



GUIDELINES FOR PRACTITIONER AND SUPERVISOR

STAGE 2

SUPERVISED PRACTICE

Glossary

AHPRA – Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

OTBA – Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

OTC – Occupational Therapy Council (Australia & New Zealand) Ltd

OQAC – Overseas Qualification Assessment Committee

Note: All documents, including completed examples and templates to download, which relate to the Stage 2 period of supervised practice are in the “forms” section of the OTC website. The step-by-step guidelines should be used to ensure the process leading to general registration is as seamless as possible. If clarification is required, the practitioner or supervisor should contact the OTC’s executive officer.

What is Supervised Practice?

After successful completion of the Stage 1 desktop assessment, the practitioner is required to complete a period of supervised practice in Australia. This can be undertaken in a paid or voluntary capacity and must be monitored by a registered occupational therapist.

The purpose of the period of supervised practice is to ensure an overseas-trained practitioner is competent to practise safely and independently in the Australian environment.

This period of supervised practice is required to ensure the practitioner can apply an occupational therapy process to:

- demonstrate their capacity to perform safely and competently as an occupational therapist within the Australian context;
- meet the minimum level of competence across all levels of Australian competency standards, as determined by the Australian Minimum Competency Standards for New Graduate Occupational Therapists (2010);
- develop knowledge and skills relevant to contemporary occupational therapy practice in Australia;
- receive peer review of their practice skills and knowledge that can contribute to further learning.

Upon successful completion of the Stage 1 desktop assessment, the practitioner has two years in which to commence the Stage 2 period of supervised practice.

The practitioner must submit a Stage 2 Supervision Agreement to the OTC for approval *prior* to commencing supervised practice. Once the Supervision Agreement has been approved by the OTC and the OTBA, and

the practitioner has been granted limited registration by the AHPRA, the practitioner is able to commence the period of supervised practice in the approved position.

What are the Requirements to be a Supervisor?

The role of a supervisor is to provide feedback to the practitioner on their practice to facilitate their reflection on practice, and to assist in the application of skills to the Australian context.

A supervisor acceptable to the OTC must meet the following criteria:

- have current general unconditional registration;
- have at least two years of occupational therapy experience and practice in Australia; *refer below to non-OT secondary supervisors;
- preferably have the same principal place of employment as the practitioner to allow supervision and support as required;
- should not be supervising more than three (3) practitioners on behalf of the OTBA or OTC at any given time.

It is recommended the practitioner nominates a secondary supervisor (on the supervision agreement) for situations where the primary supervisor may not be available to provide supervision (i.e. annual leave, emergency leave, resignation). A second supervisor may also be appropriate when the primary supervisor fails to meet the supervisor requirements of the OTC, and needs to meet the standards above.

Non-OT Secondary Supervisors

In exceptional circumstances when practitioners are undertaking the periods of supervised practice in remote or rural locations for example, the OTC will give consideration to approve a secondary on-site supervisor who is not a registered occupational therapist but does have current registration with AHPRA in another field. Final approval for a non-OT supervisor needs to be given by the OTBA.

The purpose of the secondary supervisor is to provide on-site assistance and to liaise directly with the primary supervisor regarding the practitioner's progress, and **cannot** assume this role until approval has been given by the OTBA.

It is not the role of the secondary non-occupational therapist supervisor to provide the weekly face-to-face supervision requirements.

All supervisors must maintain current registration with the OTBA (or other relevant registration board) for the duration of the supervised practice.

What is a Supervised Practice Plan?

A supervised practice plan is developed by the practitioner and supervisor and submitted to OTC within **two weeks** of commencing the period of supervised practice, having been granted limited registration. It must address key criteria of the occupational therapy process as outlined in the template and examples (available in "forms" section of OTC website) including goal-setting, action and measurement/evaluation of those goals. The supervised practice plan identifies and documents the learning goals and activities required to develop skills and knowledge to practise safely and competently as an occupational therapist in Australia.

The plan must be appropriate to the practitioner's current level of competency. Goals and activities should relate to the Australian Minimum Competency Standards for New Graduate Occupational Therapists (2010) and any specific skills or knowledge included in the job description for the post held.

There must be a learning goal identifying activities that address the practitioner's cultural awareness. The plan must also specify the supervisor will observe the practitioner applying the occupational therapy process in their practice context.

