



AOTA APPROVED PROVIDER PROGRAM: CRITERIA & GUIDELINES

ORGANIZATIONAL CRITERIA

1. IDENTITY & STRUCTURE

Criteria: The Provider must have an identifiable continuing education entity or group with assigned responsibility for administering continuing education (CE) activities.

Guidelines:

Providers who are eligible to award the AOTA CEU will have a well-defined organizational structure in which the authority and responsibility for administering continuing education activities is assigned to a particular entity or group that can ensure that each of the AOTA CEU criteria are met. Individuals who are sole proprietors are also considered an entity.

Large, complex Providers whose continuing education is conducted by various parts of the organization may apply for AOTA Approved Provider status as a whole if all continuing education activities fall under the auspices of a single entity or group. The specific divisions, departments, colleges, or units that are responsible for various continuing education activities may choose to submit individual applications for approval.

The Provider's continuing education group or entity is clearly identified within the organizational structure. The activities of the group/entity must support the organization's mission. This support must be evidenced by the group/entity's own mission statement or similar document that defines the group/entity's responsibilities. The Provider and/or CE entity's mission or description must reflect a desire for excellence in providing continuing education.

The Provider and its staff must demonstrate high standards of professional conduct and refrain from unethical or illegal behavior such as discrimination; false advertising or claims; fraud; misrepresentation; and defamatory or disparaging remarks about consumers or learners.

Co-Sponsorship

AOTA Approved Provider status indicates that the Provider has been rigorously vetted as a CE provider who meets our high standards and offers CE relevant to occupational therapy. We do not allow Approved Providers to use their APP status to offer AOTA CEUs for other organizations.

If an Approved Provider is working with other organizations to create or plan content for a course or conference, it must be clear that the AOTA Approved Provider is a significant contributor to content development and is responsible for awarding AOTA CEUs for OT learners. Promotional materials, website information, and certificates of completion must indicate that the Provider is the entity that has AOTA APP status (e.g., AOTA APP logo, non-endorsement statement, AOTA CEUs, and Provider name and logo must be provided).

If an AOTA Approved Provider is contracted by another organization to offer the Approved Provider's course at their facility, the promotional materials and certificates of completion must identify the Approved Provider as the entity providing the course; the other organization can be identified as a hosting or supporting organization.

2. RESPONSIBILITY & CONTROL

Criteria: The Provider, through its continuing education entity or group, has a review process that ensures that the AOTA CEU criteria are met.

Guidelines: Internal policies should clearly show the continuing education entity has authority and responsibility to establish and implement review procedures that ensure continuing education activities meet current AOTA CEU criteria.

The Provider must designate one person from the organization as the AOTA CE Administrator who is responsible for ensuring that all AOTA CEU criteria are followed. The person designated by the Provider as the AOTA CE Administrator must be qualified by experience and training to ensure that all requirements and procedures are followed, including availability of complete course information to learners (including employees or other closed audiences) prior to registration.

Required Information in Promotional Materials

- Course Title, Date, and Location
- CE Provider Name and Contact Information
- Speakers/Authors
- Target Audience
- Educational Level (introductory, intermediate, or advanced)
- Prerequisites if applicable
- Learning Objectives/Outcomes
- Course Description and Outline/Agenda; Timed Agenda if Full Day
- Instructional Methods
- Cancellation Policies (learner and provider)
- AOTA CEUs/Contact Hours
- Registration Information, Including Special Needs Requests
- Course Completion Requirements
- AOTA APP logo and statement (indicate a placeholder until approved)
- AOTA Classification Codes

If the designated CE Administrator is not an OT practitioner, the Provider must identify a system for ensuring that an OT practitioner serves as a consultant to the Provider in all levels of program development, planning, and implementation for each activity to which the Provider assigns AOTA CEUs. The OT Consultant and the Provider must sign and date the OT Consultant Agreement (additional responsibilities can be added by the Provider) and submit to AOTA. (See agreement template at the end of this section which all Providers must sign.)

