Cyprus University of Technology
Department of Rehabilitation Sciences

20 January 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: Response to the Occupational Therapist Representative of the Cyprus Registration board of Occupational Therapists

We appreciate the feedback and suggestions regarding developing our Occupational Therapy program. Below, we address the key points raised and outline our corresponding actions and clarifications:

A. Practice Placement

Thank you for your suggestions and observations regarding the structure of the practice placement hours and the alignment with the guidelines of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT MSEOT, 2016). To ensure compliance with the WFOT requirement of a minimum of 1000 hours of fieldwork during the program, we have structured the practice placements as follows:

Practice Placement	Hours	ECTS
Practice Placement 1	78	3
Practice Placement 2	136.5	5
Practice Placement 3	175.5	7
Practice Placement 4	175.5	7
Practice Placement 5	520	20
TOTAL Practice Placement Hours and ECTS Credits	1085.5	42

Compliance and Clarifications:

1. Alignment with WFOT Guidelines: The total practice placement hours exceed the minimum requirement of 1000 hours, ensuring alignment with MSEOT WFOT (2016) recommendations. These hours are strategically distributed across the program to provide students with progressively challenging clinical experiences that enhance professional skills.

2. Nomenclature Update: The course names have been revised to "Practice Placement 1," "Practice Placement 2," and so on to reflect the placements' sequential and developmental complexity nature. This ensures consistency and avoids confusion regarding the content and progression of the training.

3. Spiral Learning Approach: The design of the practice placements follows a spiral learning model, encompassing a constructivist educational theory that will ensure students revisit and develop the identified graduate attributes. The four key themes

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of the spiral learning approach are embedded within each practice placement, with successive levels of complexity, building on previous knowledge to increase student competence (Harden, 1997). These include:

- Professional values and behaviors
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Practice skills, professional reasoning, problem-solving, and evidence-based decision-making.
- Leadership, management, and team-working.

To avoid confusion regarding the total number of practice placement hours, the above table added to the application clearly references that the practice placement hours comply with the WFOT guidelines (2016).
Also, **Table 1: STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME OF STUDIES** of the application was modified accordingly (with Practical Training 42 ECTS).

B. University Rehabilitation Clinic

As stated in the application (see pages 164-165), the University Rehabilitation Clinic operates on three key pillars: clinical training of students, research, and community service. The Clinic provides a model of best practice, integrating theoretical education with hands-on clinical experience. Additionally, it serves as a hub for cutting-edge research in Rehabilitation Sciences, with efforts to secure external research funding nationally and internationally. The Clinic actively contributes to improving public health and well-being through community service.
To meet the needs of the Occupational Therapy program, the Rehabilitation Clinic is be expanded by three additional floors. The new facilities will be aligned with WFOT guidelines and the curriculum requirements of the program.

Facilities Based on WFOT Guidelines:
The expanded facilities at CUT, including the Rehabilitation Clinic and other university spaces, are going to incorporate all required resources to ensure compliance with WFOT standards. These include:

- Offices for the director/head of program and secretary, with adequate space to maintain scholastic records and for student academic counseling
- Office space for teachers and educators
- Lecture rooms and laboratories/classrooms with adequate equipment, storage space, and display boards
- Access to rooms for teaching practical activities of daily living, work-related activities, creative activities, or construction of assistive devices, including splints
- Access to audio-visual equipment and technology such as video, PowerPoint, data projection, etc
- Access to library resources, including international textbooks and scientific journals in occupational therapy/occupational science
- Access to computers, information technology, and the internet. Records should be kept for each student and include their progress in both academic learning and practice placement (fieldwork)

- Access to storage to maintain student performance records and teaching plans for all modules delivered throughout the program.

Additional Facilities:
Moreover, the expanded facilities of the clinic are going to include:

- A large lecture room that can accommodate around 70 students
- A specially designed Independent Living Room for training in activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental ADLs (IADLs).
- Four therapy rooms with clinical observation areas equipped with one-way mirrors and video recording capabilities.
- A group therapy room with one-way mirrors and video recording capabilities.
- A student room where OT students will use for studying and preparation.
- A Rehabilitative and Assistive Technology Lab (equipped with VR, psychophysiology, robotics, etc).
- A large Occupational Therapy Lab (equipped with hospital beds, therapeutic tables, etc).
- A multifunctional room for teaching work-related tasks, creative activities, and splint construction.
- Storage space for the performance records of individuals served by the University Clinic.

