



POLICY

Program accreditation

Assessor selection, appointment, training, and performance management

July 2022

1. Introduction

The policy aims to ensure competent persons are qualified by their skills, knowledge and experience to assess professional programs of study and their providers, against the accreditation standards.

2. Scope

This policy is relevant to assessors and trainee assessors who are appointed as part of the Panel of Assessors for the OTC, to review professional programs of study and their providers.

3. Definitions

OTC – Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd
PAC – Program Accreditation Committee (sub-committee of the OTC)
OTBA – Occupational Therapy Board of Australia
OTA – Occupational Therapy Australia

4. Selection of assessors

Assessors are recruited via a broad call for expressions of interest, a request for nomination from representative organisations or a targeted invitation based on the needed expertise.

Interested individuals can apply by submitting an application outlining how they meet the assessor criteria, including a statement addressing the selection criteria and a CV – see 5. below.

5. Assessor selection criteria

Applicants must have:

- extensive experience in the occupational therapy profession or another relevant field
- an interest in and expertise in quality improvement
- effective analytical and problem-solving skills
- excellent interpersonal skills
- an understanding of education provider and accreditation processes.

All assessors are expected to uphold the OTC values of being ethical, professional, transparent, collaborative, community and stakeholder focused and embrace diversity.

6. Appointment of assessors

Assessor applications are reviewed and assessors are appointed by the PAC. The appointment is for a term of 3 years, after which the assessor will be invited to renew for a further term if agreed to by both parties.

All assessors must agree to abide by the OTC Assessor Code of Conduct, Privacy and Confidentiality Policies, and be familiar with the *Accreditation Manual for Assessors*.

When an assessor is appointed, they become part of the Panel of Assessors for the OTC.

7. Allocation of assessors to an individual program accreditation

- Expressions of interest are circulated to the panel of assessors for the OTC for upcoming accreditations.
- Assessors are selected for an individual program accreditation based on their combined skills, availability, and confirmation there is no real or perceived conflict of interest that would impact on the accreditation process for an individual program.
- Assessors are appointed to a team which has responsibility for review of accreditation submissions from a specific education provider.
- Each assessor is required to sign an assessor agreement for an individual accreditation assessment, which outlines their expected role and confidentiality requirements
- The team consists of a minimum of 2 assessors who are appointed from the OTC's panel of assessors, the Professional Advisor and the Administration Assistant.
- Team leadership is established for each assessment by the OTC's Professional Advisor, program accreditation. The allocated assessors are responsible for contributing to the document review, virtual and/or site visit/s and report writing as part of the Assessment Team.

8. Training

All assessors are required to participate in training conducted by the OTC.

8.1 New assessors

- will receive an invitation to the PAC Assessors Teams folder where they will find all the information relevant to their role, including the *Accreditation Manual for Assessors*.
- will meet with and are briefed by the OTC staff, initially the Professional Advisor, program accreditation.
- are expected to make themselves familiar with the information in the Teams folder.
- will be invited to join an accreditation as an observer initially to see how the process is conducted. They will be mentored and supervised in their initial assessment activities by the Professional Advisor and the Team Leader.
- will receive ongoing support from the Professional Advisor in regard to their expected role, including during accreditation an assessment and report writing.
- will participate in any training deemed necessary by the OTC, including cultural responsiveness training.

8.2 All assessors

The OTC assessors operate as a Community of Practice. As part of the Community of Practice, assessors are asked to:

- reflect on the previous year's accreditations with the view to assisting with quality improvement, including the strengths and weaknesses in the processes used and recommendations for change
- consider implications of the current context on occupational therapy education and accreditation including changes in the higher education sector, OTBA and Ahpra activities
- participate in cultural safety training.

9. Performance

The Professional Advisor Program Accreditation monitors performance of assessors via:

- feedback from education providers
- feedback from partner assessors
- review of individual assessor documentation/activity by the Professional Adviser
- assessor team discussion and reflection about the conduct of the assessment at the conclusion of each assessment.

Expected performance is measured by:

- evidence of assessor preparedness for an assessment e.g. demonstrated via their familiarity with the education providers submission and their pre-population of final report
- ability to manage interviews/data collection in a respectful and collegiate manner
- timeliness and quality of assessor reports
- ability to work as a team
- adherence to code of conduct, privacy and confidentiality policies.

Assessors are required to perform their role to a high standard and be proactive and seek clarification from the Professional Adviser where needed. Assessor meetings are scheduled prior to, during and after each accreditation assessment to ensure assessors discuss their individual assessment outcomes and to clarify the essence of the report.

If the Professional Advisor receives information suggesting concerns about an assessor's performance, the Professional Advisor will initiate discussion with the assessor with the aim of formulating a collaborative plan of action to improve the assessor's performance, including via targeted training.

Should no resolution or improvement result, the Chair of PAC will be advised of the concern about Assessor performance. In the event this is a minor issue, the Chair will advise the appropriate course of action, in writing, to the assessor. If the issue is of major concern, a special meeting will be convened, consisting of the Chair of PAC and the Professional Advisor, and the assessor will be required to address the concern.

In the event the outcome of the meeting is deemed the assessor has breached policy guidelines outlined above, and there is no agreed resolution or remediation plan, their membership of the Panel of Assessors for the OTC will be terminated.

Should assessors have concerns about the actions of the Professional Adviser or administrative support provided, they can raise these concerns directly with the Chair of the OTC's Program Accreditation Committee.

In all instances, the OTC will conduct the above discussion and processes in a respectful and collegiate manner.

10. Related documents

- OTC Values
- Confidentiality policy
- Privacy policy
- Assessor manual
- Internal complaints, grievance and conflict management policy

11. Document information

Policy location:	OTC Governance Manual		
Date	Reviewed July 2022	Version	V2
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