The OT Consultant must have a role in determining if a course is relevant to occupational therapy, evidence-based, and occupation-based as described in Criterion 9. If a continuing education activity does not meet this criteria establishing relevance to OT, the activity must not be awarded AOTA CEUs. There are a variety of ways to ensure that content is relevant to occupational therapy as indicated by the following strategies in the OT Consultant Agreement:

Methods/Strategies for Ensuring Relevance to OT

Each continuing education activity must address relevance to OT practice or education by using one or more of the following (or similar) methods/strategies:

- Require presenters to address relevance to OT practice or education within the presentation.
- Incorporate discussion groups, case examples, homework, or similar structured activities that facilitate incorporation of knowledge and skills in OT practice.
- Discuss or demonstrate the distinct/specific contribution of occupational therapy.
- Integrate a reflective component to the course that facilitates learners' ability to integrate material into their occupational therapy practice. This can be done as an activity within the course and/or by asking learners to identify how they will utilize the new knowledge and skills within their OT practice on the learner evaluation survey.

Note: All Providers (even those with OTs as the AOTA CE Administrator) must sign this agreement to indicate understanding of APP requirements related to relevance to OT. If you are an OT staff member serving in that role, check this box ___ and complete the signature line on the left only.

AOTA OT Consultant Agreement

The OT Consultant serves an important role in ensuring that continuing education activities awarding AOTA CEUs are specifically relevant to occupational therapy practice as outlined in Criteria and Guidelines #9. If a continuing education activity does not address the relevance of that content to occupational therapy, the activity must not be awarded AOTA CEUs.

The OT Consultant agrees to perform the following tasks for any learning activity that is awarded AOTA CEUs:

- Identify or assist in identifying at least 1 and up to 3 appropriate AOTA Classification Codes for each CE activity, indicating the relevance to occupational therapy.
- Review CE activities in terms of their relevance to OT and evidence-based foundation, including course description, learning outcomes, target audience, educational level, in-depth course outline, and any additional information needed to determine if the course should be awarded AOTA CEUs.
- Ensure that each learning activity addresses OT relevance by using one or more of the following methods:
 - Require presenters to address relevance to OT within the presentation.
 - Ask learners to identify how they will utilize the new knowledge and skills within their OT practice on the learner evaluation survey.
 - Incorporate discussion groups, case examples, homework, or similar structured activities that facilitate incorporating knowledge and skills into OT relevant practice.
 - Discuss or demonstrate the unique/specific contribution of occupational therapy.
 - Employ meaningful methods that facilitate reflection and integration of the material within the appropriate scope of OT practice.
- Be involved in planning and developing future courses that are targeted for OT practitioners.
- Review course evaluations and tests from OT practitioners to determine if each course is meeting the needs of OT learners, and provide recommendations for improvement to the provider.
- Assist in needs assessment methods, implementation, and review of findings as they pertain to OT practitioners.

Signature of Provider Representative

Signature of OT Consultant

Printed/Typed Name

Printed/Typed Name

Title

Title

Date

Date

Note: My electronic (typed) signature on this document constitutes my legal signature in accordance with 21 CFR Part 11: Electronic Records; Electronic Signatures Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

3. SYSTEM FOR AWARDING AOTA CEUS

Criteria: The Provider has a system in place to identify learners who meet requirements for satisfactory completion of a learning activity.

Guidelines:

- One (1) AOTA CEU is the equivalent of ten (10) contact (clock) hours, excluding meals, breaks, or other non-educational time. The smallest increment that can be assigned to a course is point zero five (.05) AOTA CEUs or .5 hours (30 minutes).
- Calculate CEUs using the following 2-step formula:
 1. Contact Hours =
$$\frac{\text{(total minutes for learning activity - meals, breaks, other non-educational time)}}{60 \text{ minutes}}$$
 2. CEUs =
$$\frac{\text{contact hours}}{10 \text{ hours}}$$
- Total CEUs awarded must be in full- or half-hour increments (e.g., 11.5 contact hours/1.15 CEUs, *not* 11.25 contact hours/1.125 CEUs).
- When CE activities are time controlled by the provider (e.g., live courses and webinars) an exact run time can be used and 5 minutes can be added per 10 test questions (or actual averaged time for completing test questions could be used). For self-paced written or online CE activities, the Provider must use a valid formula such as the Mergener Formula (<http://touchcalc.com/calculators/mergener>) or conduct a pilot study averaging the completion times of 5 to 10 learners. Pilot participants must be from the target audience and keep accurate records of time spent in the activity, including testing time (not course evaluation survey time). CEUs may be awarded to the pilot participants.
- Satisfactory completion requirements are established prior to the beginning of the activity.
- Requirements for performance levels should be based on the intended learning outcomes.
- When attendance is part of the satisfactory completion, attendance requirements should be established and documented through sign-in/out sheets or other methods for tracking attendance.
- Providers must have policies on cancellation by the Provider, cancellation by the learner, and complaint resolution. Learners must have access to the cancellation policies prior to registration.
- Learners must be informed of completion requirements prior to registration for the learning activity, and that only those who meet satisfactory completion requirements will earn AOTA CEUs.
- A designated official of the continuing education or training entity/group verifies and reports that each learner has or has not met the specified requirements for satisfactory completion and is or is not awarded AOTA CEU credit.
- When partial credit is awarded to learners who do not complete an entire activity, the Provider has a system to track, calculate, and award variable credit.
- The Provider has a process for calculating the AOTA CEU, which includes the provision that there be no retroactive granting of the AOTA CEU (i.e., before the Provider was approved).
- If units other than AOTA CEUs are awarded, the process will include a conversion formula or explanation, so that the equivalent AOTA CEU can be determined.
- Permanent individual records are established indicating the number of AOTA CEUs awarded to each learner.
- Only learners who successfully complete an activity are awarded AOTA CEUs.

