

Occupational Therapy Australia Mental Health Endorsement Criteria

As in force on 1 March 2023

Background

In 2004, the Australian Government implemented the Enhanced Primary Care Program under which General Practitioners were able to refer patients with complex care requirements to a range of allied health services. Under this initiative occupational therapists were recognised as one of the groups of eligible mental health providers. In 2006, the Government introduced the 'Better Access to Mental Health Care' (BAMH) initiative, under which General Practitioners, Paediatricians and Private Psychiatrists could refer to suitably qualified and experienced allied health professionals namely: social workers; psychologists and occupational therapists for the provision of 'Focussed Psychological Strategies'. This document explains the process which an occupational therapists must undergo, should they wish to be considered by Medicare Australia as 'suitably qualified and experienced allied health professional'.

Criteria

In order to be eligible to provide services under the BAMH Initiative, occupational therapists must hold [Occupational Therapy Australia Mental Health Endorsement](#) according to the criteria in force from 1 March 2023.

For a successful application for mental health endorsement applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Hold registration to practice as an occupational therapist with Ahpra and meet the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia registration and competency standards.
- Hold current membership with Occupational Therapy Australia.
- Have at least **two years** of full-time equivalent **supervised mental health experience** as a **qualified** occupational therapist, including at least **six months** of full time equivalent **supervised** mental health experience in the last **five years**.
- Have had training and clinical experience in the use of **risk assessments** (including mental state assessments) and **safety planning**.
- Ability to demonstrate the required mental health capabilities.

Please refer to the Mental Health Page on the [OTA Website](#) for further information and full details of the OTA Mental Health Capability Framework and Mental Health Endorsement application process.

Maintaining Endorsement

In order to maintain mental health endorsement, endorsed occupational therapists must meet the following criteria:

- Continue to be registered to practice with AHPRA and meet the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia registration and competency standards.
- Occupational Therapy Australia general membership must be maintained.
- Complete **10 hours** of mental health specific continuing professional development (CPD) each year. If practising under Medicare, all ten hours of CPD must be associated with the [Focussed Psychological Strategies \(FPS\)](#) outlined by Medicare.
- Maintain active engagement in professional supervision.

OTA randomly audits a percentage of endorsed mental health practitioners to ensure they are meeting the CPD and supervision requirements and endorsed practitioners may be asked to provide evidence of having undertaken appropriate CPD and supervision activities.

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