

Approved Provider Program



Guidelines for the AOTA Approved Provider Professional Development Activity Application

The following guidelines may be used to guide AOTA Approved Providers through the online professional development (PD) activity application process.

- The PD Activity Approval Application verifies that PD activities are relevant to the profession of occupational therapy, fall within the scope of practice of occupational therapy, are consistent with AOTA official documents, reflect best practices, are occupation centered, and are evidence-informed.
- Submitted evidence must provide examples of compliance with criteria.
- All PD activities that award AOTA continuing education units (CEUs) must be approved prior to delivery of the activity.
- After approval, the provider may offer the PD activity on multiple occasions in the approved format(s) for a period of 5 years. After 5 years the provider must discontinue assigning AOTA CEUs to the PD activity and re-apply for approval to demonstrate currency.

Application Guidelines

Collaborators

The AOTA Approved Provider may invite collaborators to assist with completion of the PD activity application. This may be useful if the developer and/or presenter for the PD activity is not the AOTA CE Administrator. It may also be helpful if the AOTA CE administrator does not act as the occupational therapy consultant.

Expected Length of the PD Activity

For distance learning— independent or blended/hybrid activities, the length of the activity should correspond with the number of contact hours/CEUs assigned to the activity.

Prospective Date of the PD Activity

Applicants should report the date they expect to launch the PD activity with AOTA CEUs assigned. Once approved, the PD activity will be approved for 5 years from that date.

Delivery Format(s)

Applicants should check all delivery formats that the PD activity will be presented in over the 5-year approval period.

Has this PD activity been approved by the AOTA Approved Provider Program under the 2020 APP criteria and guidelines?

Applicants who are submitting an activity that has been approved by the APP within the last 5 years will not be required to complete the PD activity application in its entirety, and **no application fee will be applied**. Applicants will

identify the previous AOTA APP **approval identification number and date approved**, and sign an attestation that the PD activity has not been altered or changed in any way.

Application Sections

SECTION 1. RELEVANCE TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Criteria: Content is relevant to the profession of occupational therapy, falls within the [scope of practice](#) of occupational therapy, and is consistent with AOTA [official documents](#) such as the [Occupational Therapy Practice Framework](#).

Guidelines: PD activities may focus on one of the following 3 categories:

Occupational Therapy Service Delivery: The process of service delivery is occupation-based and applied within the profession's domain to support the client's health and participation as delineated in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework.

- PD activities may focus on:
 - **Evaluation:** Provides an understanding of the client's occupational history and experiences and analysis of occupational performance.
 - **Intervention:** The use of occupations and activities, preparatory methods and tasks, education and training, advocacy, and group interventions to facilitate engagement in occupations to promote health and participation.
 - **Outcomes:** Determinants of success in reaching the desired end result of the occupational therapy process. Outcome assessment information is used to plan future actions with the client and to evaluate the service program.
- Note: Courses focused solely on preparatory methods and tasks such as exercise, manual therapies, or complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) interventions must demonstrate an explicit connection to occupation-focused practice, which includes client ability to participate in desired activities of daily living in context.

Professional Issues: Topics are acceptable for AOTA CEUs when they pertain to the practice of occupational therapy.

- PD activities may focus on:
 - **Administration & Management:** Planning, organizing, controlling, and directing the activities of an organization to achieve desired outcomes in occupation-based practice.
 - **Legal, Legislative, Regulatory, & Reimbursement Issues:** Coding and reimbursement, documentation, licensure, and scope issues related to occupational therapy practice.
 - **OT Education:** Developing, delivering, or administering occupational therapy education and continuing professional development, including experiential components of occupational therapy education programs.
 - **OT Research:** Conducting clinical and academic activities that (a) support scientific procedures and processes to gather data, and (b) generate knowledge that enhances the profession and clinical practice of occupational therapy.
 - **Supervision:** Ensuring the safe and effective delivery of occupational therapy services and fostering professional competence and development.
 - **Contemporary Issues and Trends:** Considering the potential role of occupation in addressing societal issues.

Foundational Knowledge: 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 practice.

- PD activities may focus on:
 - **Human Body, Development, and Behavior:** Diagnoses & conditions, biological and physical sciences, neurosciences, kinesiology, biomechanics, human development, behavior, and social sciences needed for occupational therapy service delivery.

- **Sociocultural, Socioeconomic, Diversity Factors, and Lifestyle Choices:** The impact of sociocultural, socioeconomic, and diversity factors, as well as lifestyle choices in contemporary society to meet the occupational needs of persons, groups, and populations.
- **Social Determinants of Health:** Determinants of health for persons, groups, and populations with or at risk for disabilities and chronic health conditions.
- **OT History, Philosophical Base, Theory, and Sociopolitical Climate:** Occupational therapy history, philosophical base, theory, and sociopolitical climate and their importance in meeting society's current and future occupational needs as well as how these factors influence and are influenced by practice.

