

## **OT Section Vision Statement**

At its October 2006 retreat, the members of the Occupational Therapy Section developed the following statement to reflect the Section's vision on the parameters framing its regulatory discussions.

The Occupational Therapy Section is committed to proactively:

- + Provide education to the consumers of occupational therapy services;
- + Enforce practice standards for the protection of the consumers of occupational therapy services;
- + Regulate the profession of occupational therapy in an ever-changing environment;
- + Regulate ethical and multicultural competency in the practice of occupational therapy;
- + Regulate the practice of occupational therapy in all current and emerging areas of service delivery.

## **Online Applications for Initial Licensure**

In 2005, the Board implemented online license renewals through the Ohio e-License Center. The opportunity to renew online and pay with a credit card has been well received by licensees, with over 90% of individuals electing to use the online system. In light of the success of online renewals, the Board recently developed a method for individuals seeking an initial Ohio license to use the Ohio e-License Center to apply online and pay with a credit card.

Individuals seeking to apply for their Ohio occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant license online should go to the Ohio e-License Center (<https://license.ohio.gov>) and select the Application Site option.

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## Proposed Rules Changes

Each year, the Occupational Therapy Section reviews its rules to determine if any changes are needed to reflect current practice. The rule review process starts during the summer when the Section makes an initial determination of any potential changes. The Section then seeks feedback on the initial language before formally filing the changes. The Section plans on holding a public hearing on the proposed rules changes at its March 10, 2009 meeting, with the goal of new language going into effect on May 1, 2009.

The current proposed changes include adding requirements, similar to the endorsement and reinstatement requirements, to ensure that individuals who have not practiced occupational therapy in more than five years are still practicing at entry-level competence (4755-3-05), adding provisions related to sexual boundary violations to the code of ethics (4755-7-08), and adopting a new rule specifying how licensees, students, and limited permit holders should sign their name in client documentation (4755-7-10).

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Question: How should the supervising occupational therapist co-sign a supervisee's documentation?*

**Answer:** If client documentation includes any type of treatment grid, a single co-signature and date of review on the form is sufficient. For any handwritten documentation, each entry must be co-signed with the name, credential, and date.

*Question: Are electronic signatures acceptable? If so, how should the occupational therapist co-sign an electronic signature?*

**Answer:** Electronic signatures are acceptable if security and integrity are maintained. A copy of the individual's name, handwritten signature, and electronic signature must be on file where the electronic signature is used. The supervising occupational therapist must co-sign and reference the dates of the entries into the client record. If needed, the OT may make a separate entry referencing the date(s) of the note(s) being reviewed.

*Question: What are the continuing education requirements?*

**Answer:** All licensees must complete 20 contact hours of continuing education in the appropriate categories during each 2 year renewal period. At least one contact hour of ethics is required for each renewal. If a license is valid for less than 12 months, 10 contact hours are required, including at least 1 contact hour of ethics.

*Question: Can an occupational therapy assistant perform a screen?*

**Answer:** Screens, or identification of candidates for therapy, may be performed by an OTA since a screen is only data gathering and non-evaluative in nature. All screens must be co-signed by the occupational therapist with collaboration documented.

*Question: Can occupational therapy assistants complete home assessments?*

**Answer:** Occupational therapy assistants can gather objective information and



### Join the Listserv

To allow for a quick and inexpensive mechanism to notify licensees and other interested parties of news and other regulatory issues, the Board established a listserv. To join the listserv, send an email to [board@otptat.ohio.gov](mailto:board@otptat.ohio.gov). In the body of the email, please state that you'd like to join the listserv and also indicate which list(s) you'd like to join. The Board maintains a separate list for each of the three professions.

report observations, with or without the patient and/or occupational therapist present. It is the responsibility of the occupational therapist to interpret the data and make recommendations.

*Question: Can an occupational therapy assistant perform a discharge summary?*

**Answer:** An occupational therapy assistant may gather and summarize objective information; however, they may not interpret this data. It is the occupational therapist's responsibility to interpret the data gathered by the occupational therapy assistant and make the recommendations for discharge plan development. The collaboration between the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant must be reflected in patient documentation.

*Question: I got a new job at a different facility. Does this mean that I'm abandoning my current clients?*

**Answer:** Abandonment is the inappropriate termination of the therapist/client relationship by the occupational therapist. Abandonment is generally alleged when the relationship is severed without reasonable notice at a time when treatments are still needed. A facility that refuses to fill a vacant occupational therapist position does not constitute abandonment on the part of the occupational therapist, provided that the occupational therapist gave reasonable notice.

