



College of Occupational
Therapists of Ontario

YOUR GUIDE TO SELF-ASSESSMENT



Like other components of the QA Program, the Self-Assessment Tool is based on principles of adult learning, life-long learning and self-reflection. All of the items in the Tool are based on the College's *Essential Competencies* (2nd Edition) and have been worded to include all types of practice. This guide will assist you in completing the tool.

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Why is the College sending you this Self-Assessment kit?

The College's Quality Assurance (QA) Program requires Registrants to perform a Self-Assessment and create a Professional Development Plan (PD Plan) on a regular basis. The College created this kit to help you comply with professional requirements.

The kit contains this guide and a set of standardized forms. There is a Self-Assessment Tool (with an optional worksheet) and a Professional Development Plan. The forms ensure that you thoroughly compare your practice to the *Essential Competencies of Practice for Occupational Therapists in Canada* (2nd edition, 2003), document your reflection and create a plan to guide your future professional development.

* For an explanation of **conscious competence**, see the *Conscious Competence Model* document, located at Tab 5 of your Registrant Resource Binder and available on the College website.

A thorough Self-Assessment is part of the foundation for **conscious competence***. Periodically, you need to review how the essential competencies apply specifically to your own area of practice and how you demonstrate them. This process helps identify learning needs and plan professional development activities. You must keep your completed forms in Section 3A of your Professional Portfolio for five years and be able to supply them to the College upon request.

When do you have to complete a Self-Assessment Tool?

Once every two registration years. A registration year runs from June 1 to May 31. The Self-Assessment Tool is available on the College website. Registrants complete the Self-Assessment process between April and June.

You should complete the Self-Assessment Tool if there has been a major change in your practice, even if only one year has elapsed. Examples of major changes include:

- Returning to clinical practice following an absence of more than 6 months for any reason, including having assumed primarily non-clinical roles.
- Working in a different system (for example, moving from institutional to community practice or changing from a publicly funded to a privately funded system).
- Encountering changes in the practice environment that impact on professional support systems (for example, organizational restructuring that changes access to peer consultation).
- Serving clients with different occupational performance issues or when different performance components or different environments need to be considered.
- Moving to a role where different knowledge, skills or judgement is needed (for example, new supervisory or advisory responsibilities).