Note: Each PD activity in the categories of Professional Issues and Foundational Knowledge must address specific relevance to OT practice or education using strategies such as, but not limited to:

- Address relevance to OT practice and/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 on the learner evaluation survey how they will utilize the new knowledge and skills within their OT practice.

For the following questions in Section 1 it is important that the applicant provide specific details regarding how and/or why the PD activity meets the criteria (rather than stating that the PD activity does meet criteria).

1.1 Identify the category/categories of the PD activity.

The answer to 1.1 will electronically determine which questions (1.2–1.8) need to be addressed. The categories under the new 2020 approved provider guidelines are OT Service Delivery, Professional Issues, and Foundational Knowledge. Applicants should use the definitions for each category, located above, to assist in choosing all that apply.

1.1a Does the activity focus on preparatory methods?

The answer to 1.1a will electronically determine whether 1.4 needs to be addressed. PD activities must fall within the scope of occupational therapy. If a PD activity focuses primarily on preparatory methods such as exercise, manual therapies, or complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) interventions, it demonstrate an explicit connection to occupation-focused practice, which includes but is not limited to client ability to participate in desired activities of daily living in context.

1.2 Demonstrate how the proposed PD activity is occupation based and applied within the profession's domain to support the client's health and participation.

Applicants should demonstrate the PD activity occupation as a means or as an outcome. PD activities in the OT Service Delivery category must be within the scope of OT practice. AOTA recognizes the foundations of a profession's [scope of practice](#) are (a) inclusion in the educational curriculum, (b) a history of application in practice, and (c) language in the legally defined scope of practice in the state licensure law.

1.3 Describe how the proposed PD activity addresses occupation-based assessment, intervention, and/or outcomes.

Describe how the PD activity uses performance analysis to evaluate and or provide intervention that enhances the quality of a person's occupational performance. Content focus and/or strategies should demonstrate the use of task analyses, for example, to evaluate the underlying factors (e.g., person, environment, context) as they may relate to issues with occupational performance (Fisher, 2013).

1.4 Demonstrate an explicit connection between the preparatory methods and occupation-proximal (immediate) practice, which includes client ability to participate in desired occupations in context.

Applicants who have determined that the focus of the PD activity is on preparatory methods in 1.1a will describe how the PD activity connects the preparatory method to having occupation as the proximal/immediate focus of the evaluation or the "...proximal intent of the intervention" (Fisher, 2013, p. 167).

1.5 and 1.7 Demonstrate how the proposed PD activity meets the requirements of Foundational Knowledge or Professional Issues that pertain to the practice of occupational therapy.

Applicants who have determined the PD activity falls within the category of Foundational Knowledge (e.g., anatomy) or Professional Issues (e.g., policy) provide information related to how the activity is aligned with OT practice.

1.6 and 1.8 Identify strategies that the proposed PD activity will use to explicitly link Foundational Knowledge or Professional Issues to OT practice and/or education.

Applicants who have determined the PD activity falls within the category of Foundational Knowledge (e.g., anatomy) or professional issues (e.g., policy) describe the specific strategies (e.g., case study, videos) within the course, which assist the learner in making connections to OT practice.

SECTION 2. EVIDENCE

Criteria: Where applicable, content included in PD activities is evidence informed and reflects best practice. All PD activities must be supported by the most current literature.

Guidelines

- Evidence-informed practice is based on integrating critically appraised research (e.g., critically appraised papers [CAPS], critically appraised topics [CATS], systematic reviews) results with the practitioner's clinical expertise, and the client's preferences, beliefs, and values. To promote evidence-informed practice, AOTA has developed a number of resources to help members find and utilize clinically relevant literature to respond to both their clients' needs and external demands for information from the scientific community.
- In order to award AOTA CEUs, PD activities must reflect best available evidence.
- Interventions refuted by a professional association and/or regulatory agency in white papers or official documents cannot be awarded AOTA CEUs.
- Occupational therapy is a science-driven profession that applies the most up-to-date research to service delivery.

For the following questions in Section 2 it is important that the applicant provide specific details regarding *how and/or why* the PD activity meets the criteria (*rather than stating that the PD activity does meet criteria*).

2.1 Provide the abstracts or articles for 3 peer-reviewed documents (e.g., journal articles, [practice guidelines](#), CAPs or CATs) OR provide the activity's entire reference list supporting that the PD activity reflects evidence-informed practice.