*Question: How can I care for my clients when I'm on vacation?*

**Answer:** Termination of care does not include an occupational therapist going on vacation or taking regularly scheduled days off. In those situations, another occupational therapist would be providing coverage. If the evaluating occupational therapist will no longer be available to provide and supervise occupational therapy care, the patient must be transferred to another occupational therapist.

*Question: What is the caseload ratio for school-based therapists?*

**Answer:** The Ohio Occupational Therapy Practice Act does not regulate caseload levels. The Ohio Department of Education establishes the number of students that an occupational therapist may serve. Under the Department of Education rules, an occupational therapist may treat no more than 50 school age children with disabilities or no more than 40 preschool children with disabilities. An occupational therapy assistant who provides occupational therapy techniques must do so under the general supervision of an occupational therapist as required in the occupational therapy rules established in Chapter 4755-7 of the Administrative Code.

*Question: What are the supervisory ratios for occupational therapy assistants in school-based practice?*

**Answer:** A full-time occupational therapist may supervise no more than 4 full-time occupational therapy assistants and/or limited permit holders. If the OT only provides client evaluations and supervision without a separate caseload, the OT may supervise 6 OTAs and/or LP holders. This ratio may not be acceptable in the school setting. The occupational therapist is ultimately responsible for all clients/students served by the OTA. The OTA does not maintain a separate caseload. In all settings, the OT must provide appropriate supervision and assure that treatments are rendered according to safe and ethical standards.

## Board Sponsored Continuing Education Course

In April 2008, the Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board sponsored its first continuing education activity in Columbus. This free 2.0 contact hour session included a general overview of the agency's role and functions. Following the completion of the general information session, individuals attended breakout sessions that were profession specific. These breakout sessions addressed specific areas of concern, trends in violations/discipline, recent laws and rules changes, a group ethical exercise, and frequently asked questions.

The second session was held in December in Findlay. In 2009, the Board plans on holding two or three additional sessions at different locations in the state, including Akron.

## Signature & Documentation

The Occupational Therapy Section is currently proposing rule language specifying how licensees, limited permit holders, and students should sign their names in documentation. Under the draft rule, all occupational therapists must use the credential “OT/L” or “OTR/L” following their signature to indicate licensure as an occupational therapist. Occupational therapy assistants must use “OTA/L” or “COTA/L” to indicate licensure as an occupational therapy assistant.

Limited permit holders must use “LP/OT” or “LP/OTA” after their name to indicate their limited permit status and students must use “S/OT” or “S/OTA” to indicate student status. Under the proposed rule, OTS and OTAS would not be an acceptable format for students to use to indicate student status. In addition, a student may not simply use the word “student” without indicating if the individual is a student occupational therapist or student occupational therapy assistant.

## Required Release of Personal Information

All of the information in an individual’s licensure file, except the Social Security Number, is a public record under Ohio’s broad public records law. Therefore, the Board must release the information to anyone who submits a public records request. Unfortunately, part of the requirement to hold an Ohio license is to provide current mailing and employment addresses, and current home and employment phone numbers. If a licensee fails to provide that information, the Board will not issue or renew a license. Although we share licensees’ concerns about phone numbers and email addresses being released to any party requesting a listing of information, the Board is unable to remove mailing addresses or phone numbers from our licensure database.

The Board recommends that licensees contact their State Senator and State Representative and ask the legislature to change the public records laws. A change in Ohio’s public records law would be the only way the Board could legally not release your address, phone number, or email address to a public records requestor. The Board also suggests that licensees register their phone number with the National Do Not Call Registry (<https://www.donotcall.gov/default.aspx>).

## Occupational Therapy Section Members

Name	City	Term Expires*	Term^
Nanette Shoemaker, OTA, Chair	Miamisburg	2009	1st Term
Mary Stover, OT, Secretary	Columbus	2009	1st Term
Rebecca Finni, OT	Amelia	2010	1st Term
Jean Halpin, OT	Westerville	2011	1st Term
Kimberly Lawler, OT	Fazeysburg	2010	1st Term

\*All terms expire on August 27th of the designated year.

^Prusuant to ORC 4755.01, Board members shall not serve for more than three (3) consecutive terms.



### Duty to Report

Many licensees may not be aware that rule 4755-7-08 (A)(2)(d) requires them to report “any conduct that they consider unethical or incompetent relating to the practice of occupational therapy to the Occupational Therapy Section.”

If you are aware of any potential violations of the Occupational Therapy Practice Act, please download and submit the Complaint Form, which is available on the Board’s website at <http://otptat.ohio.gov>.