- Certificates or letters of completion accurately reflect course and learner information, including Provider name, address, and/or website; course title, date, and location; learner name, speaker name (if one or two speakers); credits awarded (recommend using both AOTA CEUs and contact hours); name, title, and signature of Provider CE representative; and indication of AOTA APP approval status (recommend using APP logo, Provider number, and statement, but can use APP # or logo and statement—all provided after approval).

4. MAINTENANCE AND AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS

Criteria: The Provider maintains a complete, permanent (at least 7 years) record of each learner's participation and can provide a copy of that record on request.

Guidelines: The Provider is responsible for maintaining permanent records of all AOTA CEUs earned and must have a written policy on retaining and releasing such records that ensures the privacy and security of its learners' records. The Provider is expected to maintain a permanent record for each learner who successfully completes an activity and to record the number of AOTA CEUs earned. Cumulative records of all AOTA CEUs earned are to be available for a minimum of 7 years and are to be used as an official permanent record on request by the learner. Policies must include verification of learner identity when replacement records are requested and ensure that the learner has agreed to the release of any information.

The permanent record may be maintained by the Provider or a contracted service; however, the Provider bears primary responsibility for maintenance and availability of permanent records.

A permanent record is an official cumulative record or file issued by the Approved Provider that documents an individual's participation in the Approved Provider's continuing education activities. This individual record should include:

- Provider name and address
- Learner name
- Activity title
- Type of activity (e.g., workshop, online course, self-study)
- Start and completion date(s) of the activity
- Number of AOTA CEUs awarded
- Instructor(s) name(s) and credentials
- Assessment scores, if applicable

The permanent record may be a computer-generated, typed, or handwritten listing or may consist of a cumulative file of activity completion documents that can be reproduced at the learner's request.

Learners must be made aware of AOTA Approved Provider status (on Provider website and/or brochure), including the logo and Provider approval statement, prior to registration. Providers must provide each learner who completes an activity a certificate, transcript, or letter of completion in addition to, not in lieu of, permanent records. Approved Providers may also display the AOTA CEU logo on promotional materials and certificates.

5. DISCLOSURE

Criteria: The Provider discloses in advance of the activity the Provider's and any instructor's financial and non-financial interest in any product, instrument, device, service, or material discussed during the activity and the source of any compensation related to the presentation (if indicated).

Guidelines: Individuals who participate in a continuing education activity have the right to know of any financial and non-financial interest the Provider or an instructor may have in a product or service mentioned

during an activity. This information must be made available to the learners prior to the activity and may be conveyed through promotional materials, written handout, or an announcement prior to the commencement of the training. Not all programs require disclosure statements, only those in which there are a financial or non-financial interest.

The purpose of this policy is to allow the participants to form their own judgments about the program prior to the presentation with full disclosure of the facts. Having an interest in or affiliation with any corporate organization does not prevent an instructor from making a presentation, but the relationship must be made known in advance. AOTA does not view the existence of these interests or commitments as implying bias or decreasing the value of participation of CE activities.

Examples of situations requiring financial disclosure might include service as a paid or non-paid consultant or employee; receiving support from commercial sources for honoraria, travel, and lodging; receipt of financial support from commercial sources for research projects; major financial interests or stock holdings; and/or membership in a commercial supporter's speakers bureau.