Applicants have several choices for meeting the criteria for 2.1 and may submit the abstracts OR entire article of 3 peer-reviewed documents OR submit a complete reference list for the PD activity. The provider may consider uploading the 3 publications with the highest level of evidence from the reference list. Please note the upload may be in the form of an abstract. Levels of evidence may be found in the [AOTA EBP Toolkit](#).

2.2 Provide a statement on the strength ([level of evidence](#)) of the information provided in 2.1 and provide a rationale for how the evidence meets industry acceptable standards, reflects best practice, and supports the PD activity.

The applicant must provide evidence as it directly relates to the PD activity and its proximal occupation focus. The evidence must not be refuted; resources, such as AOTA's [Choosing Wisely materials](#), may be useful. If the applicant uploads the entire PD activity's reference list, the level of evidence for a minimum of 3 of the references must be provided. Provide a rationale for the use of, for example, examples that are greater than 10-15 years old.

SECTION 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: The provider has clear, specific, and measurable written statements of intended learning outcomes for each PD activity that are based on identified needs..

Guidelines

- Learning outcomes are statements that specify what participants will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate when they have completed a PD activity.

- Learning outcomes specify an action by the student that is observable, measurable, and demonstrable.
- Learning outcomes provide the basis for providing periodic feedback, measuring progress, and conducting a final assessment of learning.
- Learning outcomes are realistic and appropriate in number for the planned activity.
- Learning outcomes should reflect the level of PD activity. For example, a PD activity at the intermediate or advanced level should NOT have learning objectives that begin with the verb “understand.” At this level participants should be applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Note: Resources can be found on the web related to developing appropriate learning outcomes, including Bloom’s Taxonomy or resources based on it. The following book may also be helpful: *Gronlund’s Writing Instructional Objectives* (8th ed.) by Norman E. Gronlund and Susan Brookhart (2008), Pearson publishing

For the following questions in Section 3 it is important that the applicant provide specific details regarding *how and/or why* the PD activity meets the criteria (*rather than stating that the PD activity does meet criteria*).

3.1 Provide learning outcomes for the PD activity that reflect course content, and are observable and measurable.

The applicant provides learning outcomes for the PD activity that specify what the learner will know and be able to do or demonstrate after satisfactory completion of the learning activity. The learning outcomes should be written with verbs, for example, from Bloom’s Taxonomy and be measurable. Learning outcomes should be written to afford the learner the opportunity to demonstrate achievement. For example, if the participant will achieve the outcome if the learner defines a concept, the learner must have the opportunity to, for example, verbally *define* the concept during the course (or as another example, provide a free text *definition* of the concept).

3.2 Describe why the learning outcomes for the PD activity are realistic and appropriate in number for the planned activity.

The applicant should provide the relationship between the length of the PD activity (e.g., 1 hour) and the number of learning outcomes.

3.3 Describe why the learning outcomes for the PD activity reflect the education level of PD activity (i.e., beginner, intermediate, or advanced).

The applicant should identify the educational level of the course, and describe why the learning outcomes are congruent with that educational level. The use of the [Bloom’s Taxonomy graphic](#) may be helpful to determine action verbs that are suitable for the beginner level (e.g., define, state), intermediate level (e.g., apply, compare/contrast), and/or advanced level (e.g., evaluate, create).

SECTION 4. PUBLICATIONS

Criteria: All publications must accurately reflect the PD activities offered by the provider.

Guidelines

- The provider ensures all publications (including web postings) accurately reflect the learning activity and include at a minimum:
 - Course Title, Date, and Location
 - PD Provider Name and Contact Information
 - Speakers/Authors
 - Target Audience
 - Educational Level (introductory, intermediate, or advanced)
 - Prerequisites if applicable *
 - Learning Objectives
 - Course Description
 - Course Outline and/or Time-Ordered Agenda
 - Instructional Methods *

- Cancellation Policies (learner and provider)
- AOTA CEUs/Contact Hours
- Registration Information, Including Special Needs Requests
- Course Completion Requirements *
- AOTA APP logo and imprimatur and statement (indicate a placeholder until approved)

(*Not required for conferences)

- A PD 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.

4.1 Provide the web publication link or upload the proposed PD activity publications (e.g., brochure) that demonstrates all of the required elements.

The applicant should upload marketing materials and/or website marketing for review. All components of the above list must be present on the marketing materials and/or website and visible before the participant registers for and/or enrolls in the PD activity. While it is not necessary to detail the organization's special needs policies in promotional materials, it should be clear who to contact to make special needs/accessibility requests.