CHAPTER 206
Licensure of Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants

[Prior to 3/6/02, see 645—201.3(147,148B,272C) to 645—201.7(147) and 645—201.9(272C)]

645—206.1(147) Definitions. For purposes of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

“Active license” means a license that is current and has not expired.

“Board” means the board of physical and occupational therapy.

“Department” means the department of public health.

“Grace period” means the 30-day period following expiration of a license when the license is still considered to be active. In order to renew a license during the grace period, a licensee is required to pay a late fee.

“Inactive license” means a license that has expired because it was not renewed by the end of the grace period. The category of “inactive license” may include licenses formerly known as lapsed, inactive, delinquent, closed, or retired.

“Licensee” means any person licensed to practice as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in the state of Iowa.

“License expiration date” means the fifteenth day of the birth month every two years after initial licensure.

“Licensure by endorsement” means the issuance of an Iowa license to practice occupational therapy to an applicant who is or has been licensed in another state.

“Licensure examination” means the examination administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.

“Mandatory training” means training on identifying and reporting child abuse or dependent adult abuse required of occupational therapists or occupational therapy assistants who are mandatory reporters. The full requirements on mandatory reporting of child abuse and the training requirements are found in Iowa Code section 232.69. The full requirements on mandatory reporting of dependent adult abuse and the training requirements are found in Iowa Code section 235B.16.

“NBCOT” means the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.

“Occupational therapist” means a person licensed under this chapter to practice occupational therapy.

“Occupational therapy assistant” means a person licensed under this chapter to assist in the practice of occupational therapy.

“Occupational therapy practice” means the therapeutic use of occupations, including everyday life activities with individuals, groups, populations, or organizations, to support participation, performance, and function in roles and situations in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings. Occupational therapy services are provided for habilitation, rehabilitation, and the promotion of health and wellness to those who have or are at risk for developing an illness, injury, disease, disorder, condition, impairment, disability, activity limitation, or participation restriction. Occupational therapy addresses the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory-perceptual, and other aspects of performance in a variety of contexts and environments to support engagement in occupations that affect physical and mental health, well-being, and quality of life. The practice of occupational therapy includes:

1. Evaluation of factors affecting activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, including:
   - Client factors, including body functions (such as neuromusculoskeletal, sensory-perceptual, visual, mental, cognitive, and pain factors) and body structures (such as cardiovascular, digestive, nervous, integumentary, genitourinary systems, and structures related to movement) and values, beliefs, and spirituality.
   - Habits, routines, roles, rituals, and behavior patterns.
   - Physical and social environments; cultural, personal, temporal and virtual contexts; and activity demands that affect performance.
Performance skills, including motor and praxis, sensory-perceptual, emotional regulation, cognitive, communication and social skills.

2. Methods or approaches selected to direct the process of interventions, including:
   - Establishment of a skill or ability that has not yet developed or remediation or restoration of a skill or ability that is impaired or is in decline.
   - Compensation, modification, or adaptation of activity or environment to enhance performance or to prevent injuries, disorders, or other conditions.
   - Retention and enhancement of skills or abilities without which performance in everyday life activities would decline.
   - Promotion of health and wellness, including the use of self-management strategies, to enable or enhance performance in everyday life activities.
   - Prevention of barriers to performance and participation, including injury and disability prevention.

3. Interventions and procedures to promote or enhance safety and performance in activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, including:
   - Therapeutic use of occupations, exercises, and activities.
   - Training in self-care, self-management, health management and maintenance, home management, community/work reintegration, and school activities and work performance.
   - Development, remediation, or compensation of neuromusculoskeletal, sensory-perceptual, visual, mental, and cognitive functions, pain tolerance and management, and behavioral skills.
   - Therapeutic use of self, including one’s personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments, as part of the therapeutic process.
   - Education and training of individuals, including family members, caregivers, groups, populations, and others.
     - Care coordination, case management, and transition services.
     - Consultative services to groups, programs, organizations, or communities.
     - Modification of environments (home, work, school, or community) and adaptation of processes, including the application of ergonomic principles.
     - Assessment, design, fabrication, application, fitting, and training in seating and positioning, assistive technology, adaptive devices, and orthotic devices, and training in the use of prosthetic devices.
     - Assessment, recommendation, and training in techniques to enhance functional mobility, including management of wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
     - Low vision rehabilitation.
     - Driver rehabilitation and community mobility.
     - Management of feeding, eating, and swallowing to enable eating and feeding performance.
     - Application of physical agent modalities and use of a range of specific therapeutic procedures (such as wound care management, interventions to enhance sensory-perceptual and cognitive processing, and manual therapy) to enhance performance skills.
     - Facilitating the occupational performance of groups, populations, or organizations through the modification of environments and the adaptation of processes.