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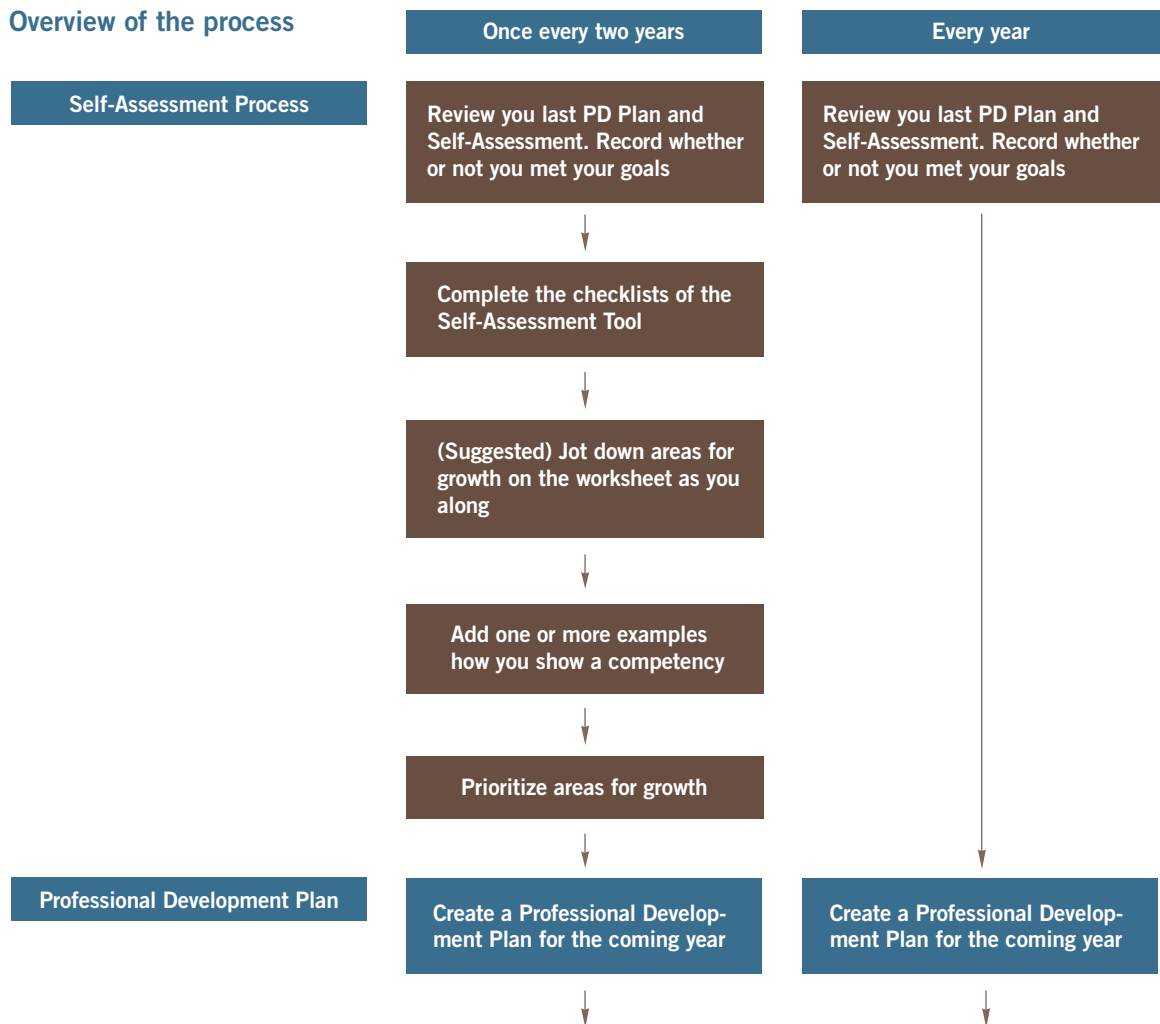
When do you have to create a Professional Development Plan?

Every year. To do this, you should review your most recent Self-Assessment Tool and previous PD Plan. The form for creating a Professional Development Plan is available on the College website.

What is involved in performing a Self-Assessment?

Essentially, the Self-Assessment Tool is a series of checklists that list typical ways to demonstrate the seven Essential Competencies. Go through the checklists and tick off whether you demonstrate specific competencies and whether or not you can identify an area for growth. At the end of the section for each competency, you will fill in examples from your own practice. Wherever you indicate an area for growth in a competency, you can use this information as input for your Professional Development Plan.

The graphic below provides an overview of the process.



STEPS FOR COMPLETING SELF-ASSESSMENT

Getting Ready

Before you start

Plan on spending several hours to complete the process.

- Two or three shorter sessions may be better than one long session.
- Plan time to consult with colleagues, if possible. Identify practice examples and to get feedback on your Plan.

If you have completed the process before, gather any previously completed Self-Assessment Tools and Professional Development Plans.

We recommend the following additional resources:

- Your Registrant Resource Binder
- Your Professional Portfolio
- Any documentation of completed professional development activities
- Other relevant records (e.g. performance appraisals, results of client satisfaction surveys, etc.)

Review Last
Year's Goals

Step 1: Review your last PD Plan and Self-Assessment Tool

Start with your last Professional Development Plan and document on it whether or not you met your goals.

If you met a goal	In the “Date Completed” column, fill in the date. In the “Evidence of Progress” column, list any evidence you have of meeting your goal.
If you did not meet a goal	If the goal is still a priority for you, note that you will continue it and include it in your new Professional Development Plan (put an asterisk in the appropriate column on the new Plan). If it is no longer a priority for you, note why not.

Review any Self-Assessment Tool to:

- recall your previous thoughts and practice examples; and
- decide whether previous areas for growth are still relevant.

General
Information

Step 2: Complete the Self-Assessment Tool

Fill in Page 1 of the Self-Assessment Tool.

This section contains general information about your practice. If you are asked to submit your Self-Assessment to the College, this information provides a context.