There should be alignment with the occupational therapy process of assessment, goal-setting, intervention and evaluation.

How is the Supervised Practice Plan Developed?

The supervised practice plan must be completed in the preferred OTC format. Alternative formats will not be accepted. Examples of the supervised practice plan and the OTC's Stage 2 application form are in the "forms" section of the OTC website. The example documents are for guidance only.

It is the responsibility of the practitioner to notify the OTC if the supervised practice plan will not be submitted within two weeks of commencement as the start of the period of supervised practice can only be backdated TWO WEEKS from the date the plan is received.

If the practitioner does not provide the supervised practice plan within two (2) weeks of commencing in the position, the OTC executive officer will notify AHPRA of non-compliance with reporting requirements as this may be a breach of the limited registration conditions.

Support for developing a Supervised Practice Plan

The OTC employs a professional advisor with responsibility for the assessment of overseas-qualified practitioners. The professional advisor is available to assist the practitioner and supervisor to develop a suitable plan. This may include advice regarding learning activities, supervision requirements, development of professional competencies and use of the supervised practice plan as a competency tool.

Please contact the OTC directly via telephone (08 9368 2655) or email (admin@otcouncil.com.au) to request assistance from the professional advisor.

Approval to practise in more than one organisation

Approval may be given by the OTC for the practitioner to undertake supervised practice in more than one organisation. In this instance, a supervised practice plan must be submitted to the OTC and approved for each workplace. The OTC also requires a Stage 2 supervision agreement for all supervisors prior to commencement in the roles.

What is an Orientation to Australian Healthcare System?

AHPRA requires all overseas-qualified practitioners to include evidence of orientation to the Australian Healthcare system as part of the period of supervised practice. Practitioners are required to complete the "Orientation to Australian Healthcare System – Appendix 5 available on the OTBA website (www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au) and return this form to AHPRA within two (2) weeks of commencing the period of supervised practice. A copy of the document should also accompany the practitioner's OTC Stage 2 application submitted to the OTC within two weeks of commencing in the position.

What Type of Supervision is Required?

As a minimum, it is expected the supervisor provides one hour of weekly face-to-face supervision with the practitioner for the first six weeks to support the implementation of the supervised practice plan and to observe practice to assess competence. The frequency of supervision could then be modified to at least fortnightly until the completion of the supervised practice period.

If there is any difficulty in providing this type of supervision, the practitioner and supervisor can apply for special provisions in the supervised practice plan.

Scenario 1 – A practitioner working on a full-time basis in one location with the supervisor on site requires face-to-face supervision for one hour per week for the first six weeks as a minimum.

Scenario 2 – A practitioner working on a part-time basis in one location with the supervisor on site requires face-to-face supervision for one hour per week for the first six weeks as a minimum. If this is not feasible, then 30 minutes face-to-face supervision per week for 12 weeks will need to be provided.

Scenario 3 – A practitioner working in two different locations for different agencies with different supervisors on site requires face-to-face supervision for one hour per week in EACH location for the first six weeks as a minimum.

Practitioners are required to maintain a signed log of supervision received. This document should be submitted with the midway report and the final report at the conclusion of the period of supervised practice.

What is the Role of the Supervisor?

The role of the supervisor is to ensure a practitioner, upon completion of a period of supervised practice, is competent to practise safely and independently within the Australian environment. To reach this goal, the supervisor may:

- assist the practitioner to develop the supervised practice plan, identifying learning objectives and learning activities, and areas for development throughout the period of supervised practice;
- support the practitioner in occupational therapy practice to ensure development of competence across all areas;
- direct the practitioner to relevant resources in order to develop competence;
- demonstrate occupational therapy practice skills to the practitioner within the Australian healthcare context;
- review intervention plans and documentation;
- observe the practitioner in the provision of occupational therapy services;
- provide feedback through regular supervision sessions;
- sign off on the progress report;
- complete the Stage 2 OTC final report and the Stage 2 OTBA supervisor's report at the conclusion of the period of supervised practice.

If two supervisors have been nominated and approved for the period of supervised practice, the supervisors must confer regarding the practitioner's progress during the period of supervised practice, and prior to the completion of any assessment report.

What is the Duration of Supervision Practice?

The period of supervised practice will be for a MINIMUM of three months full-time equivalent based on a minimum of 30 hours per week.