## Verification of Licensure

The Board receives many requests for verification of an Ohio license to another state licensing board. To officially verify your Ohio license to another entity, you must submit a written request that includes the following information:

1. Your name;
2. Your current mailing address;
3. Your daytime phone number;
4. Your Ohio license number and/or your Social Security Number;
5. The mailing address of the entity requiring the verification; and
6. The verification fee.

You may also send the Board a copy of the other entity's verification request form provided that it includes your name and Ohio license number, and you include the verification fee and a daytime phone number.

The fee to officially verify your license to another entity is \$30 per request. Please make your money order, cashier's check, or business check payable to "Treasurer State of Ohio" in the exact amount. Personal check, credit cards, and/or cash will not be accepted. Verification processing takes approximately 3 business days.

Please send the request and verification fee to:

License Verification Request  
Ohio OTPTAT Board  
77 S. High Street, 16th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215-6108

## Enforcement Division

You can view the enforcement website at <http://otptat.ohio.gov>. On the left hand column, select the "Enforcement" link. From that page, you can learn about the complaint and investigative process, review disciplinary actions taken by the Section, and obtain the complaint form.

## Updating Your Contact Information

Did you know that failure to notify the Board of an address change won't just lead to a delay in receiving your renewal application from the board, but it also is a violation of the Ohio OT Practice Act. Rule 4755-3-08 of the Administrative Code requires all licensees to notify the board "in writing of any change of name, place of business or employment, or mailing address within thirty days after the change."

Many licensees incorrectly assume that notifying the post office of a new address is sufficient. The post office will not forward a renewal application to a new address. It is relatively easy to notify the Board of your new information. You can fax the information to (614) 995-0816 or send an email to [board@otptat.ohio.gov](mailto:board@otptat.ohio.gov). If you have your UserID and password from your online renewal, you can even log into the Ohio e-License Center (<https://license.ohio.gov>) and select the Update Address Information option to make the appropriate changes.

## Licensee Census As of December 11, 2008:

Occupational Therapists	4121	Occupational Therapists in Escrow	223
Occupational Therapy Assistants	2694	Occupational Therapy Assistants in Escrow	132
Physical Therapists	7035	Physical Therapist Assistants	5251
Athletic Trainers	1832		

## Licensure Renewal

Please note, all licenses issued for occupational therapists must be renewed by June 30th of odd-numbered years. All licenses issued for occupational therapy assistants must be renewed by June 30th of even-numbered years.

Renewing your license online is the preferred method. However, you can request a paper renewal by contacting the Board.

### *Common questions with online renewal.*

*Why is my phone number on the receipt listed as (555)555-5555?* This is a security feature built in the system. The phone numbers you entered are stored in the system.

*What should I do if I am unable to update my business address?* If your business name and address are not modifiable in the renewal module, email your business address to the Board and the staff will update your file.

*If you are having Browser issues:* check your browser to see if you have enabled the feature to accept cookies. You may need to update your web browser.

## Continuing Education

Occupational therapy practitioners are required to complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours of continuing education (CE) per renewal cycle. This includes at least 1 hour of ethics each renewal. Requests for continuing education waivers must be received in the Board office no later than April 1 in the year that your license expires.

## Are you ready to Serve?

Have you ever wondered what goes on during an Occupational Therapy Section Meeting? Do you ever think that you might be able to contribute to the profession of occupational therapy by serving as a member of the regulatory board?

The Governor is responsible for appointing all members of the Board. Members are appointed for three year terms and may serve up to three consecutive terms. There are approximately seven meetings each year and members are reimbursed for their time and travel expenses.

To be eligible to serve on the Board, each applicant must hold a current Ohio occupational therapist/occupational therapy assistant license and have been actively engaged in or associated with the practice of occupational therapy in Ohio for at least five years immediately preceding the appointment.

If you are interested in submitting your name for consideration by the Governor, please download the application from the Boards and Commissions section of the Governor's website (<http://governor.ohio.gov>).

## SECTION MEETINGS

All Board/Section meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend. Please contact the Board at (614) 466-3774 or [board@otptat.ohio.gov](mailto:board@otptat.ohio.gov) to verify the time and meeting location if you would like to attend.

The planned 2009 meetings are scheduled for:

January 15

March 10

May 7

July 7

September 17

November 17



Ohio OTPTAT Board  
77 South High Street  
16th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108

<http://otptat.ohio.gov>  
[board@otptat.ohio.gov](mailto:board@otptat.ohio.gov)

Phone: (614) 466-3774  
Fax (614) 995-0816