

MARCH-APRIL 2025

Newsletter

NSOTR Nova Scotia
Occupational Therapy
Regulator



ANNOUNCING OUR NEW NAME:

NOVA SCOTIA OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY REGULATOR

COTNS will be officially migrating to the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* on March 31, 2025. This means that the new regulations and rules for occupational therapy take effect that day - including a new name for the COTNS!

Our new name is the **Nova Scotia Occupational Therapy Regulator (NSOTR)**. This new name more clearly represents our regulatory role and public protection mandate, in line with best practices for regulatory bodies. We are excited to share our new logo and brand with you in the near future.

All documents, licenses, certificates, and permits issued under the old COTNS name will remain valid after March 31. If for any reason you require an updated document using the new name, please contact Josef at: admin@cotns.ca or 902-455-0556.

Please note the following important changes:

- A new logo is forthcoming (the one you see above is a placeholder!)
- A new website will launch in the coming months as **NSOTR.ca**.
- College e-mail addresses will be updated, but e-mails sent to the old addresses will auto-forward to the new addresses for the foreseeable future.

Please note that our office will be closed on Monday, March 31, 2025 to allow us to complete the transition and prepare for renewal.

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New Legislative Framework under the RHPA

There will be a new legislative framework for the regulation of occupational therapy under the RHPA. The College is currently governed by:

- *Occupational Therapists Act, 1998*
- *Registration Regulations*
- *General Regulations*
- *Professional Corporations Regulations*

Under the RHPA, the new regulator will be governed by:

- *Regulated Health Professions Act, 2023* ["RHPA"]
- Two sets of Regulations under the RHPA:
 - *Regulated Health Professions General Regulations*
 - *Regulations Respecting Occupational Therapy*
- *Bylaws*, which will be passed by the Board of the Regulator, as allowed by section 12 of the RHPA and section 4 of the *Regulations Respecting Occupational Therapy*.

What does the RHPA do?

The RHPA sets out the basic structure and for health professional regulators. The Act also sets out the Regulator's authority over registration and licensing and the basic procedures for committee activities and professional conduct. Sections 4, 13, and 14 of the RHPA allow the government to make regulations concerning the regulator and the Occupational Therapy Profession.

What about policies on registration and licensing, governance, professional conduct, or continuing competence?

All current policies of the College will need to align with the new Act and Regulations. Revisions to our current policies are underway and the updated policies will be published on our website as soon as they are approved by the Board or responsible committee.

Guide to the New Legislative Framework:

Where can I find rules concerning...?

NSOTR By-laws (to be approved)

- **Registration of professional corporations**
- **Currency requirements**
- **Advanced/restricted practice**
- **Board composition, selection, and officers**
- **Fines for practising with a suspended licence**
- **Sale of appliances**

RHPA General Regulations

- **Reporting requirements by the Regulator**
- **Committee powers and authority**
- **Professional conduct procedures**
- **Reinstatement procedures**
- **Requirement for registrants to report a criminal charge to the Regulator**

RHPA Occupational Therapy Regulations

- **Requirements for registration and licensure**
- **Categories of licensure**
- **Scope of practice of occupational therapy**
- **Title restriction for occupational therapy**

For Your Information

Consultation on Practice Standards & Psychotherapy

COTNS is looking for registrant feedback on our standards of practice. As we work to update our standards, we invite you to complete a short survey on any standards that you may have comments on.

We are also inviting you to complete a short survey on the current practice of psychotherapy by OTs in Nova Scotia. This survey will look at the initial and ongoing competence practices that OTs utilize in regards to their psychotherapy practice, and will be used to help inform key regulatory functions including continuing competence and professional practice.

You can access the standards of practice survey by clicking the link [HERE](#).

You can access the psychotherapy survey by clicking the link [HERE](#).

Any data collected from this survey is anonymous, and will be used to identify trends across the profession.

The surveys are available now, and are open until **9am April 22, 2025**.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact Rachel Avery at rachel.avery@cotns.ca.

Competence Review

NSOTR is preparing to begin its first Competence Review cohort.

Notification of selected registrants for the first cohort is planned for mid-April, with the first assessments taking place Spring/Summer 2025.

Please keep an eye out for communications from the Regulator regarding selection.

Changes to Registration Categories

The Regulator will be changing how we categorize licenses and registration in our records and our public directory. We make this change to align with our new legislation and regulations under the *RHPA*. A licence is now either:

Practicing: a registrant who holds this licence can practice occupational therapy without restrictions or conditions. This registrant is on the practicing register.

Conditional: a registrant who holds this licence can practice occupational therapy with restrictions or under terms, limits, or conditions. This registrant is on the conditional register.

