will feature clear, task-based navigation, making it easier to access information and resources. Content has been reorganised and simplified, with improved readability and clearer pathways for different audiences.

Enhancements also include greater visibility of governance information, clearer presentation of the OTC Board, committees and the OTC Secretariat, and more prominent recognition of the OTC's commitment to cultural responsiveness, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and engagement.

The site will be fully responsive across desktop and mobile devices and will present contact and organisational information more clearly and consistently.

We look forward to sharing the refreshed website with you soon.

Meet Professor Geneviève Pépin, OTC Board Director and PAC Chair

1. What inspired you to join the OTC?

Back in the day, when I was still living in Canada, I was quite involved in the assessment of occupational therapists having trained outside of Canada. A team of us spend countless hours thinking about the best ways to assess occupational therapists' skills and knowledge in a way that acknowledged their original qualification while ensuring it aligned with the Canadian health care and higher education systems.

2. What do you enjoy about your current role?

I must say, it's the people! In my role of Chair of the Program Accreditation Committee, I work with amazing OTs of diverse backgrounds and expertise and that energises me! I also truly enjoy exploring ways to engage with and support the assessors, learning about new courses and new ways of delivering occupational therapy education that is innovative that recognises and embeds authentic cultural knowledge and Indigenous ways of learning.

3. What is one of your career highlights?

In 2021, I was invited to join the team of researchers and people with lived experience of eating disorders that was successful in being awarded a \$13M Commonwealth four year grant to advance eating disorders research that is co-produced and supports its translation. The Australian Eating Disorders Research and Translation Centre was created. The Centre brings together researchers, clinicians and people with lived experience to change the way research about eating disorders is conducted in Australia.

I am the only occupational therapist in the leadership of the Centre and have had the opportunity to educate my colleagues about the contribution of occupational therapy to the identification, treatment, and recovery of eating disorders. Some of our nation-wide studies now include the Occupational Performance History Interview and the Sensory Profile. The Commonwealth granted an extra \$6M to the Centre to pursue its work.

4. What is your favourite travel destination?

This is a tough question..... I am from a small town right between Montréal and Québec City in Canada, so I'd say that is my favourite travel destination. However, I have a soft spot for London and Paris.



Professor Geneviève Pépin
OTC Board Director and PAC Chair

5. What do you do to relax?

Pilates and barre classes relax me. I love long walks on the beach as much as I enjoy being in the bush. Spending time with family and friends around a meal or reading a book with a nice cup of tea are also nice ways to relax. Going to the movies, seeing a ballet or a play, watching live music are other fantastic ways of relaxing.

6. Do you have any pets?

I do! Serge is our 17-year-old wirehaired terrier. People say he looks like Hairy Maclary. Serge has been with us for just over 4 years. A family member had him for 2 years before that, but when they became unwell and were unable to look after Serge, we took him with us.

He is old and a bit grumpy, has low vision and hearing problems and despite all this, he is very, very cute. He's independent and comes for a pat when he wants to. He loves going for walks and adores roast chicken. Lots of it!

7. What is one thing on your bucket list?

Eating a Greek salad in a Taverna in a Greek village or by a beach on a Greek island.

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This, and previous issues of *Accreditation matters* can be found on our website [here](#).

The Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