"Occupational therapy screening" means a brief process which is directed by an occupational therapist in order for the occupational therapist to render a decision as to whether the individual warrants further, in-depth evaluation and which includes:

1. Assessment of the medical and social history of an individual;
2. Observations related by that individual’s caregivers; or
3. Observations or nonstandardized tests, or both, administered to an individual by the occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant under the direction of the occupational therapist.

Nothing in this definition shall be construed to prohibit licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants who work in preschools or school settings from providing short-term
interventions to children prior to an evaluation, not to exceed 16 sessions per concern per school year, in accordance with state and federal educational policy.

“On site” means:
1. To be continuously on site and present in the department or facility where the assistive personnel are performing services;
2. To be immediately available to assist the person being supervised in the services being performed; and
3. To provide continued direction of appropriate aspects of each treatment session in which a component of treatment is delegated to assistive personnel.

“OT” means occupational therapist.

“OTA” means occupational therapy assistant.

“Reactivate” or “reactivation” means the process as outlined in rule 645—206.11(17A,147,272C) by which an inactive license is restored to active status.

“Reciprocal license” means the issuance of an Iowa license to practice occupational therapy to an applicant who is currently licensed in another state which has a mutual agreement with the Iowa board of physical and occupational therapy to license persons who have the same or similar qualifications to those required in Iowa.

“Reinstatement” means the process as outlined in 645—11.31(272C) by which a licensee who has had a license suspended or revoked or who has voluntarily surrendered a license may apply to have the license reinstated, with or without conditions. Once the license is reinstated, the licensee may apply for active status.

[ARC 7644B, IAB 3/25/09, effective 4/29/09; ARC 0223C, IAB 7/25/12, effective 8/29/12]

645—206.2(147) Requirements for licensure. The following criteria shall apply to licensure:

206.2(1) The applicant shall complete an application.

206.2(2) The applicant shall complete the application form according to the instructions contained in the application. If the application is not completed according to the instructions, the application will not be reviewed by the board.

206.2(3) Each application shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees payable by check or money order to the Board of Physical and Occupational Therapy. The fees are nonrefundable.

206.2(4) No application will be considered by the board until official copies of academic transcripts sent directly from the school to the board have been received by the board.

206.2(5) The licensure examination score shall be sent directly from the examination service to the board to confirm a passing score on the examination.

206.2(6) Licensees who were issued their initial licenses within six months prior to the renewal date shall not be required to renew their licenses until the renewal date two years later.

206.2(7) Submitting complete application materials. An application for an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant license will be considered active for two years from the date the application is received. If the applicant does not submit all materials within this time period or if the applicant does not meet the requirements for the license, the application shall be considered incomplete. An applicant whose application is filed incomplete must submit a new application, supporting materials, and the application fee. The board shall destroy incomplete applications after two years.

[ARC 3445C, IAB 11/8/17, effective 12/13/17; ARC 5758C, IAB 7/14/21, effective 8/18/21]

645—206.3(147) Limited permit to practice pending licensure. A limited permit holder who is applying for licensure in Iowa by taking the licensure examination for the first time and has never been licensed as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in any state, the District of Columbia, or another country must have completed the educational and experience requirements for licensure as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant. The limited permit holder shall:

1. Make arrangements to take the examination and have the official results of the examination sent directly from the examination service to the board;
2. Apply for licensure on forms provided by the board. The applicant must include on the application form the name of the Iowa-licensed occupational therapist(s) who will provide supervision of the limited permit holder until the limited permit holder is licensed;

3. Practice only under the supervision of an Iowa-licensed OT for a period not to exceed six months from the date the application was received in the board office;

4. Submit to the board the name of the OT providing supervision within seven days after a change in supervision occurs; and

5. If the applicant fails the national examination, the limited permit holder must cease practicing immediately.


645—206.5(147) Practice of occupational therapy limited permit holders.

206.5(1) Occupational therapist limited permit holders may:

a. Evaluate clients, plan treatment programs, and provide periodic reevaluations only under supervision of a licensed OT who shall bear full responsibility for care provided under the OT’s supervision; and

b. Perform the duties of the occupational therapist under the supervision of an Iowa-licensed occupational therapist, except for providing supervision to an occupational therapy assistant.