Examples of situations requiring non-financial disclosure might include personal or professional relationships that might present a bias. All providers must have a written policy on disclosure. If a disclosure policy is not currently in place, one must be developed and submitted prior to approval. All speakers must be made aware of the policy.

A method of meeting the minimum requirements for disclosure (Criterion #5), copyright (Criterion #6), and professional conduct (Criterion #8) is to include the following in the speaker/instructor agreement:

Sample Speaker/Instructor Agreement Provisions

- Instructor will inform our organization and disclose any financial or non-financial interest in any product, instrument, device, service, or material discussed during their presentation and the source of any compensation prior to the start of his or her presentation.

- Instructor is compliant with copyright laws and has ownership or permission to use all materials used in conjunction with the presentation.

- Instructor will demonstrate high standards of professional conduct and not discriminate against learners on the basis of gender, age, socioeconomic or ethnic background, sexual orientation, or disability.

6. COPYRIGHT, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, & RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Criteria: The Provider has ownership or permission to use all materials used in conjunction with continuing education activities offered by the Provider. The Provider follows guidelines established by the Copyright Clearance Center.

Guideline: AOTA respects the ownership of materials by those who have developed them. The Provider must be able to demonstrate ownership of all materials used in conjunction with an activity or provide documentation of permission to use copyrighted works. The Provider must also be able to provide release of information forms/documentation when using materials that depict patients or clients and others not employed by the Provider in any type of visual medium.

Although each of the following components may not be indicated for your organization, a comprehensive copyright, intellectual property rights, and release of information policy and procedure might include the following information:

- Copyright policy
- Policy definitions

- Scope of copyright protection
- Disclosure and ownership of copyrightable works
- Copyright in specific works
- Copying of works owned by others
- Determination of ownership and policy interpretation
- Licensing and income sharing
- Use of name in copyright notices
- Trade and service marks
- Patents
- Proprietary information
- Assurance that presenters use copyrighted materials by giving credit and with permission

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, & EVALUATION

7. NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

Criteria: Program development and learning activities are planned in response to identified needs relevant to the practice of occupational therapy. The Provider defines the potential learners/target audience, educational level, and any prerequisites for each continuing education activity and includes this information in promotional efforts.

Guidelines: The process of needs assessment should identify who is affected by the need—that is, whom the potential learner should be. A separate needs assessment is not required for each continuing education activity; however, the rationale and planning for each activity should be the result of needs that have been identified and documented by some assessment method(s). Needs assessments should be documented, reviewed, and updated.

Examples of methods for needs assessment include focus groups, questionnaires and surveys, learners' comments and suggestions, records and reports, tests or self-assessments, literature review, demographic data, print media, observation, and work samples. In work settings, needs assessment may be done in a variety of ways: at staff meetings and recorded in minutes, by utilization review committees, by discipline (such as occupational therapy), or by program (such as stroke or spinal cord injury program). The focus for this application is on identifying education needs for occupational therapy.

Educational levels are categorized as one of the following:

- **Introductory**—Information is geared to practitioners with little or no knowledge of the subject matter. Focus is on providing general introductory information.
- **Intermediate**—Information is geared to practitioners with a general working knowledge of current practice trends and literature related to the subject matter. Focus is on increasing understanding and competent application of the subject matter.
- **Advanced**—Information is geared to practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter based on current theories and standards of practice as well as current literature and research. Focus is on recent advances and trends, and/or research applications.

The following resources may be helpful:

- Grant, J. (2002). Learning needs assessment: assessing the need. *British Medical Journal*, 324, 156–159. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC64520/>

- McCawley, P. (2009, August). *Methods for conducting an educational needs assessment*. Retrieved from <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edcomm/pdf/BUL/BUL0870.pdf>
- Sleezer, C, Russ-Eff, D., & Gupta, K., (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons. A preview of this book is available at http://www.amazon.com/Practical-Assessment-American-Training-Development/dp/1118457897/ref=la_B001JSC1JK_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1453225314&sr=1-1

8. PROGRAM PLANNING & INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

Criteria: Qualified personnel are involved in planning and conducting each learning activity.

Guidelines:

Decisions about activity planning, development, and implementation are made by individuals who:

- Are competent in the subject matter
- Understand the activity purpose and learning outcomes
- Have knowledge and skill in the instructional methods and learning processes being used
- Have knowledge and skill in the delivery format (e.g., workshop, online course, self-study) being used

Qualifications and credentials of personnel involved in planning, developing, and implementing CE must be evident in documentation maintained by the Provider, such as résumés, job descriptions, licenses, and certifications.