Equipment and Resources
The laboratory spaces will be equipped with state-of-the-art tools and equipment, such as anatomical models, robotic devices for upper limb and hand rehabilitation, virtual reality systems, functional electrical stimulation devices, mirror therapy tools, driving simulators, therapeutic equipment for children, sensory integration therapy tools, aids for car modifications, adapted equipment for activities of daily living, leisure and mobility aids, splint fabrication materials, a 3D printer, and wheelchairs. Storage areas and display boards will also be included (see pages 164-165 of the application).

Assessment Tools:
In terms of assessment tools, the selection will indicatively include widely used tools in occupational therapy, such as the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (CMOP), Occupational Performance History Interview II (OPHI-II), Model of Human Occupation Screening Tool (MOHOST), Sensory Profile (adult & child, toddler), Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS), Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency (BOT-2), Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery VMI), Pediatric Evaluation of Disability Inventory (PEDI), Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), and Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE).
It is noted that the department has already listed the needs, and the university has been allocated the money needed to purchase the necessary tools.
The Department periodically assesses the adequacy and suitability of these spaces and informs the relevant University Authorities about their findings and actions.
The university has obtained the necessary urban planning permit and is reviewing bids from construction companies, with plans to begin construction in 2025. The

construction of the expanded building is expected to be completed by the beginning of 2027. Regarding the layout of the spaces, a preliminary study was conducted in collaboration with the architect. A more detailed study will follow to ensure the spaces are configured following international standards and meet the requirements of the program's curriculum.

C. Curriculum

We revised the curriculum accordingly and the course **Occupational Therapy in Early Childhood** is now compulsory. **Driving and Community Mobility in Occupational Therapy** course was moved to the 3rd semester along with other elective courses. The rest of the elective courses allow students to deepen their knowledge in a specific aspect of occupational therapy, which is also addressed in other courses.
Additionally, students can choose the areas they want to focus on, supporting the student-centered learning philosophy.

Regarding the course allocation in the curriculum, emphasis has been placed on aligning them with WFOT guidelines "Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists" (2016), which state that 60% of courses should focus on **occupation** and occupational therapy. In the proposed program, these courses account for 61% of the total curriculum.

Course Structure and Sequence

1st and 2nd Semesters:

- The program includes basic theoretical knowledge that provides a general background (social dimensions of health, anatomy and physiology, developmental psychology, rehabilitation principles, and multidisciplinary team) to build a foundation understanding and support the effective application of principles in **occupational therapy**. That's why books such as Functional Anatomy in Occupational Therapy are included in study materials.
- Also, it provides foundational knowledge for **occupational therapy and occupational science** (theories, approaches, models), how **occupation** can be used as a means and as an end (introduction to occupational therapy, occupation in occupational therapy, psychosocial occupational therapy, creativity, practice placement 1).
- It also includes courses necessary for students to develop skills for reading, researching articles, and promoting independent learning (English, information literacy, and statistics).

3rd semester

- The curriculum includes Neurology and First Aid as essential knowledge
- The course Therapeutic Use of Groups is also included, focusing on human beings and their interaction with the social environment and as fundamental knowledge

for occupational therapists. It also explores how group dynamics and social participation can enhance **occupational performance** and promote well-being.

- It explores **occupation** (biomechanics of human occupation). It delves deeper into specific **occupations and activities**, their use in occupational therapy, and how they can serve for health and well-being (play in occupational therapy, vocational rehabilitation, driving, and community mobility in occupational therapy).

4th-5th Semester

- The focus shifts to the individual and their **participation in occupations** (based on the person- occupation-environment concept as a fundamental knowledge of occupational therapy) and how these can be used during occupational therapy interventions to enhance **activity and participation**. This addresses the impact of health conditions on occupational participation and health risks arising from socio-political forces that disrupt occupational engagement (aligned with **WFOT MSEOT, 2016).**
- These courses are strategically placed before **Practice Placement 2** (the first direct interaction of students with occupational therapy service recipients) and during this placement, so students can apply what they learned in Semester 4 during Practice 2 in the 5th semester and what they learned in Semester 5 during Practice 3 in the 6th semester.