206.5(2) Occupational therapy assistants and limited permit holders shall:

a. Follow the treatment plan written by the supervising OT outlining the elements that have been delegated; and

b. Perform occupational therapy procedures delegated by the supervising OT as required in subrule 206.8(4).

[ARC 3445C, IAB 11/8/17, effective 12/13/17]

645—206.6(147) Examination requirements. The following criteria shall apply to the written examination(s):

206.6(1) The applicant for licensure as an occupational therapist shall have received a passing score on the licensure examination for occupational therapists. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make arrangements to take the examination and have the official results submitted directly from the examination service to the board of physical and occupational therapy.

206.6(2) The applicant for licensure as an occupational therapy assistant shall have received a passing score on the licensure examination for occupational therapy assistants. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make arrangements to take the examination and have the official results submitted directly from the examination service to the board of physical and occupational therapy.

645—206.7(147) Educational qualifications.

206.7(1) The applicant must present proof of meeting the following requirements for licensure as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant:

a. Occupational therapist. The applicant for licensure as an occupational therapist shall have completed the requirements for a degree in occupational therapy in an occupational therapy program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association. The transcript shall show completion of a supervised fieldwork experience.

b. Occupational therapy assistant. The applicant for licensure as an occupational therapy assistant shall be a graduate of an educational program approved by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association. The transcript shall show completion of a supervised fieldwork experience.

206.7(2) Foreign-trained occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. To become eligible to take the licensure examination, internationally educated occupational therapists must meet
NBCOT eligibility requirements and undergo prescreening based on the status of their occupational therapy educational programs.

645—206.8(148B) Supervision requirements.

206.8(1) Care rendered by unlicensed assistive personnel shall not be documented or charged as occupational therapy unless direct on-site supervision is provided by an OT or in-sight supervision is provided by an OTA.

206.8(2) Occupational therapist supervisor responsibilities. The supervisor shall:

a. Provide supervision to a licensed OTA, OT limited permit holder and OTA limited permit holder anytime occupational therapy services are rendered. Supervision may be provided on site or through the use of telecommunication or other technology.

b. Ensure that every licensed OTA, OT limited permit holder and OTA limited permit holder being supervised is aware of who the supervisor is and how the supervisor can be contacted anytime occupational therapy services are rendered.

c. Assume responsibility for all delegated tasks and shall not delegate a service which exceeds the expertise of the OTA or OTA limited permit holder.

d. Provide evaluation and development of a treatment plan for use by the OTA.

e. Ensure that the OTA, OT limited permit holder and OTA limited permit holder under the OT’s supervision have current licenses to practice.

f. Ensure that the signature of an OTA on an occupational therapy treatment record indicates that the occupational therapy services were provided in accordance with the rules and regulations for practicing as an OTA.

206.8(3) The following are functions that only an occupational therapist may provide and that shall not be delegated to an OTA:

a. Interpretation of referrals;

b. Initial occupational therapy evaluation and reevaluations;

c. Identification, determination or modification of patient problems, goals, and care plans;

d. Final discharge evaluation and establishment of the discharge plan;

e. Assurance of the qualifications of all assistive personnel to perform assigned tasks through written documentation of their education or training that is maintained and available at all times;

f. Delegation of and instruction in the services to be rendered by the OTA including, but not limited to, specific tasks or procedures, precautions, special problems, and contraindicated procedures; and

g. Timely review of documentation, reexamination of the patient and revision of the plan when indicated.

206.8(4) Supervision of unlicensed assistive personnel. OTs are responsible for patient care provided by unlicensed assistive personnel under the OT’s supervision. Unlicensed assistive personnel shall not provide independent patient care unless each of the following standards is satisfied:

a. The supervising OT shall physically participate in the patient's treatment or evaluation, or both, each treatment day;

b. The unlicensed assistive personnel shall provide independent patient care only while under the on-site supervision of the supervising OT;

c. Documentation made in occupational therapy records by unlicensed assistive personnel shall be cosigned by the supervising OT; and

d. The supervising OT shall provide periodic reevaluation of the performance of unlicensed assistive personnel in relation to the patient.

206.8(5) Minimum frequency of OT interaction. At a minimum, an OT must directly participate in treatment, either in person or through a telehealth visit, every twelfth visit for all patients and must document each visit. The occupational therapist shall participate at a higher frequency when the standard of care dictates.

