

Appendix 2

Professional requirements and recommendations for pre-registration education

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A Requirements

A.1 Duration of the programme

In order to comply with the requirements for approval by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, the duration of a pre-registration programme will be a minimum of 90 weeks. There is a requirement for a student to successfully complete a minimum of 1000 assessed hours of practice learning, as part of the programme.

Accreditation of prior learning or experience can be considered for equivalence in determining the above in accordance with the accepted ACL or AP(E)L policy and process. Normally, no more than one third of the programme or part of the programme may be subject to AP(E)L in keeping with the COT position statement on AP(E)L.

The College of Occupational Therapists sets the maximum time in which students should normally complete the programme and gain the professional qualification. This is to ensure that those qualifying have currency of professional knowledge for safe practice and the protection of the public.

- Graduate entry programmes of two years' duration should normally be completed within four years.
- Three-year Bachelor's programmes should normally be completed within five years.
- Four-year part-time programmes should normally be completed within six years.

Extension of a student's registration period beyond the maximum time set by the College of Occupational Therapists must have prior approval of the College and must have the support of the higher education institution.

A.2 Assessments

All modules contributing to the professional qualification must be passed.

A.3 Retrieval and failure

The College of Occupational Therapists has a duty to ensure that graduates of its accredited programmes possess the required current knowledge, skills and attitudes to be safe and effective practitioners. The COT regulations on retrieval of failure take account not only of the currency of the programme but also the overall capabilities of the student to demonstrate competence in core academic elements and at integrating theory with practice. The College of Occupational Therapists' accreditation of a pre-registration occupational therapy programme will be conditional to the pre-registration programme adopting the College's regulations on retrieval of failure in both academic and practice education elements of the programme should the higher education institution's own regulations be less stringent.

A.3.1 Academic failure

With the exception of modules or periods of learning relating to practice education, a student may be allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass a module. A student who thus fails a module after the retrieval processes associated with the first attempt are exhausted (and in the absence of extenuating circumstances) may be allowed to re-register for the module on one occasion only, provided that successful completion of the module is within the maximum period for completion of the programme.

Re-registration will provide the student with further academic learning to improve his/her chance of passing the module. The student's progression to the next level will be determined by the programme regulations on progression. Extenuating circumstances and deferrals will be at the discretion of the examinations board and subject to the university regulations.

A.3.2 Practice placement failure

The practice placement is where students will be required to demonstrate their ability to integrate theory with practice and professional competence at their level of study. Successful practice placement learning is important for safe and effective practice and for the protection of the public. Where a student is deemed to have demonstrated unsafe practice, their status on the programme will be considered under A.3.3 below.

With regards to periods of learning or modules related to practice education, no re-registration for these modules is permissible. If the module is ultimately failed when the first attempt and retrieval processes for the module have been exhausted, the student should be required to leave the course. A student may also be denied the retrieval if the failure originally occurred on grounds of professional unsuitability. The practice hours of failed practice education will not count towards the minimum requirement of 1000 hours.

A.3.3 Professional unsuitability including unprofessional behaviour and breaches of the COT Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (failure on grounds of professional unsuitability)

Students can be required to leave the course on grounds of professional unsuitability irrespective of academic achievement. The programme document should include the procedure for investigation of alleged professional unsuitability and for the termination of a student's education on these grounds.

A.4 Exit awards

Where a student cannot complete a programme successfully for the professional qualifying award, the awarding institution has a duty to give proper acknowledgement to his/her achievement.

If the institution wishes to offer other exit awards, the titles of the awards must be stated. The document must clearly state that no exit award other than the professional qualifying award will confer eligibility to apply for HPC registration.

B Recommendations

B.1 Aegrotat degree

An aegrotat degree will not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council. Should the HEI offer an aegrotat degree, the title of the award must be stated in the definitive document and must not include any reference to the protected title of occupational therapist.

B.2 Break in studies

A break in studies for sound reasons may be permitted at the discretion of the higher education institution if supported by the programme leader, provided that the programme is completed satisfactorily within the permitted maximum period from initial registration. A break in studies should normally be limited to one year at any one time.

B.3 External examiners

At least one external examiner must be a registered occupational therapist with an understanding and experience of assessment principles and methods in higher education. Where there are more than two external examiners, the majority must be HPC registered occupational therapists. Although the scrutiny and appointment of the external examiners is the responsibility of the higher education institution, the College of Occupational Therapists shall reserve its right to raise objections to an appointment to a programme accredited by the College. (The College of Occupational Therapists holds an annually updated Register of External Examiners that is available to accredited programmes.)