Checklists

Fill in the checklists for each of the seven Essential Competencies (Pages 2 to 9 of the Self-Assessment Tool).

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The checklists help you examine whether you meet the seven Essential Competencies. (Refer to the *Essential Competencies of Practice for Occupational Therapists in Canada*, 2nd edition, 2003)

The Essential Competencies sections list typical ways to demonstrate each competency. Go through the checklists indicating whether you demonstrate the competency, whether it is an area for growth, or whether it is not relevant to your practice.

Check this column...	If...
Yes	You already perform at the level required for your practice setting and role. There may be some statements for which you are not ready to check “yes”.
Area for Growth	You need or want to enhance your practice in this area. Feel free to check both “Yes” and “Area for Growth” if you decide that you already perform at the required level but wish to develop additional knowledge or skills. <i>Tip: If you identify an area for growth, jot down some thoughts on the worksheet on page 10 of the Self-Assessment Tool as you go along. This is an easy way to summarize your areas for growth on one page, making it easier to create your Professional Development Plan later on.</i>
N/A (Not Applicable)	The statement describes an aspect of the competency that is not applicable to your practice. <i>Note: Use “N/A” judiciously. Because the Essential Competencies apply regardless of practice area, most statements apply at some level to all areas of practice (i.e. clinician, consultant, administrator, educator or researcher).</i>

As you decide which answer to check, ask yourself, “In my current area of practice, what do I do that relates to this statement?” For example, if you were thinking about Item 18: “I identify and work to resolve discrepancies between regulatory or ethical obligations and practice environment constraints”, you might recall discussions with your employer about using addendums to add to or change reports and the reasons for this. Examples will help you decide whether you already perform at your desired level, or want to grow.

Provide examples
of your competence

Fill in the “Specific Practice Examples” section for each of the seven Essential Competencies.

At the end of each Essential Competency, you will find a summary section entitled *Specific Practice Example(s)*. This is where you should record ways in which YOU demonstrate competence in that area.

If you checked “Yes” one or more times within an Essential Competency, you should include **at least one** example. Focus on the most significant example for your practice. The practice examples will differ according to your area of practice.

Tip: Don’t miss Appendix B of this guide! It contains a wealth of examples to draw from. Consider discussing with other OTs how they demonstrate competency.

Step 3: Set priorities

Review your list of areas for growth.

This is where it will be handy to have recorded areas for growth on the worksheet on page 10 of the Self-Assessment Tool as you went along. Remember to consider:

- Unmet learning goals from the previous year's PD Plan.
- Areas for growth from previous Self-Assessments that are still relevant but were not included on your last PD Plan.
- Learning needs identified from completing Prescribed Regulatory Education Program (PREP) modules.
- Learning needs identified from other processes, such as performance appraisals, chart audits and peer reviews.

Decide on a priority level for each area for growth.

High priority	Your current practice role requires immediate improvement or growth in this area and you need to plan strategies that will allow you to reach your goal this year.
Medium priority	Growth would be very helpful in your role, but it is less urgent. If the opportunity arises, you will act. Otherwise you may address it in the future.
Low priority	While you wish to grow, or have some interest in this area, it is not critical for your current role. You will pursue it only after higher priorities are met.

If there are no gaps between your current competency and current role or practice environment, you will still identify areas for professional growth, however, you may wish to prioritize differently.

Step 4: Create a Professional Development Plan

Review the areas for growth with the highest priority and select a reasonable number to include on your learning plan. It is unrealistic to expect to achieve everything in one year, so be thoughtful and select areas for learning that will have the most impact on your current practice. Depending on the size and complexity of your goals, you are advised to focus on between one and five goals.

Write Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited (SMART) learning goals.

Think within a one-year timeframe and break the learning goal down into smaller chunks if needed.

Goals should have an observable outcome. Consider:

- How will you demonstrate that you have met your goal?
- What changes in your practice or in client outcomes would be seen if you achieved your goal?

Prioritize your goals

Create your Professional Development Plan

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When your goal will take longer than one year, use the “Future learning needs and/or actions” column on the Professional Development Plan form to identify this situation and to remind yourself next year.