The purpose of the period of supervised practice is to ensure an overseas-qualified practitioner is competent and confident to practise safely and independently in the Australian environment. To ensure these primary components are fulfilled, there is need for continuity with the period of supervised practice, and practitioners should not consider locum positions unless they are for a MINIMUM period of three months full-time equivalent. Anything less will not be credited to the six-month period required. This minimum period is to ensure there is sufficient continuity for a supervisor and ultimately the OQAC to be satisfied a practitioner is safe and competent to practise in Australia.

For example: you accept a position with an employer for three months part-time (no less than 15 hours per week). To comply with the conditions imposed on your registration, all relevant documentation needs to be provided for approval of this position (ie Stage 2 supervision agreement, Stage 2 application and Stage 2 supervised practice plan, etc.) however upon completion of the contract, and following submission to the OTC of a final report, and supervision log, you will need to find a position that provides either:

- six months full-time equivalent, or
- two part-time concurrent positions no less than 15 hours per week each for six months; or

- one part-time position no less than 15 hours per week for 12 months.

The maximum duration of supervised practice should be 12 months unless extensions are requested by the practitioner and endorsed by the supervisor to develop certain aspects of the learning goals. Both the supervisor and practitioner must maintain current registration with AHPRA during the period of supervised practice.

Leave of Absence

Practitioners must inform the OTC via email of any absence from the workplace for greater than one week to ensure this absence is made up at the end of the period of supervised practice.

What Happens if there is a Change of Supervisor?

In the situation where a change of supervisor (in the same place of employment) occurs during the period of supervised practice, the practitioner will be required to provide a new supervision agreement to the OTC **prior to the change occurring**. The practitioner can continue with their existing supervised practice plan, reviewed with the new supervisor. The first supervisor will be required to provide a progress report prior to handover to another approved supervisor. The duration of supervised practice will depend on the achievement of competencies within the supervised practice plan.

What Happens if there is a Change of Employment Position?

Where a change in place of employment occurs during the period of supervised practice, the practitioner will be required to submit a new supervision agreement to the OTC for approval, **prior to commencement of the new position**. The practitioner must then submit a new Stage 2 application and supervised practice prepared in conjunction with the new supervisor, **within two weeks of commencing the new position**. The first supervisor will be required to provide a progress report and supervision log to the OTC prior to leaving the position.

A final report for the first position, signed by the practitioner and supervisor, needs to be forwarded to the OTC at the conclusion of the first position.

The practitioner will be required to undertake at least three months of supervised practice in their new supervised practice position in the event of a change of employment, but can count their previous hours within the full number of hours completed in supervised practice.

Practitioners are also required to advise AHPRA via email, and complete the AHPRA "ACCL-96 Request for change in circumstances" form and return it to AHPRA.

Can the Practitioner Provide Supervision to Others Whilst on Supervised Practice?

During the period of supervision, it is not appropriate for the practitioner to have supervisory responsibilities of other occupational therapy staff or students for the first six (6) weeks of the supervised practice. Following this period and depending on the:

- competence of the practitioner;
- prior supervisory experience of the practitioner;
- prior knowledge and experience in the field of practice;

supervision of occupational therapy staff and students may be added to the practitioner's duties.

If special provisions are needed for supervision responsibility, application must be made to the OTC when submitting the supervision agreement.

If at a later time, during the period of supervised practice, it becomes known that supervision of others will be required by the practitioner, approval for this to occur needs to be sought from the OTC. The supervisor will need to email the OTC requesting this amendment to the supervised practice plan.

What is a Midway Report?

At the midway stage of the period of supervised practice, the practitioner is required to send the completed midway report and supervision log to the OTC.

The midway report requires the practitioner to reflect on their progress towards achieving their approved goals. The report is to be discussed with, approved and co-signed by their supervisor.

The midway report may draw on feedback and information provided by other staff and clients. It may also include comment on areas for further development and additional goals to address these areas.

The midway report is to be accompanied by the supervision log which provides evidence of regular meetings and topics discussed.

The midway report and related documentation must be completed in the OTC format which is available in the "forms" section of the OTC website. Alternative formats will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure they submit the midway report and supervision log at the required time. If there is an expected delay in submitting this assessment, the practitioner must notify the OTC via email (admin@otcouncil.com.au) **prior** to the due date for the assessment.