Program planning and instructional personnel must demonstrate high standards of professional conduct and refrain from unethical or illegal behavior such as discrimination; deceptive advertising or claims; fraud; or misrepresentation; and defamatory or disparaging remarks about consumers or learners.

It is a joint responsibility of the Provider, the planner(s), and the instructor(s) to ensure that established content for each continuing education activity is relevant and meaningful to occupational therapy and that the learning experience results in achievement of the learning outcomes. The CE Administrator or CE Coordinator has oversight responsibilities for each activity and confers with the OT Consultant to ensure that CE activities are relevant to occupational therapy and meet the needs of occupational therapy learners (see Criteria 2 and 9).

9. EVIDENCE AND RELEVANCE TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Criteria: Content is relevant to the profession of occupational therapy, falls within the scope of practice of occupational therapy, is consistent with AOTA official documents, reflects best practices, is supported by best available evidence, and can be reflected in the [AOTA Classification Codes for Continuing Education Activities](#).

Guidelines:

All continuing education activities must reflect best available evidence; fall within the scope of practice of occupational therapy,¹ including service delivery, education, management, or research; be consistent with AOTA official documents; and align with pertinent laws and regulations. If a continuing education activity does not fit the criteria and guidelines, AOTA CEUs cannot not be awarded.

Relevance to Occupational Therapy

AOTA CEUs are specifically designed to indicate that courses are relevant to occupational therapy. Providers must identify 1 to 3 AOTA Classification Codes² to indicate how the content is relevant to OT for each course.

The applicant must identify a system that is used to ensure that appropriate AOTA Classification Codes are assigned for each individual course as it is developed. An occupational therapy staff member in the position

of AOTA CE Administrator or CE Coordinator or an OT Consultant (inside or outside the organization) must be involved in this process. Information about each CE activity, including the AOTA Classification Codes, must be entered by the provider on their AOTA provider login page at least 2 weeks prior to the course start date. Classification Codes must also appear in course promotional material. A continuing education activity is relevant to OT when it falls into one or more of the following **types of courses** (note that course examples are not inclusive of all possibilities):

- 1. Professional issues courses** must be reflective of current, relevant occupational therapy practice—including management, education, or research—and support the learner’s role. *These courses fall under Category 3 (Professional Issues) in the AOTA Classification Codes.*

Acceptable topic examples: Interprofessional practice, primary care, documentation, leadership development, ethics, reimbursement, cultural sensitivity/awareness

Unacceptable topic examples: CPR, Microsoft Office training, project management certification, successful negotiating
- 2. General practice/health/medical related courses** that target multidisciplinary audiences must be supported by best available evidence and relevant to the roles of OT learners. General health or medical topics are acceptable for AOTA CEUs when they pertain to diagnoses or conditions encountered by OT practitioners and provide medical information, background, or context relevant to occupational therapy. *These courses generally fall under Category 1 of the AOTA Classification Codes (Domain of OT), but may include other Codes.*

Acceptable topic examples: Diagnosis-specific conferences or courses, anatomy and physiology, low vision, home modification/universal design

Unacceptable topic examples: Courses clearly and primarily focused on a target audience other than OT (e.g. dentistry, applied behavior analysis, nursing, dietetics)
- 3. Service delivery–focused courses** must be supported by best available evidence and consistent with evidence-based practice³ (EBP) and occupation-based practice⁴. Courses focused solely on exercise, manual therapies, or complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) interventions must be supported by scientific studies and demonstrate an explicit connection to occupation-based practice, which includes client ability to participate in desired activities of daily living in context. *These courses fall under Categories 1 (Domain of OT) and 2 (Occupational Therapy Process) of the AOTA Classification Codes.*

Acceptable topic examples: Interventions such as yoga or select physical agent modalities (PAMs) that are explicitly identified as preparatory techniques for occupation-based practice; constraint induced movement treatment; wheelchair assessment; incontinence management; Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM); pain management

Unacceptable topic examples: Primary course content that is clearly associated with another profession and does not have applicability to occupation-based practice (e.g. reflexology, dry needling, invasive pelvic floor assessment/intervention), PAMs courses that are not explicitly identified as preparatory techniques for occupation-based practice, interventions with evidence of harm or that contradict effectiveness, interventions that have been refuted by a profession in white papers or official documents

Note: See Criterion 8. Program Planning & Instructional Personnel for responsibilities related to ensuring relevance to OT and assigning the AOTA Classification Codes.