Identify strategies and resources to meet your learning goals for this year.

These are the concrete actions you will take to achieve the outcome. Attach specific timelines to each strategy. Be proactive in accessing resources to meet high priority goals. Do not wait for an opportunity to come your way – be innovative and seek creative ways to learn what you need to improve.

Your final Professional Development Plan provides the direction for activities that will enhance your competence over the next year. It also records very specifically how you will enhance your competence.

In subsequent years, you will review areas for growth that were not addressed. You will decide whether to address them, change them, or track them for future consideration.

The reverse side of the Professional Development Plan form and the College publication *Your Professional Development Plan: Making it Work** contain additional information to help you complete the PD Plan.

Appendix A: Tips for OTs in non-clinical roles

Some OTs do not provide any services to clients (as defined by the College) but rather her/his scope involves service to others (e.g. students, organizations, government, staff members, etc.)

This section contains hints to help you complete a Self-Assessment if you have a non-clinical practice.

Please note that if you provide any service to clients as defined by the College, you should use the Self-Assessment Tool to review your competence in that role.

1. Do any aspects of your role impact on the provision of OT services to clients? For example, you may supervise OTs who provide direct service, educate future service providers, advise organizations on policies and procedures that directly impact the provision of OT services, or you may conduct research that will impact on OT service provision. If your role impacts OT services to the public, consider this perspective as you complete the Self-Assessment.
2. You may expand your thinking to include others you serve when the word “client” is used, although this will not always be relevant. You are not required to take this approach.
3. Since you are an occupational therapist, you remain accountable for professional and ethical behaviour in your interactions with others as well as with clients. For example, you are expected to adhere to legislation relevant to your practice, to communicate about the scope and limitations of your role, to engage in professional development and to identify and manage conflicts of interest.

4. Although specific statements may not seem applicable to your practice, review the checklists in the Self-Assessment Tool regardless. Feel free to check the “N/A” column wherever statements do not apply.
5. Although you may not currently serve clients directly, this can change. Everyone registered as an occupational therapist needs to keep generally up-to-date about regulatory and professional requirements. Therefore, some of the statements about knowledge of OT and professional requirements will apply. Try asking yourself whether you are sufficiently up-to-date to know what additional resources, training or information you would need to acquire if you decided to begin providing occupational therapy services to clients.
6. Finally, the Self-Assessment Tool will only review the aspects of your role that interface with the practice of occupational therapy. Other aspects of your role (e.g. preparing management or research reports) likely require different competencies and are not covered by the Self-Assessment Tool.

Appendix B: Practice Examples

This section provides examples from a variety of practice areas related to each of the seven Essential Competencies. You can find additional examples at www.coto.org (Registrants, Quality Assurance, Self-Assessment). Adapt and personalize these examples to demonstrate your competency.

1.0 - I Assume Professional Responsibility

- I provide clients with lists of vendors or service providers to enable them to make an informed choice. When requested to carry specific products for sale to clients, I decided to make arrangements for the product to be carried by a supply firm with whom I have no financial connection. I advise clients of the availability of all products that could meet their needs.
- All staff members have a copy of the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule. New staff members are oriented to the legislation and its impact. There is a policy covering how staff must clarify their roles with payers and clients.
- I include College contact information on written consent forms. I carry COTO brochures in case clients request information. I give each client a business card with my name as registered and the OT Reg. (Ont.) designation.
- I participated in a working group to develop a directive for the delegation of communicating a diagnosis (a controlled act). I follow the directive and document the process.
- With a recent change to integrated service delivery within my work setting, I reviewed how this impacted the service I could provide to clients. I communicate with other professionals to clarify how each of us will be involved with specific clients.
- I verify annually that staff members are registered with their respective Colleges.

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2.0 - I Demonstrate Practice Knowledge

- I review College publications for changes in practice requirements or regulations, highlighting relevant information for action and follow-up.
- I read CJOT articles that are relevant to my practice. I perform online searches to acquire relevant references when faced with new issues.
- I keep a file of key references that I have reviewed and use to support my approach to practice and update it annually to include new references. The orientation binder for my practice setting explains the application of theoretical models to my practice. I read and contribute to the binder as appropriate.
- I complete a monthly environmental report that identifies key factors or changes (e.g. political, social, service system, legislative) that impact or potentially impact, the organization.
- I meet with several peers to review equipment prescriptions or other issues related to Augmentative Communication Services.
- I make sure I know what my role is within the insurance system and how the information I provide is used by others.