206.8(6) Occupational therapy assistant responsibilities.

a. The occupational therapy assistant:
(1) Shall provide only those services for which the OTA has the necessary skills and shall consult the supervising occupational therapist if the procedures are believed not to be in the best interest of the patient;
(2) Shall gather data relating to the patient’s disability during screening, but shall not interpret the patient information as it pertains to the plan of care;
(3) Shall communicate any change, or lack of change, which occurs in the patient’s condition and which may need the assessment of the OT;
(4) Shall provide occupational therapy services only under the supervision of the occupational therapist;
(5) Shall provide treatment only after evaluation and development of a treatment plan by the occupational therapist;
(6) Shall refer inquiries that require interpretation of patient information to the occupational therapist;
(7) Shall be supervised by an occupational therapist, either on site or through the use of telecommunication or other technology, at all times when occupational therapy services are being rendered;
(8) May receive supervision from any number of occupational therapists; and
(9) Shall record on every patient chart the name of the OTA’s supervisor for each treatment session.
   b. The signature of an OTA on the occupational therapy treatment record indicates that occupational therapy services were provided in accordance with the rules and regulations for practicing as an OTA.

206.8(7) Unlicensed assistive personnel. Unlicensed assistive personnel may assist an OTA in providing patient care in the absence of an OT only if the OTA maintains in-sight supervision of the unlicensed assistive personnel and the OTA is primarily and significantly involved in that patient’s care.

206.8(8) The occupational therapy limited permit holder may evaluate clients, plan treatment programs, and provide periodic reevaluations under supervision of a licensed occupational therapist who shall bear full responsibility for care provided under the occupational therapist’s supervision.

[ARC 0223C, IAB 7/25/12, effective 8/29/12; ARC 3876C, IAB 7/4/18, effective 8/8/18]

645—206.9(147) Licensure by endorsement. An applicant who has been a licensed occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant under the laws of another jurisdiction shall file an application for licensure by endorsement with the board office. The board may receive by endorsement any applicant from the District of Columbia, another state, territory, province or foreign country who:
1. Submits to the board a completed application;
2. Pays the licensure fee;
3. Shows evidence of licensure requirements in the jurisdiction in which the applicant has been licensed that are similar to those required in Iowa;
4. Submits official results from the appropriate professional examination sent directly from the examination service to the board;
5. Provides official copies of the academic transcripts sent directly from the school to the board;
6. Provides verification of license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant has been licensed, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification direct from the jurisdiction’s board office if it provides:
   • Licensee’s name;
   • Date of initial licensure;
   • Current licensure status; and
   • Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and
7. Shows evidence of one of the following:
   • Completion of 30 hours for an occupational therapist and 15 hours for an occupational therapy assistant of board-approved continuing education during the immediately preceding two-year period;
   • The practice of occupational therapy for a minimum of 2,080 hours during the immediately preceding two-year period as a licensed occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant;
• Serving as a full-time equivalent faculty member teaching occupational therapy in an accredited school of occupational therapy for at least one of the immediately preceding two years; or
• Successfully passing the examination within a period of two years from the date of examination to the time application is completed for licensure.

Individuals who were issued their licenses by endorsement within six months of the license renewal date will not be required to renew their licenses until the next renewal two years later. A person who is licensed in another jurisdiction but who is unable to satisfy the requirements for licensure by endorsement may apply for licensure by verification, if eligible, in accordance with rule 645—19.1(272C).

[ARC 0223C, IAB 7/25/12, effective 8/29/12; ARC 3445C, IAB 11/8/17, effective 12/13/17; ARC 5758C, IAB 7/14/21, effective 8/18/21]

645—206.10(147) License renewal.

206.10(1) The biennial license renewal period for a license to practice as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant shall begin on the sixteenth day of the birth month and end on the fifteenth day of the birth month two years later. The licensee is responsible for renewing the license prior to its expiration. Failure of the licensee to receive notice from the board does not relieve the licensee of the responsibility for renewing the license.

206.10(2) An individual who was issued a license within six months of the license renewal date will not be required to renew the license until the subsequent renewal two years later.

206.10(3) A licensee seeking renewal shall:

a. Meet the continuing education requirements of rule 645—207.2(272C) and the mandatory reporting requirements of subrule 206.12(4). A licensee whose license was reactivated during the current renewal compliance period may use continuing education earned during the compliance period for the first renewal following reactivation; and

b. Submit the completed renewal application and renewal fee before the license expiration date.

