

Regulated Professions Representative Form

Section 1: Regulated Profession Details

Regulated Profession:

Full Name of representative	Maria Petrou
Position/Title	Occupational Therapist Representative of the Cyprus Registration board of Occupational Therapists
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Section 2: Observations Regarding Legislation

Please provide specific observations related to the legislation governing this profession:

Occupational Therapy has a distinct scientific background, is recognised as an autonomous healthcare profession, and is a scientific discipline whose professional rights are regulated by European Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by 2013/55/EU.

Additionally the Occupational Therapy Profession is regulated by law [The Occupational Therapist Registration Law of 2006]. According to the Law on the Registration of Occupational Therapists of the Republic of Cyprus, the exercise of the profession requires registration in the Register of Registered Occupational Therapists and the possession of a professional licence. According to Article 8 of the Law on the Registration of Occupational Therapists, the qualifications for registration in the Register include the following:

1. Basic Conditions of Registration

- The applicant must: A citizen of the Republic of Cyprus or an EU Member State or a member of the family of a citizen of the Republic of Cyprus permanently residing in Cyprus.
- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Be of sound moral character, as defined by the absence of any criminal conviction for offences of moral turpitude or dishonesty within the last five years.

2. Academic qualifications

The applicant must have:

- A degree or diploma in occupational therapy from an accredited university or equivalent educational institution.
- A degree that complies with the European guidelines and criteria of the Cyprus Registry Board of Occupational Therapists, as well as the requirements of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT).

The Cyprus Registry Board of Occupational Therapists, is the competent body for the licensing of professionals, according to the legislation for the Registration of Occupational Therapists in Cyprus (Law 136(I)/2006).

From this provision of the law, it follows that whichever university wishes to establish an occupational therapy faculty or program must ensure that it meets the minimum educational requirements set by WFOT (2016). According to the 2016 revised version, the implementation of the program must meet the minimum educational requirements of WFOT so that the program can be assessed and approved by WFOT. This will ensure that future graduates of the programme will be able to obtain a license to practice in Cyprus.

The process for approval of a training programme by WFOT is independent of and different from the accreditation, coordination or monitoring processes sometimes required by other organisations, such as the CYQAA, and cannot be carried out at the same time as these (Guidelines for Submission, WFOT, 2022). The documents and application are submitted to WFOT through the Cyprus Association of Occupational Therapists, which is the affiliate member and the representative of the World Federation of Occupational Therapy in Cyprus.

Section 3: Additional Comments

Any further comments:

Practice placement

It is important, both in the documents relating to the description and establishment of the institution and in the content of the programme, to clearly articulate compliance with the requirements of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT, 2016) with regard to practice placement. According to WFOT recommendations, students should complete a minimum of 1000 field hours during their studies. These hours, which are spread over different stages of training, are designed to gain clinical experience, and enhance students' professional skills in real professional settings.

Specifically, it is proposed that in Table 1: STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME OF STUDIES, under the section "PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS", the ECTS reflecting the 1000 hours of practical training in the field, specifically 40 ECTS ("Practice Placement"), be clearly recorded in order to be readily distinguishable.

For greater clarity and to avoid misunderstandings, we suggest that the clinical trainings in occupational therapy in the text be renamed " Practice Placement 1", " Practice Placement 2", " Practice Placement 3", and " Practice Placement 4" to accurately reflect the content of the courses. The last placement, referred to as ' Practice Placement ', should also be called Practice Placement 5 ', ensuring consistency with the nomenclature of the other placements. In this way, the learning process is considered to follow a spiral path, in which professional skills are transferred from one level to the next, enhancing and improving the learning experience, while new skills are added as students' progress from one professional practice experience to the next.

University Rehabilitation Clinic:

It is important to adequately specify how the expansion of the rehabilitation clinic will serve the work and needs of the occupational therapy program. In addition, it must be clearly defined what exactly the rehabilitation clinic will entail, what space and equipment will be used, and what assessment tools will be available to meet the needs of the program.

It is recommended that a study be conducted to detail the design and configuration of the rehabilitation clinic. This study should focus on the layout of the labs and the selection of appropriate equipment to effectively support the needs of the Occupational Therapy program.

Curriculum:

The modules of an occupational therapy program should focus on the purposeful use of occupation, which lies at the core of occupational therapy practice. The curriculum should modify to include a well-structured sequence of courses that focus on developing both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

All courses related to Occupational Therapy should be Compulsory. Electives should be courses that are not specific to the field of occupational therapy.

Academic Personnel

The permanent academic staff of the proposed programme have considerable academic qualifications and experience. However, there is a lack of the specialist background required to effectively support the subject of Occupational Therapy.

The university appears to have planned actions to find academic staff in the future. Given that the school is scheduled to open in 2025, we believe it is necessary to open and advertise positions for permanent elected academics in Occupational Therapy. This will ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the program, as faculty competence is critical to the quality and success of the curriculum.

Strengthening the academic staff with qualified faculty members will help improve teaching, research and the overall student experience. The lack of qualified faculty may create challenges in meeting the standards set by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), as well as in teaching the specialised disciplines.

Representative's Signature:

Date: 14/01/2025