3.0 - I Use a Practice Process

- I advise referring agents that I am unable to accept referrals for clients with spinal cord injuries (I do not have adequate experience or access to supervision to provide competent service to these clients).
- I use the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure to involve clients in setting goals and priorities. I adapt the assessment process to address referral concerns. I select assessment methods based on the individual client's needs and issues.
- I discuss recommendations (equipment, referrals, etc.) with clients. Before sending reports to referring agencies, I review the content of the report with the client and obtain consent to send it.
- I check that I am up-to-date on client charting and workload documentation before accepting new referrals.
- I developed policies and procedures for obtaining and documenting consent and release of information. I check that staff members know and follow the policies and procedures.
- I explain to students my role as their teacher and the limits of that role. For issues outside my scope, I advise students of other resources within the university setting or in the community.

4.0 - I Think Critically

- I use assessment tools that have been developed and tested for the client population I serve (e.g. clients who have sustained a stroke). I document the assessments used and how results were integrated with client goals to guide intervention and recommendations.
- I reviewed the theoretical basis, reliability and validity of various Functional Capacity Evaluation protocols. I include in my reports the limitations of the method when interpreting assessment results and providing recommendations.
- I researched potential outcome measures for use with clients participating in group therapy to address anger management. I chose an appropriate measure and have used it with a number of clients to demonstrate the effectiveness of group therapy.
- I consider clients' activity tolerance and number of other therapy appointments when deciding on the frequency of OT intervention.
- I use a Performance Measures Survey with all new clients in the agency to evaluate overall service effectiveness. Clients provide information about how well the service helped them meet their goals and whether their personal strengths and choices were considered.

5.0 - I Communicate Effectively

- I discuss assessment results with each client to ensure that they understand the results and any recommendations.
- I consult with a speech language pathologist when treating clients with aphasia. I use gestures and written diagrams to accompany verbal information, depending on the best way for each client to receive information.
- I follow an established procedure to regularly distribute (with client consent) written reports to outside agencies, physicians, etc. who are involved in care for a client. There is a designated team member to facilitate communication between the client, team members and outside agencies/providers.
- I call parents of the children I serve in the school to discuss any changes to the OT program, including planning discharge. If I recommend referring the child to a community program, I discuss with parents what information I would like to provide to that program and obtain permission to do so.
- I respond to requests for information from the Ministry within the timeframe specified. I provide information to the Board when needed for their governance decisions.
- I post my office hours and advise students as to when I am available and how to reach me if they have questions or need academic direction.

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6.0 - I Engage in Professional Development

- I complete PREP Modules and Self-Assessments with colleagues. I review my Professional Development Plan periodically and follow through with my plans.
- I heard of a new assessment for my client population. I obtained the assessment and reviewed the administration manual. I practised administering the assessment with normal volunteers and sought feedback on my process and results until I could administer the assessment according to the standard protocol.
- I purchased a directory of community resources available in my area and called a number of agencies to clarify their roles. For example, when it might be appropriate to refer a client, and the process to follow. I have linked several clients with the appropriate community resource.
- I attend an OT Psychiatric Interest group on a monthly basis. This group shares resource information, discusses current research and problem-solves clinical scenarios. I facilitated a task group with my service team to search for and implement an agitation scale.
- I schedule time within and outside my work hours to review professional journals or texts or to conduct internet research in areas relevant to my practice.
- I maintain a list of courses or other formal learning activities in my Professional Portfolio. I complete learning logs to record key learning that directly impacts my practice.
- I facilitate staff networking by scheduling monthly meetings on topics identified by staff. I attended a conference on changes to the *Employment Standards Act* and implemented changes to organizational policies.

