



FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

COMMISSAIRE À L'ÉQUITÉ

OFFICE OF THE FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

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Fair Registration Practices Report 2020

The Fair Registration Practices Report was created as required in the:

- Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006 (FARPACTA) s.20 and 23(1), for the regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARPACTA
- Health Professions Procedural Code set out in Schedule 2 of the Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA) s. 22.7(1) and 22.9(1), for health colleges

Guidelines for this report are available to download as a .pdf on the OFC website.

<https://www.fairnesscommissioner.com/en/Publications/Pages/Guidelines.aspx>

Organization: College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

Name of the regulated profession: Occupational Therapists

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Qualitative Information

The following qualitative information is collected for the purpose of highlighting a regulator's enhancements to improve fair access year over year, including actions that result from recommendations made in the OFC's Assessment of Registration Practices.

For each of the categories below, where applicable, please describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year by your organization or a third-party for the purpose of changing fair access.

Please also describe the impact of these improvements/changes on applicants. If you have been working on improvements/changes over the last year that have not yet been implemented, describe your progress and the expected impact the improvements/changes will have on applicants and your organization.

Provide as much detail as possible. This can include the rationale for the improvements/changes, relevant findings from preliminary work leading up to the improvements/changes, methodology, relevant dates and anything else you think is important.

Include as much supporting material as possible to support your description (e.g., relevant reports, policies, protocols, websites, other documents and anything else you think is important). This material can be provided in the form of hyperlinks to electronic sources.

a. Requirements for registration, including acceptable alternatives

- i) Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year
 - No changes this year
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants
 - No changes this year
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization
 - No changes this year

b. Assessment of qualifications

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year



- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person competency assessment has been replaced with a virtual competency assessment. The Competency Assessment is a structured interview with a trained OT assessor that evaluates an internationally educated OT's ability to apply their occupational therapy knowledge, skills and judgement to ensure that they have the entry-level competencies required for safe and ethical practice.
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
- Internationally educated OTs completing Substantial Equivalency Assessment System (SEAS) can now complete the competency assessment portion of SEAS in any country. The transition to a virtual competency assessment did result in delays for some applicants. Please see e. Timelines below for additional details.
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
- Internationally educated OTs continue to be assessed using a robust assessment process that permits them to better understand the Canadian health system and recognizes experience through competency assessment.

c. Provision of timely decisions, responses, and reasons

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
- No changes this year
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
- No changes this year
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
- No changes this year

d. Fees

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
- The cost to write the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination (NOTCE) administered by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) increased from \$555.00 + HST to \$655.00 +HST.

Exam fees cover the cost of all aspects of the exam administration, including:

- Proctoring services at testing centres or remotely
- Services from exam provider



- Exam production, item bank management
 - Computer based testing platform
 - Marking and reporting results
 - National office administration costs (staff, overhead cost)
 - Cost of research activities involving the ongoing evaluation of the reliability and validity of the examination
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
- The NOTCE is developed and maintained to provide a reliable and valid assessment of academic knowledge and professional behaviour of individuals entering the occupational therapy profession in Canada.
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
- The NOTCE is developed and maintained to provide a reliable and valid assessment of academic knowledge and professional behaviour of individuals entering the occupational therapy profession in Canada.

e. Timelines

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person competency assessment component of SEAS was placed on hold in March 2020. Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic and restrictions, contingency planning for the competency assessment was initiated. Some of the main considerations in transitioning to an online/virtual competency assessment were:
 - Privacy and security for applicants and assessors
 - Assessment security and integrity
 - Defensibility and equivalence
 - International time zone management

Virtual competency assessments began on November 16, 2020.

- The July 2020 NOTCE was moved to September 2020 due to COVID-19. CAOT needed additional time to ensure the in-person exam was delivered in accordance with all public health and safety guidelines. The November 2020 exam was moved to January 2021 and was held online through live virtual proctoring.



- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - The transition to a virtual competency assessment resulted in a delay in internationally educated occupational therapists completing the SEAS process.
 - Moving the exam to September resulted in a delay for some applicants. Eligible applicants were issued provisional registration (which allowed practice under supervision while waiting to complete the exam).
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - The transition to a virtual competency assessment resulted in a lower number of internationally educated occupational therapists applying to the College in 2020. The College expects to have a higher number of internationally educated occupational therapists applying to the College in 2021.
 - Moving the July exam resulted in a larger number of applicants being eligible to attempt the exam in September. This increased the volume of applications and inquiries at the College.

f. Policies, procedures and/or processes, including by-laws

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
 - No changes this year
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - No changes this year
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - No changes this year

g. Resource for applicants

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
 - No changes this year
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - No changes this year
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - No changes this year

h. Review or appeal processes

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
 - No changes this year



- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - No changes this year
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - No changes this year

i. Access to applicants' records

- i) Describe any improvement/changes implemented in the last year
 - No changes this year
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - No changes this year
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - No changes this year

j. Training and resources for registration staff, Council, and committee members

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
 - Registration Committee orientation included training from College legal counsel, regarding fairness, legislation, bias and human rights obligations. This is routinely included as part of the annual Registration Committee orientation.
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - Ensures that all applicants experience a registration process that is transparent, objective, impartial and fair.
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - Ensures that all registration staff and the Registration Committee are well versed in fairness principles and understand the obligations of the College. This increased knowledge and understanding ensures registration decisions are not consciously or unconsciously biased, discriminatory or in violation of an applicant's human rights. This applies to the consideration of all applications, whether domestically or internationally trained.

k. Mutual recognition agreements

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
 - Although there were no formal changes to labour mobility/Canadian Free Trade Agreement, COVID-19 created an opportunity for telepractice to become more widely used across the country to provide services to clients. In April 2020, the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO) members agreed that anyone registered in a Canadian jurisdiction wishing to carry out telepractice in another Canadian jurisdiction could do so by



completing streamlined application process, and if all requirements were met, the College would issue a temporary certificate of registration at no cost (waived fees).

- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - Applicants completed a streamlined application process at no cost, which allowed them to receive a certificate of registration in a timely manner. Barriers to providing client care were reduced.
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - Certificates were issued in a timely manner, while still ensuring qualifications were met, and barriers to providing client care were reduced. This change led to further conversation with ACOTRO about telepractice. In December 2020, ACOTRO developed a position statement on telepractice where they agreed that for registration purposes, telepractice occurs where the occupational therapist is situated. This means that regardless of where the patient/client is, the occupational therapist only needs to be registered where they are physically located. It is expected that all occupational therapist regulators in Canada will develop policy in 2021 to implement this approach.

I. Describing any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

- i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
 - As a result of the pandemic and working remotely, the College has shifted to more electronic processes and is accepting all documents by email or fax to limit delays in the processing of applications.
- ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
 - Accepting electronic documents during the application process reduces delays in the processing of applications.
- iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
 - Applicants are issued a certificate of registration in a timely manner.

m. Describe any registration-related improvements/changes to your enabling legislation and/or regulations in the last year

Provide any additional information: N/A



Quantitative Information

The following quantitative information is collected for the purpose of observing statistical changes and trends related to application, licensure, appeals and staffing year over year.

a. Languages

Indicate the languages in which application materials and information about the application process are available.

| Language | Yes/No |
|----------|---------------------|
| English | Yes |
| French | Yes, when requested |

Other (please specify):

b. Gender applications

Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable

| Gender | Number of applicants |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Male | 51 |
| Female | 459 |
| None of the above | 1 (self-described) |

Additional comments:

c. Gender of members

Indicate the number of members in each category as applicable. Select the option that best corresponds to the terminology used by your organization.

| Gender | Number of members |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 557 |
| Female | 5968 |
| None of the above | 2 (self-described) |

Additional Comments:

For the following sections d,e & f, the OFC recognizes that the term initial education infers that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions.



For the purpose of these questions, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

d. Jurisdiction where applicants obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education in the profession or trade

| Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International (list countries and # of applicants) | Unknown | Total |
|---------|--------------------------|-----|---|---------|-------|
| 412 | 58 | 11 | Australia – 7 Brazil – 1 Germany – 1 India – 8 Ireland – 2 South Africa – 1 United Kingdom – 10 | 0 | 511 |

Additional comments: Number of internationally educated applications were likely lower in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

e. Jurisdiction where applicants who became registered members obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants who became registered members in the reporting year by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education in the profession or trade.

| Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International (list countries and # of applicants) | Unknown | Total |
|---------|--------------------------|-----|--|---------|-------|
| 427 | 53 | 11 | Australia – 7 Brazil – 1 Germany – 1 India – 4 Ireland – 2 United Kingdom – 9 | 0 | 515 |



Additional comments:

f. Jurisdiction where members were initially trained

Indicate the total number of registered members by jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education in the profession or trade.

| Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International (list countries and # of applicants) | Unknown | Total |
|---------|--------------------------|-----|--|---------|-------|
| 5353 | 602 | 184 | Australia – 45 Brazil – 8 China – 1 Colombia -5 Germany – 7 Hong Kong – 22 India – 90 Iran – 14 Ireland – 6 Israel – 7 Japan – 1 Jordan – 5 New Zealand – 4 Pakistan – 11 Philippines – 40 Portugal – 1 Slovenia – 1 South Africa – 14 South Korea – 1 Spain – 1 Sri Lanka – 1 Sweden – 2 Taiwan, Province of China – 2 Thailand – 1 United Kingdom - 98 | 0 | 6527 |

g. Application processed



Indicate the number of applications your organization processed in the reporting year. Enter the data by jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession, i.e. before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario.

| January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 | Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International | Unknown | Total |
|--|---------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------|-------|
| New applications received | 412 | 58 | 11 | 30 | 0 | 511 |
| Applicant actively pursuing licensing. Those who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year | 36 | 9 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 57 |
| Inactive applicants. Those who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members <u>but did not</u> become members | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Applicants who became <u>fully</u> registered members | 326 | 44 | 10 | 21 | 0 | 401 |
| Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative licence <u>but were not</u> issued a licence | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence* | 101 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 114 |

- An alternative class of licence enables its holder to practice with limitations, but additional requirements must be met in order for the member to be fully licensed.

Additional comments:



h. Classes of certificate/licence

Provide a description of the classes of certificate/license offered by your organization. You should have at least one class listed.

| # | Certification | Description |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | General practising certificate of registration | General certificates are issued to individuals who meet all of the requirements. General members are able to practice without restriction. |
| 2 | Provisional practising certificate of registration | Provisional certificates are issued to individuals who have not yet met the examination requirement or to individuals who have been found by the Registration Committee to require minimal education upgrading to achieve the equivalent of a Bachelor of Science degree or Master of Science degree in Occupational Therapy obtained in Ontario. To register in this category, applicants must meet all of the requirements, with the exception of the examination. In addition, provisional members must be registered to write the first available sitting of the exam, and have an offer of employment where they will be supervised by a member who has held a general certificate for at least one year. |
| 3 | Temporary practising certificate of registration | This category of certificate is intended for those applicants who are registered in another jurisdiction but enter the province of Ontario to practice temporarily. To register in this category, applicants must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valid certificate of registration from another jurisdiction with education and clinical requirements equivalent to those of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. |



| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an offer of employment or appointment that does not exceed four months within a twelve-month period; • Have a member who holds a general certificate agree to supervise and be responsible for ensuring the provision of appropriate care for clients attended by the applicant; • Have professional liability insurance that includes a sexual abuse therapy and counselling fund endorsement; and • Meet the suitability to practise requirement |
|--|--|--|

Additional comments:

i. Reviews and appeals processed

State the number of reviews and appeals your organization processed in the reporting year. Enter the data by jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession, i.e. before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario.

| January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 | Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International | Unknown | Total |
|---|---------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------|-------|
| Applicants that were subject to an internal review or that were referred to a statutory committee of your governing council, such as Registration Committee | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Applicants who initiated an appeal of | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a registration decision | | | | | | |
| Appeals heard | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Registration decisions changed following an appeal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Additional comments: Two reviews to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB) were initiated and heard in in 2019. Decisions were released in 2020. HPARB confirmed both decisions.

j. Paid Staff

Provide the number of paid staff employed by your organization in the categories shown, as of December 31, 2020.

You may use decimals if you need to count half units. For example, on full-time employee plus one part-time employee will be equivalent to 1.5 employees.

| Category | Number of staff |
|---|-----------------|
| Total number of staff employed by the regulatory body | 27 |
| Number of staff involved in the appeals process | 3 |
| Number of staff involved in the registration process | 5 |

Additional comments:

Submission

Name of individual with authority to sign on behalf of the organization: Brandi Park

Title: Manager, Registration

Date: April 14, 2021

