



## WAOTA Position Statement

### Occupational Therapy Assistants

#### BACKGROUND:

This statement is applicable to all those working under the employment title: occupational therapy assistant (OTA). This document is a position statement created by the WAOTA and not a policy or guideline for OTA practice. Currently there is no governing body for OTAs or any other therapy assistants which can pose the risk of poorly structured employment, limited career progression, inconsistency in the role, and differing levels of responsibility. For the purposes of this document an OTA is defined as a person employed to work under the direct supervision of an occupational therapist to assist with occupational therapy intervention and take on clinical and program related duties.

The demands on occupational therapists to provide therapy in a multitude of practice settings have increased in recent years. This increase of demand and complexity have brought significant change in the way in allied health services are provided. In many practice settings this increase of demand has meant the occupational therapists cannot meet this demand solely, thus a shift in roles for OTAs has been necessary.

#### WAOTA POSITION:

- The Occupational therapist is legally responsible for delivery of all occupational therapy services and must ensure delegation of task to OTAs are appropriate to the individuals experience, training, education and skills.
- Occupational therapist holds sole responsibility and accountability for the client's therapy.
- When OTA assists in delivery of occupational therapy services the occupational therapist is responsible to provide supervision over the therapy being delivered.
- An occupational therapist must ensure OTA work within the boundaries of the Code of Conduct applicable to the profession which can be found on the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia website.
- OTA should hold a minimum qualification of Certificate III in the field relevant to the area of service.
- OTAs should not be utilised as replacements for occupational therapists but should be used in conjunction for delivery of occupational therapy services where appropriate
- Tasks not suitable for delegation;
  - Assessment
  - Diagnosis
  - Clinical problem solving
  - Therapy planning
  - Changing of therapy plan
  - Drafting reports
  - Accepting referrals for OT service
  - Discharge clients from OT service

#### Acknowledgements:

Supporting and Developing the Allied Health Assistant Workforce; Government of Western Australia; WA Health; 2015  
Allied Health Assistant Policy; Government of Western Australia; WA Health; 2016  
Physiotherapy Assistants: Policy Statements and Guidelines; Australian Physiotherapy Association; 2015  
FAQs from general public – Allied Health Assistants; Speech Pathology Australia; 2016  
Code of Conduct; Occupational Therapy Board of Australia; 2014