

**COMPETENCIES, CRITERIA, AND CLIENT OUTCOMES**  
**Specialty Certification in Low Vision (Adults)**  
**Occupational Therapist**

This document represents the competencies and criteria that applicants must use for building their certification portfolio. Complete information about the requirements for certification and instructions on how to complete a certification application can be found in the Low Vision Specialty Certification Handbook for occupational therapists.

**COMPETENCY A**

**Performs an individualized occupational therapy low vision evaluation to identify factors that support or hinder use of vision in occupational performance.**

**Client Outcome:** Clients are engaged in the identification of strengths, limitations, and goals as they relate to low vision to optimize health and participation in desired occupations.

Standard	Criteria
Knowledge	A1. Has knowledge of the primary conditions that permanently impair vision, including the etiology, prevalence, typical onset, and prognosis, and the medical and optical management.
Knowledge	A2. Has knowledge of the changes in visual functions that can occur from congenital, inherited, and acquired conditions and how those changes affect engagement in areas of occupation, including co-occupations.
Knowledge	A3. Has knowledge of assessment methods and tools used to measure visual functions, including interpretation of vision-specific terminology.
Critical Reasoning	A4. Identifies and interprets relevant information from multiple sources to select the best assessments to complete the occupational profile and occupational analysis of the client with low vision.
Performance Skills	A5. Administers selected low vision assessments according to appropriate protocols, guidelines, and standards.
Performance Skills	A6. Assesses the client's contexts and environments to identify the elements that support or hinder occupational performance and participation.
Ethical Reasoning	A7. Differentiates between the role and scope of practice of the occupational therapy low vision specialist and those of other members of the rehabilitation team who address low vision.

**COMPETENCY B**

**Develops and implements an individualized occupational therapy low vision intervention plan in collaboration with the client that reflects the client's priorities for occupational performance.**

**Client Outcomes:**

1. Clients participate in the development of the low vision intervention plan, including the identification and prioritization of goals, to achieve desired outcomes.
2. Client engages in desired occupations as identified in the intervention plan using the most appropriate visual or nonvisual strategies.
3. Clients are prepared to use services and resources that foster performance and participation in occupations within varied contexts after discharge.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Knowledge	B1. Has knowledge of strategies to facilitate the use of remaining vision through modification of tasks, environments, and contexts, including application of vision-specific adaptive equipment.
Knowledge	B2. Identifies occupational therapy theories relevant to low vision to guide development of the intervention plan.
Knowledge	B3. Has knowledge of strategies to facilitate the use of visual performance skills (e.g., scanning, use of the preferred retinal locus [PRL]) to enhance occupational performance.
Knowledge	B4. Has knowledge of the optical properties and uses of lenses and prisms.
Knowledge	B5. Has knowledge of visual and nonvisual strategies and techniques to facilitate safe negotiation of environments.
Critical Reasoning	B6. Differentiates between the risks and benefits of visual and nonvisual strategies and determines and implements the most appropriate interventions to facilitate occupational performance and participation.
Critical Reasoning	B7. Establishes a discharge plan that prepares the client with low vision to obtain and use services and resources that maximize occupational performance and support health, participation, and life satisfaction.
Interpersonal Skills	B8. Communicates information in a way that removes or minimizes barriers created by low vision for the client in a given context or environment.
Interpersonal Skills	B9. Establishes and collaborates with referral and resource networks inside and outside the health care community to help the client achieve outcomes that support health and participation in life.
Performance Skills	B10. Uses occupation-based interventions to achieve the client's identified occupational therapy low vision goals.
Performance Skills	B11. Maintains ongoing dialogue with the referring physician to determine optical devices that are compatible with the client's performance patterns, contexts, environments, and client factors and reflect the client's desired goals.
Ethical Reasoning	B12. Considers ethical and financial implications associated with the recommendation of low vision assistive devices.

**COMPETENCY C**

**Recognizes immediate and long-term implications of psychosocial issues related to vision loss and modifies therapeutic approach and occupational therapy service delivery accordingly.**

**Client Outcome:** Clients have immediate and long-term emotional and psychosocial issues related to low vision addressed throughout the occupational therapy process.

Standard	Criteria
Knowledge	C1. Has knowledge of the factors unique to vision loss that influence clients' psychological adjustment.
Critical Reasoning	C2. Identifies and selects evidence-based intervention strategies, including therapeutic use of self, that facilitate psychosocial adjustment to vision loss, and empowers the client to advocate for needed services that support social participation.
Performance Skills	C3. Refers to appropriate mental health professionals when the psychosocial needs of the client are beyond the practitioner's educational preparation or scope of practice.

**COMPETENCY D**

**Advances access to occupational therapy services and advocates for policies, programs, and products that promote health and participation in occupations by persons with low vision.**

**Client Outcome:** Clients experience improved access to services and programs that promote optimal health and participation in occupations.

Standard	Criteria
Knowledge	D1. Has knowledge of current and evolving practice developments, trends, and research that affect individuals with low vision.
Knowledge	D2. Has knowledge of federal, state, local, and organizational policies, regulations, qualifying criteria, and procedures that support or hinder completion of desired occupations (e.g., driving licensure requirements, Meals on Wheels, talking books).
Performance Skills	D3. Collaborates with key decision makers at the facility, local, state, or national levels to advocate for needed services, programs, or products that support health and participation.
Performance Skills	D4. Educates the public and professionals on the efficacy and scope of occupational therapy services for adults with low vision.
Performance Skills	D5. Contributes to the professional development of occupational therapy practitioners as specialists in low vision rehabilitation.