Definitions:

- 1. Occupational therapy**, as defined in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process (3rd ed.; AOTA, 2014), is “the therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) with individuals or groups for the purpose of enhancing or enabling participation in roles, habits, and routines in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings. Occupational therapy practitioners use their knowledge of the transactional relationship among the person, his or her engagement in valuable occupations, and the context to design occupation-based intervention plans that facilitate change or growth in client factors (body functions, body structures, values, beliefs, and spirituality) and skills (motor, process, and social interaction) needed for successful participation. Occupational therapy practitioners are concerned with the end result of participation and thus enable engagement through adaptations and modifications to the environment or objects within the environment when needed. Occupational therapy services are provided for habilitation, rehabilitation, and promotion of health and wellness for clients with disability- and non-disability-related needs. These services include acquisition and preservation of occupational identity for those who have or are at risk for developing an illness, injury, disease, disorder, condition, impairment, disability, activities limitation, or participation restriction” (p. S1).
- 2. [AOTA Classification Codes](#)** are a method to identify how the continuing education activity is relevant to OT. In order to assign AOTA CEUs to a CE activity, Providers must ensure that the content of each activity falls within at least one area of the AOTA Classification Codes for CE Activities. The codes consist of three categories: *Domain of OT*, *Occupational Therapy Process*, and *Professional Issues*. They are based in large part on the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework* (AOTA, 2014) and other official guidelines; position papers; statements; and standards established by the Association for practice, continuing competence, education, and ethics.
- 3. Evidence-based practice** “can be considered to be a combination of information from what we know from research, what we have learned from clinical wisdom and what we learned from information from the client and their family. This combination of information enables us to work together with clients and families to make the best use of knowledge” (Law, Pollack, & Stewart, 2004, p. 14).
- 4. Occupation-based practice:** For the purpose of this document, “the focus and outcome of occupational therapy are individuals’ engagement in meaningful occupations that support their participation in life situations. Occupational therapy practitioners conceptualize occupations as both a means and an end to therapy. That is, there is therapeutic value in occupational engagement as a change agent, and engagement in occupations is also the ultimate goal of therapy” (AOTA, 2011, p. 65).

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2011). The philosophical base of occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65(Suppl.), S65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2011.65S65>
- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (3rd ed.). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68(Suppl.1), S1–S48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2014.682006>
- Law, M., Pollack, N., & Stewart, D. (2004). Evidence-based occupational therapy: Concepts and strategies. *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 51(1), 14–22.

10. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: The Provider has clear, specific, and measurable written statements of intended learning outcomes for each continuing education activity that are based on identified needs and communicated to learners prior to registration and during the activity.

Guidelines: Learning outcomes, also referred to as *participant behavioral or performance-centered objectives*, are written statements that:

- Provide a framework for activity planning
- Provide the basis for selecting content and instructional strategies
- Are participant centered (e.g., “By the end of this program, learners will ...”) and describe to learners exactly what knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes they are expected to accomplish/demonstrate as a result of the learning activity
- Must relate back to the content areas and be relevant to OT practice
- Are the basis for providing periodic feedback, measuring progress, and doing a final assessment of learning
- Are realistic and appropriate in number for the planned activity (e.g., for conferences and multi-topic events/activities learning outcomes must be developed for each session)

Learning outcomes should be written in a way that reflects the instructional format and delivery method being used for a particular activity. For example, if learning outcomes are to be measured by a multiple choice exam, it would be inappropriate for the learning outcome to state that learners should be able to “analyze,” “discuss,” or “develop” anything because these cannot be measured by multiple choice. More appropriate outcomes will require learners to “list,” “identify,” “differentiate,” or “recognize,” for example.

Likewise, it would be inappropriate to state that learners will be able to do or complete an activity (e.g., make a particular device, write a treatment plan, develop a program) as part of the learning outcome unless the expected outcome will actually be performed and measured during the course of the activity or through some follow-up method.

Learning outcomes must be objective and measurable; terms such as “learn” or “understand” are not objective and measurable in the context of most CE activities and should be avoided.