If the practitioner is completing the period of supervised practice in more than one place of employment, the practitioner must complete a midway report for each location and the supervisor at each location must sign off on the midway report and supervision log based on their experience with the practitioner.

If two supervisors have been nominated for the period of supervised practice, the supervisors must confer regarding the practitioner's progress prior to approving and signing the midway report.

All reports are to be signed by the practitioner and supervisor/s as an accurate and agreed record of the development and experiences of the practitioner during the period of supervised practice.

The midway report will be assessed by members of the OQAC and if it is considered the practitioner is competent to practise at this stage, the practitioner will be invited to submit the OTC Stage 2 final report and the OTBA Stage 2 supervisor's report for final assessment.

When is Supervised Practice Completed?

In order for the period of supervised practice to be considered completed successfully:

- the practitioner must have completed a MINIMUM of three months full-time equivalent practice;
- the supervisor must have assessed the practitioner as competent in all identified areas on the supervised practice plan.

If competence at the midway stage has not been met, the practitioner will continue with the period of supervised practice for the six months (based on full-time equivalent) and submit the final reports at that stage.

The OTC Stage 2 final report uses the same report as the midway report with an additional column for final self-reflection which allows for continuum of reflection on practice. The practitioner must discuss their progress with their supervisor and complete the report which must be signed by the supervisor and practitioner. In addition, the supervisor must complete the OTBA's supervisor's report.

The practitioner will send the final reports and supervision log to the OTC for review. Upon successful assessment by the OTC, a Certificate of Practical Completion will be issued, and the OTC will advise AHPRA of the certificate number.

The practitioner will need to provide a certified copy of the Certificate of Practical Completion to AHPRA with the required documentation to gain general registration.

If the supervisor has not assessed the practitioner as competent to practise independently within six months (based on full-time equivalent) of commencing supervised practice, the professional advisor responsible for the assessment of overseas-qualified practitioners will contact the supervisor and practitioner to review the supervised practice plan, and provide support.

In cases where the practitioner has not achieved the required level of competence within 12 months, the professional advisor will contact the practitioner and supervisor regarding further options, including discontinuing supervised practice.

Submission of documentation

The OTC will accept all reporting documents, signed by the practitioner and supervisor, emailed in pdf format. Any email communication with the OTC relating to reporting documents must also include the supervisor as a recipient of the documentation.

What is Unsatisfactory Performance?

The supervisor or the practitioner may contact the OTC at any time if the practitioner is not performing satisfactorily. The OTC executive officer will refer the supervisor and practitioner to the professional advisor for support and advice regarding the supervised practice position and possible revision of the supervised practice plan, which should be revised to include the reasons for poor performance, and measures to address these.

If poor performance continues with subsequent withdrawal of the supervised practice position, the supervisor must inform the OTC in writing. The OTC executive officer will refer the matter to the OTC for decision regarding further supervised practice. The professional advisor will provide support and advice to the practitioner regarding the reasons for poor performance.

In the case of notifiable conduct, the OTC executive officer and professional advisor will advise the supervisor to make notification to AHPRA in compliance with the mandatory requirement set out in the legislation. Refer to the OTBA website (www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au) for information regarding notifiable conduct. In addition, the OTC executive officer and/or professional advisor may advise AHPRA directly.

What is Non-Compliance?

It is the responsibility of the practitioner to submit all appropriate reports to the OTC, including the supervised practice plan, progress reports and notification of changes of supervisor and employment. If there is non-compliance with supervised practice or reporting responsibilities, the OTC executive officer will liaise with the practitioner and supervisor. If the practitioner or supervisor is experiencing difficulty with either the supervised practice plan or reporting, the OTC executive officer will refer them to the professional advisor for support and assistance.

Should non-compliance continue, the OTC executive officer will refer the matter to the OTC. The OTC is able to defer, rearrange or modify the supervised practice plan, through the involvement of the professional advisor. Continued non-compliance may result in withdrawal of the supervised practice position, with notification sent to the OTBA.

The practitioner may appeal against this decision via the OTC Appeals process.

REFERENCES

Occupational Therapy Australia. (2010). *Australian Minimum Competency Standards for New Graduate Occupational Therapists (ACSOT) 2010*. Occupational Therapy Board of Australia. (2012). *Supervision Guidelines for Occupational Therapy*.