7.0 - I Manage the Practice Environment

- When assigning service to the OT assistant, I demonstrate then observe the first few sessions. I schedule regular meetings with the OTA to discuss progress. I review the OTA's progress notes and follow-up as needed.
- I ensure that there is a schedule for maintaining, cleaning and calibrating equipment according to manufacturer's recommendations. I assign responsibility to follow the schedule and document the process. I review the documentation to ensure the required activities have been completed.
- I follow universal precautions and infection control procedures.
- I supervise children who are using materials or equipment that could result in injury.
- When consulting, I only teach others to perform activities that do not require the knowledge and skills of an occupational therapist.

- I inform the appropriate person when I notice environmental hazards in clients' homes, in schools or other community settings. I use antiseptic lotion to wash my hands after each visit with a client in the community.
- I helped establish the role responsibilities and accountabilities for support personnel at the agency. I hired a consultant to review our organization's compliance with the *Health and Safety Act* and implemented the recommended changes.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) **Am I required to complete the Self-Assessment Tool and Professional Development Plan?**

Yes. This is a mandatory part of the Quality Assurance Program. You need to fill out the forms, date them and keep them in your Professional Portfolio. This allows you to demonstrate that you have met your obligation to participate in Self-Assessment.

2) **I am a new graduate and have just started working. How will that affect my participation in Self-Assessment?**

You are required to complete a Self-Assessment Tool and PD Plan within 12 months of your initial registration. All Registrants are competent practitioners who should be able to engage in self-reflection and demonstrate that they meet the essential competencies for safe, ethical, effective practice in their own practice environment and role. You may identify a number of areas for growth and will need to be particularly thoughtful and realistic in setting priorities for your annual Professional Development Plan (PD Plan).

3) **Can I work with other OTs to complete this process?**

Yes. You will likely find that discussing the Tool with other OTs expands your own thinking and gives you ideas for practice examples. It is also helpful to have another person review your PD Plan to help you write specific, measurable learning goals.

4) **I am currently on leave from my employment. What are my responsibilities for Self-Assessment?**

You still need to complete one full Self-Assessment every two years as well as an annual PD Plan. The College does not monitor the exact date Tools are completed. However, the College strongly recommends that Registrants complete the process in the spring of each year. This helps develop a routine and means that most Registrants complete the process at the same time, making it easier to access or offer peer support. When you are on leave but still registered with the College, your learning goals are likely to be different, however you still need to ensure that you keep up-to-date in your knowledge, skills and abilities.

5) **I participate in an annual performance review process which is very similar to this Tool. Can I use that instead of the College forms?**

No. The College has developed the forms to assist you in comprehensively comparing your practice to the essential competencies for the profession. Not all performance review processes would meet this objective. In addition, the College needs to have a format that allows this information to be reviewed consistently for all Registrants and to identify trends within the profession.

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However, you may be able to link your Self-Assessment to your performance review process and it is acceptable to include learning needs identified from performance appraisals on your PD Plan.

6) I work in several different practice areas. Do I need to complete the checklists separately for each area of practice?

No. The Tool should be used to reflect how you are performing across all areas of practice. You may identify areas for growth in different roles. The space for margin notes and the worksheet may be particularly helpful for you to note specifically what area of your practice you were thinking about when you checked “area for growth”. You can choose examples from different practice areas to demonstrate your competency.

7) What will happen if I don’t complete the Self-Assessment?

Completing the Tool and PD Plan are mandatory parts of the QA Program. According to the General Regulation (Quality Assurance, Part VI, 27), you must keep your documents for five years and provide them to the College upon request (within 30 days). When materials are reviewed for Competency Review and Evaluation, the outcome depends on the total picture of your practice, including the survey results. When you cannot demonstrate that you have met your regulatory obligations, the Quality Assurance Committee may require you to submit additional material or to have you complete a peer and practice assessment.

8) Is my employer required to let me complete the Self-Assessment at work?

No. Employers are not required to provide time during work hours for completion of QA activities. The College has no authority over employers in this regard. However, the College provides information about the QA Program to employers and encourages them to support employees’ QA activities through such means as facilitating group discussions and promoting professional development.

9) Are the Self-Assessment materials available in French?

Yes. To receive a copy, please contact the College or go the College website, www.coto.org.

