



# SCOT

Saskatchewan College of  
Occupational Therapists

## **Continuing Competency Program Information and Purpose: Definitions, Purpose, Assumptions and Guiding Principles**

The purpose of the CCP is to substantiate that SCOT members are meeting essential professional competencies and engaging in professional development using a formalized process.

As per the SCOT Regulatory Bylaws, practicing members who hold a current full practicing license or restricted practicing license are required to participate in the continuing competency program (CCP) as part of their license renewal process.

Prior to the end of the licensing year, members must submit a copy of their completed professional development (annual) learning plan and outcomes, as part of the licence renewal process, from that current licensing year.

Members must submit their SCOT professional development plan (annual learning plan) for the upcoming licensing year, as part of the licence renewal process, to renew their license.

Members must participate in the audit process of the CCP if selected, unless an exemption of participation has been approved by council.

### **Introduction:**

The provincial government has given the Saskatchewan College of Occupational Therapists (SCOT) the responsibility to regulate the practice of occupational therapy in Saskatchewan and requires that it do so in the public's best interest. SCOT must ensure that therapists demonstrate established competencies for safe, ethical, and effective practice:

- when they enter practice, and
- that they maintain these competencies throughout their career.

A continuing competency program supports the latter function.

Regulatory organizations provincially, nationally and internationally recognize that annual licensing requirements such as number of practice hours or accumulation of continuing education credits do not sufficiently demonstrate competency alone. Most

regulatory organizations have developed or revised continuing competency programs or quality assurance programs to better demonstrate accountability to the public.

This document identifies the framework for SCOT's continuing competency program. It does not describe the actual program but establishes how on-going decisions are made about the components and processes used in the program.

## **Definitions:**

**Competency** means that the therapist demonstrates the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours described in the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (2021)*<sup>1</sup>.

**Continuing competency** refers to a therapist's ongoing ability to practice safely, ethically, and effectively within their defined scope of occupational therapy practice. The therapist will make decisions using critical thinking, reflection and reasoning related to current evidence, keeping in accordance with the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (referred to hereafter as the Competencies)*.

A **Continuing Competency Program** is a systematic set of processes, tools and methods whereby SCOT supports therapists in maintaining or enhancing competency and periodically confirms that a therapist is maintaining their competency.

## **Purpose of a Continuing Competency Program:**

This program assists therapists to achieve, and to continue achieving beyond a minimum level of competence as is outlined in the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (2021)*. This program supports individual occupational therapists to actively participate in reflective practice and ongoing learning to maintain and enhance their competence in the provision of Occupational Therapy services in Saskatchewan.

## **Assumptions:**

### ***About Competency***

- 1) Therapists develop and demonstrate the required competencies to enter practice through successful academic preparation at an educational institution, fieldwork experiences and examination processes.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://scotsk.ca/assets/main/standardspractice/OT-Competency-Document-EN-HiRes.pdf>

- 2) During their career, occupational therapists maintain and enhance their competence through on-going learning applied to their practice. The method, amount and content of learning may vary based on the occupational therapist's background, learning style and learning needs within their practice setting.
- 3) Many therapists pursue and achieve excellence in their area of practice beyond that which is described in the *Competencies* document. The objective of the program is not proficiency beyond that described in the *Competencies* document, though the tools used to demonstrate competence may capture and encourage proficiency.
- 4) While many therapists pursue and achieve excellence, it is recognized that excellence in one area does not compensate for weaknesses in another area of competency. Though some competencies are more difficult to accomplish in certain contexts, all *Competencies* are important and obligatory. Therapists are expected to demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in each of the *Competencies* as it applies to their practice.
- 5) Therapists who do not actively pursue continuing competency may fall behind as the profession advances. Gaps may develop with or without the therapist's knowledge.

#### ***About Obligations***

- 6) The primary responsibility and associated costs to maintain competency rest with the therapist. Employers may support therapists' competency maintenance and development efforts; however, therapists must maintain competence regardless of the level of employer support.
- 7) SCOT has an obligation to the public to ensure that occupational therapists maintain their competence throughout their practice. SCOT has mechanisms in place to ensure public safety. A continuing competency program supports these mechanisms but does not directly monitor public safety.
- 8) As a self-regulating profession, SCOT is responsible for decisions about acceptable levels of competence and whether an individual therapist has demonstrated these levels of competence.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

These principles are used to guide the design and implementation of SCOT's continuing competency program.

- 1) **A way to support competence.** The continuing competency program is designed to support therapists in understanding, applying, and demonstrating the *Competencies*. The tools selected are intended to assist therapists to identify ways in which they can demonstrate competency. The program is not punitive in nature but provides feedback. This feedback may validate practice and/or provide guidance. When necessary, an appropriate amount of structure to support enhancement of practice is provided.
- 2) **Competency is dynamic. It's about *how you practice*.** The program requires therapists to demonstrate that they understand and integrate the *Competencies* into their practice using systematic reasoning and processes. It focuses on patterns of practice and decision-making rather than on single clinical or non-clinical decisions.
- 3) **Public Protection is crucial.**
  - a. When components of occupational therapy practice are identified as posing higher risk to the public, the continuing competency program will focus attention and resources on these areas.
  - b. If any categories of practitioners (e.g. by demographics, geography, scope of practice) are identified to be at a higher risk for competency gaps compared to the whole profession, the program will focus attention and resources on these practitioner categories.
- 4) **Competency for all.** All occupational therapists that maintain a practising membership and licence with SCOT are required to participate in the continuing competency program.
- 5) **There's more than one "right" way to do things.** Occupational therapists maintain competence in diverse ways and practice in diverse settings. It is the individual therapist's responsibility to understand and apply the *Competencies* within their practice. The Continuing Competency program, while based on common processes and tools, accommodates a wide range of practice settings.
- 6) **Competence only.** The program focuses on verifying that individual therapists demonstrate the *Competencies*, not on the demonstration of excellence. Some therapists may choose to use the tools to assist them in their pursuit of excellence.
- 7) **Creating a responsible, sustainable program.**
  - a. **Quality:** The program is based on best practices in the field of continuing competency programs. Validity and reliability of methods and tools are considered and will be evaluated and improved over time.

- b. **Fiscal Responsibility:** The program will balance the demands for public protection and the costs associated with implementing best practice with the resources available.
- c. **Communication and Confidentiality:** The continuing competency program will require an exchange of information and feedback between SCOT and the therapist.
- d. **Fairness:** Competency assessment and decision-making processes will be clearly defined and transparent.