206.10(4) Mandatory reporter training requirements.

a. A licensee who is required by Iowa Code section 232.69 to report child abuse shall indicate on the renewal application completion of training in child abuse identification and reporting as required by Iowa Code section 232.69(3) “b” in the previous three years or condition(s) for waiver of this requirement as identified in paragraph “e.”

b. A licensee who is required by Iowa Code section 235B.3 or 235E.2 to report dependent adult abuse shall indicate on the renewal application completion of training in dependent adult abuse identification and reporting as required by Iowa Code section 235B.16(5) “b” in the previous three years or condition(s) for waiver of this requirement as identified in paragraph “e.”

c. The course(s) shall be the curriculum provided by the Iowa department of human services.

d. The licensee shall maintain written documentation for three years after mandatory training as identified in paragraphs “a” to “c,” including program date(s), content, duration, and proof of participation.

e. The requirement for mandatory training for identifying and reporting child and dependent adult abuse shall be suspended if the board determines that suspension is in the public interest or that a person at the time of license renewal:

(1) Is engaged in active duty in the military service of this state or the United States.

(2) Holds a current waiver by the board based on evidence of significant hardship in complying with training requirements, including an exemption of continuing education requirements or extension of time in which to fulfill requirements due to a physical or mental disability or illness as identified in 645—Chapter 4.

f. The board may select licensees for audit of compliance with the requirements in paragraphs “a” to “e.”

206.10(5) Upon receiving the information required by this rule and the required fee, board staff shall administratively issue a two-year license. In the event the board receives adverse information on the renewal application, the board shall issue the renewal license but may refer the adverse information for further consideration or disciplinary investigation.
206.10(6) Persons licensed to practice as occupational therapists or occupational therapy assistants shall keep their renewal licenses displayed in a conspicuous public place at the primary site of practice.

206.10(7) Late renewal. The license shall become a late license when the license has not been renewed by the expiration date on the renewal. The licensee shall be assessed a late fee as specified in 645—subrule 5.11(4). To renew a late license, the licensee shall complete the renewal requirements and submit the late fee within the grace period.

206.10(8) Inactive license. A licensee who fails to renew the license by the end of the grace period has an inactive license. A licensee whose license is inactive continues to hold the privilege of licensure in Iowa, but may not practice as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in Iowa until the license is reactivated. A licensee who practices as an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in the state of Iowa with an inactive license may be subject to disciplinary action by the board, injunctive action pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.83, criminal sanctions pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.86, and other available legal remedies.

645—206.11(17A,147,272C) License reactivation. To apply for reactivation of an inactive license, a licensee shall:

206.11(1) Submit a reactivation application on a form provided by the board.

206.11(2) Pay the reactivation fee that is due as specified in 645—subrule 5.11(5).

206.11(3) Provide verification of current competence to practice occupational therapy by satisfying one of the following criteria:

   a. If the license has been on inactive status for five years or less, an applicant must provide the following:

      (1) Verification of the license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant is or has been licensed and is or has been practicing during the time period the Iowa license was inactive, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification from a jurisdiction’s board office if the verification includes:

         1. Licensee’s name;
         2. Date of initial licensure;
         3. Current licensure status; and
         4. Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and

      (2) Verification of completion of 15 hours of continuing education for an occupational therapy assistant and 30 hours of continuing education for an occupational therapist within two years of application for reactivation; or verification of active practice, consisting of a minimum of 2,080 hours, in another state or jurisdiction during the two years preceding an application for reactivation.

   b. If the license has been on inactive status for more than five years, an applicant must provide the following:

      (1) Verification of the license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant is or has been licensed and is or has been practicing during the time period the Iowa license was inactive, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification from a jurisdiction’s board office if the verification includes:

         1. Licensee’s name;
         2. Date of initial licensure;
         3. Current licensure status; and
         4. Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and

      (2) Verification of completion of 30 hours of continuing education for an occupational therapy assistant and 60 hours of continuing education for an occupational therapist within two years of application for reactivation; verification of active practice, consisting of a minimum of 2,080 hours, in another state or jurisdiction during the two years preceding an application for reactivation; or evidence of successful completion of the professional examination required for initial licensure completed within one year prior to the submission of an application for reactivation.

[ARC 0223C, IAB 7/25/12, effective 8/29/12; ARC 5021C, IAB 4/8/20, effective 6/1/20; ARC 5758C, IAB 7/14/21, effective 8/18/21]
645—206.12(17A,147,272C) License reinstatement. A licensee whose license has been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered must apply for and receive reinstatement of the license in accordance with 645—11.31(272C) and must apply for and be granted reactivation of the license in accordance with 645—206.11(17A,147,272C) prior to practicing occupational therapy in this state.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapters 17A, 147, 148B and 272C.

[ARC 0223C, IAB 7/25/12, effective 8/29/12]

Two or more ARCs