The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.
APPROVED PROVIDER PROGRAM

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: Organizations must have at least 1 year of history as a continuing education provider and have offered a minimum of 3 courses before being eligible to apply for AOTA Approved Provider status. Providers who are eligible to award the AOTA continuing education unit (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.

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.

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. If the designated CE Administrator is not an occupational therapy practitioner, the Provider must identify a system for ensuring that an occupational therapy practitioner(s) 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.

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.**

Guidelines: One (1) AOTA CEU is the equivalent of ten (10) contact (clock) hours, excluding meals and breaks. The smallest increment that can be assigned to a course is point one (.1) AOTA CEU, or 1 hours (60 minutes).

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.

Learners should be informed of requirements prior to their participation in 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 CEU 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.

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 upon request.**

Guidelines: **The Provider is responsible for maintaining permit records of all AOTA CEUs earned and must have a written policy on retention and release of 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 upon request by the learner.

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 individuals' 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 (activity medium, e.g., workshop, online course, self-study, etc.)
- Start and completion date(s) of the activity
- Number of AOTA CEUs awarded
- Instructor(s) name(s) and credentials
  - Additional information, such as current address, telephone number, and assessment scores, may be included at the option of the Provider.

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.

Providers may choose to issue a certificate of completion to each learner who completes an activity. Certificates are to be used in addition to, not in lieu of, permanent records. Approved Providers may display the AOTA CEU logo on the certificates.

5. DISCLOSURE

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

Guidelines: Individuals who participate in a continuing education activity have the right to know of any commercial 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 commercial interest.

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.**

Guidelines: 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.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, & EVALUATION CRITERIA

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, who the potential learner should be. A separate needs assessment is not required for each CE activity; however, the rationale and planning for each activity should be the result of needs which 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.

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.

8. PROGRAM PLANNING & INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

Criteria: **Qualified personnel are involved in planning and conducting each activity. The established content for each activity can be reflected in the "AOTA Classification Codes for CE Activities."**

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; and
- have knowledge and skill in the delivery format (e.g., workshop, online course, self-study) being used.

The established content for each continuing education activity is relevant and meaningful to occupational therapy. It is a joint responsibility of the Provider, the planner(s), and the instructor(s) to ensure that the learning experience meets the stated objectives and results in achievement of learning outcomes by learners. The CE Administrator has oversight responsibilities for each activity.

9. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: **The Provider has clear and concise written statements of intended learning outcomes that are observable and/or measurable, are based on identified needs for each continuing education activity, and communicated to learners before and during the activity.**

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

- provide a framework for activity planning;
- are the basis for selection of content and instructional strategies;
- are participant-centered (e.g., "By the end of this program, learners will be able to…") and describe to learners exactly what knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes they are expected to accomplish/demonstrate as a result of the learning activity;
- are the basis for providing periodic feedback, measuring progress, and final assessment of learning;
- are appropriate in number for the planned activity.

Learning outcomes should be written in a way that reflects the instructional method and delivery format 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 since these cannot be measured by this method. 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.

10. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: **Criteria for the assessment of learning outcomes are established during the planning of each activity and are consistent with each activity's instructional methods and delivery format.**

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 what will be required of them.

In an activity where 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, etc.) may be appropriate.

11. 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, etc.) 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.

12. 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 and environmental comfort of the learner, as well as 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 those with sensory impairments (i.e., hearing, speech, vision), and emotional and learning disabilities.

13. 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 assures

that an evaluation process is established to examine various aspects of the activity, including but not limited to

- needs assessment,
- instructional planning and execution,
- selection and preparation of instructors,
- program implementation, and
- the extent to which learning outcomes were 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.

To request an application, contact AOTA:	**Online**:	http://www.aota.org under Continuing Education
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