Resources can be found on the Web related to developing appropriate learning outcomes, including Bloom’s Taxonomy or resources based on it. The following classic book may also be helpful:

- *Preparing Instructional Objectives: A Critical Tool in the Development of Effective Instruction* (3rd ed.) by Robert F. Mager, 1997. Atlanta, GA: The Center for Effective Performance.

11. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: Assessment procedures established during the planning of each activity are used to determine whether the learning outcomes have been achieved and are consistent with each activity’s instructional format and delivery method.

Guidelines: Assessment of learning outcomes refers to the specific process through which learners demonstrate the attainment of learning outcomes. In every activity for which AOTA CEUs are awarded, the Provider has the obligation to require learners to demonstrate that they have attained the learning outcomes.

How learners will demonstrate their attainment of the outcomes should be an integral part of the activity planning and include determination of the assessment procedure, its timing, and application. Learners should be advised in advance of registration what will be required of them.

In an activity in which individual proficiency is a goal, demonstration by each individual should be required. The assignment of individual scores would be appropriate. A pass/fail designation would also be appropriate. In an activity where individual proficiency is not a specific goal, group demonstrations (e.g., group activities, discussion) may be appropriate.

12. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Criteria: Instructional methods are congruent with the identified learning outcomes of each activity and are appropriate for the selected delivery format.

Guidelines: Instructional methods (e.g., lecture, group discussion, lab, case study) should appeal to the diverse learning styles of each audience. The delivery format (e.g., workshop, online course, self-study) should be appropriate for the given content and support the identified learning outcomes.

13. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Criteria: Learning facilities, resource or reference materials, and instructional aids and equipment are consistent with the purpose, design, and intended learning outcomes of the learning activity. The learning environment will accommodate teaching strategies for and the environmental comfort of the learner in a supportive and non-threatening atmosphere, as well as the accessibility needs of learners with disabilities.

Guidelines: The Provider ensures an instructional environment that enhances the learning process. Resource or reference materials and instructional aids and equipment are current, appropriate for the learning activity, and support the intended learning outcomes. The Provider attempts to create a fully accessible educational environment from which all learners can benefit and provides an opportunity for learners to identify special needs in advance of the activity.

A continuing education activity that is fully accessible addresses the needs not only of people with physical impairments, but also of those with sensory impairments (i.e., hearing, speech, vision), and emotional and learning disabilities. This includes accessible technology and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for distance learning. Promotional materials/website information must indicate contact information for special needs requests.

14. POST EVALUATION

Criteria: Each learning activity is evaluated.

Guidelines: Activity evaluation is a measurement of the quality or determination of the worth of the activity as a whole. In planning for an activity, the Provider ensures that an evaluation process is established to examine various aspects of the activity, including but not limited to:

- Needs assessment
- Instructional planning and execution
- Selecting and preparing instructors
- Program implementation
- The extent to which learning outcomes were addressed and achieved

Using only learner-reaction surveys (i.e., end-of-course evaluations that are not clearly based on the learning outcomes) will not yield the data needed for an adequate evaluation of learning experiences. Any surveys utilized as part of the activity evaluation should be designed to capture specific information that will allow the Provider to make continuous improvement in its offerings.

A “Summary Evaluation” is a compilation of the data collected at the end of a learning activity to determine its effectiveness and worth. Evaluations involve quantifying the value and quality of a learning activity. A list

of attendees' comments without other information is not a summary evaluation. Summary evaluations should include an analysis of the evaluation data and suggested changes if needed.

Written forms are the most commonly used method of course evaluation. CE evaluations should be an integral part of program planning, not an afterthought. We strongly recommend requiring that all participants in your learning activities submit their post-evaluations in order to receive their certificates; this would ensure that you receive maximum post-evaluation feedback.

CE evaluations should include:

- Demographic data about the learner, including profession, so that needs can be identified by profession
- Questions related to attainment of learning objectives/outcomes (asking learners to rate how well **each** learning outcome was achieved provides richer feedback than a single question)
- An opportunity to evaluate the faculty
- An opportunity to evaluate the resources provided
- An opportunity to evaluate the learning environment
- Future programming needs
- How the learner intends to use the knowledge and skills gained

The following books may be helpful:

- *How to Measure Training Results: A Practical Guide to Tracking the Six Key Indicators*, by Jack Phillips and Ron Stone, 2002. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels* (3rd ed.), by Donald L. Kirkpatrick and James D. Kirkpatrick, 2006. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

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