6th Semester:

- The courses Ergonomics and Environmental Modification in Occupational Therapy and Technology in Occupational Therapy provide a more in-depth understanding of the **environment**, as occupational therapists need to comprehend the third component of the **person-occupation-environment relationship** (WFOT MSEOT, 2016). These courses examine how environmental factors influence **occupational performance and participation.**
- Electives this semester allow students to deepen their knowledge in various aspects used in occupational therapy at a local level (Cognition & Splints) and internationally (Feeding Disorders - Dysphagia) to enhance **occupational performance.**
- Students also explore **evidence-based practice** and have the option to gain basic knowledge of sign language (an essential factor for the cultural competence of an occupational therapist) or an introduction to pharmacology (as per Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, 4th edition, medication management is a domain of the occupation “health management”).

7th Semester:

- Students have their final courses, which prepare them for advanced studies (research methods), further expertise (advanced occupational therapy practice), or their careers (leadership and management). At this stage, they have acquired the fundamental knowledge necessary to develop a strong foundation of professional knowledge and skills, including the ability to address challenges related to

occupational performance and apply ethical principles in practice (professional ethics). At the same time, they undertake their practice placement 4, where they further apply their knowledge and continue to develop the skills and attitudes they have acquired in previous semesters.

8th Semester:

- This is the final stage of the program (undergraduate thesis, practice placement 5), where the aim is to ensure students are ready for professional practice.

Throughout Practice Placements 1 to 5, there is a clear progression in developing knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes. This structured progression ensures that students are gradually equipped to meet the demands of professional occupational therapy practice.

D. Academic Personnel

The university adheres to official procedures (see pages 9-10) for recruiting staff and filling faculty and Special Teaching Staff (STS) positions. The program's needs have been clearly identified based on its requirements, WFOT guidelines, and university directives, and the relevant positions are scheduled to be advertised shortly.
Upon completing the recruitment process of allocated permanent faculty positions, 16 of 21 course instructors will be permanent staff, as detailed on pages 44-47 of the application. During the first full academic year of the program (2025-2026), 10 of 13 courses will be taught by permanent staff. The allocation of courses for the existing faculty and STS staff has already been finalized for the first two semesters. Specifically, 5 out of 6 courses in the first semester and 5 out of 7 in the second semester have been assigned to permanent faculty. For the remaining courses, individuals within the department who can teach them as part of their doctoral studies have already been identified.
As referenced in the application (see page 15), the university has allocated additional permanent positions to the Department, which will be advertised in the next weeks to recruit specialist scientists, STS, and faculty staff. These efforts aim to ensure that the occupational therapists recruited will fully align with the WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists and the university's regulations.

According to these standards, educators/course instructors must display:

1. **Commitment to Inclusion**: Combine qualifications and expertise with a commitment to promoting inclusive and participatory societies, engaging students in dialogue and change processes.
2. **Congruence**: Have a mix of professional backgrounds, qualifications, and experience that align with the philosophy and purpose of the program.
3. **Depth and Breadth**: Possess qualifications and experience supporting the curriculum content and educational methods, demonstrating excellence in their

teaching areas and/or holding qualifications higher than expected of program graduates (bachelor of science).

4. **Local Context Knowledge**: Have or access knowledge of local contexts, including occupations, cultural practices, health needs, and occupational opportunities, ensuring community relevance.
5. **International Perspective**: Maintain an international outlook by engaging with global occupational therapy literature, attending conferences, collaborating with recognized experts in the field, and addressing national and international trends in occupational therapy education.
6. **Quality Assurance**: Engage in ongoing professional development through literature, conferences, research, and expert collaboration to enhance knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

These principles will guide both the recruitment process and the ongoing professional development of educators to ensure the academic staff meets the Occupational Therapy program's requirements and WFOT standards, fostering high-quality education and exceptional student outcomes.

Additionally, as outlined in the WFOT Occupational Therapy Education Program Approval Guidelines for Submission for the First Approval of an Education Program (2022), applications for program approval can be submitted before the first intake or the graduation of the first cohort of students. This provides ample time to meet the WFOT standards and ensure the effective teaching of specialized courses.

We value your collaboration in ensuring the successful establishment of this program and remain committed to meeting the highest Occupational Therapy education and practice standards.

Warm regards,

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