A registrant who has not yet completed the NOTCE will have a Conditional licence and be on the Conditional register, but must still use **Provisional** title:

- Provisional Occupational Therapist
- Provisional OT



2025/2026 Licence Renewal

Changes to Renewal Process

Registrants will notice many differences between the renewal process this year and in previous years. Important differences include:

- The renewal process is completed entirely through your online Portal.
- Registrants enter their learning goals and activities, and complete a learning reflection and self-assessment form, as a part of the renewal process.
- There are new fields and questions on the profile update form, including questions related to racial or indigenous identity.

How Calculate Currency Hours

- For each employment, multiply the number of weeks you worked in 2024-2025 by the average number of hours worked per week.
- If you started working much more or much less at this employment during part of the year, calculate the hours separately for each period and add them together.
- Do not include periods you were on leave or on vacation in your calculation.

Example: Sue the OT:

- worked at NSH for **20 weeks full-time** (35 hours/week) and then changed to a **part-time** job (10 hours/week) for the rest of the year
- picked up some **casual** shifts on weekends at Shady Grove Nursing Home over the whole year, averaging 4 hours/week.
- took four weeks of leave and vacation.

Sue would calculate her hours like this:

- **NSH: 700 hours + 300 hours** [(20 weeks x 35 hours/week) + (30 weeks x 10 hours/week)]
- **Shady Grove Nursing Home: 200 hours** (50 weeks x 4 hours)

Therefore, in the profile update section of her renewal form, Sue would record 1000 hours under the employment record for NSH and 200 hours under the employment record for Shady Grove Nursing Home (for a total of 1200 Currency Hours overall).

Important Renewal Dates:

April 1, 2025: Renewal will be available through the online portal.

May 15, 2025: Deadline to submit a completed renewal request. Registrants who do not submit their renewal request or surrender their licence by this time must pay a late renewal fee of \$100.

May 31, 2025: End of licensing year and deadline for registrants to renew **or** inform the Regulator of their intent to surrender their licence.

If a registrant does not renew or surrender their licence by **May 31, 2025:**

- their licence will be **suspended**
- they will need to apply for re-licensure
- they cannot practise occupational therapy or use title until they are issued a new licence
- they must pay the reinstatement fee of \$100 in addition to the re-licensure application fee and any other applicable fees

Surrendering Your Licence

If you do not intend to practice occupational therapy after May 31, 2025 and do not wish to renew your licence, you must inform us that you want to surrender your licence before **May 15, 2025**.

If you surrender your licence, you will not be able to practice occupational therapy or use title. If you wish to return to practice in the future, you will be required to apply for re-licensure.

Steps to surrender your licence:

1. Log into your online portal.
2. On the main page, select "Request" next to the heading "Surrendered".
3. Complete the form and hit "Submit."

You will receive written confirmation from the Regulator when your surrender is approved.

Continuing Competency

Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada Training

The ***Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada*** is a document that provides standards that occupational therapists across Canada must meet in key areas of the profession including education, regulation, examination, accreditation, and continuing professional development. The College uses the Competencies as a basis and framework for our Continuing Competency Program, Practice Standards, and policies. For these reasons, it is important that all Nova Scotia OTs have read and remain familiar with the Competencies.

All practicing occupational therapists were required to complete a **free**, comprehensive online eLearning module on the new Competencies in 2023. We strongly encourage all registrants first licensed after July 1, 2023 to complete this training. The module is also useful as a refresher for all OTs and is **a convenient and accessible option for a learning activity to support your learning goals in the Continuing Competence Program.**

This module can be accessed on the ACOTRO website **[HERE](#)**.

COMPETENCIES FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS IN CANADA



CAOT · ACE
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes

Update on Bylaw Consultation

Thank you to all registrants who provided feedback to us on the draft NSOTR Bylaws. We have carefully considered your feedback and incorporated some of the suggested changes.

We would like to clarify that the Bylaws are an **authorizing document**. They contain some specific rules, but mostly **enabling language**; that is, rules that provide a framework for the NSOTR Board to make additional rules, policies, and decisions in the future.

The Bylaws are designed to accommodate new policies and standards. For example, the Bylaws enable future Boards to make new policies on areas of advanced or reserved practice.

The authority to make policies concerning advanced or reserved practice is not new, and existed under the old *Occupational Therapists Act*. The new Bylaws are very much in line with this past authority.

Any decisions the Board makes on advanced or reserved practice will be informed by consultation with:

- OTs who work in that field or practice area
- government
- employers
- national regulatory partners

Current registrants will be given a full opportunity to provide feedback on any new policies or standards concerning advanced or reserved practice.

Are you an employee or a contractor?

An important consideration for OTs

The College has recently received several questions from OTs seeking clarification about whether they are **employees** or **contractors** (also called self-employed). It is important to know your employment status for many reasons:

- There can be tax implications depending on your employment status.
- OTs who employ or contract other OTs have a professional and legal responsibility to follow all applicable laws and standards.
- OTs must accurately report to the College whether they are employees or self-employed for each place of practice

If you are unsure about your employment status, we strongly recommend referring to these guides to determine if you are an employee or self-employed, and/or seek legal advice:

- **[CRA Employment Status Guide](#)**
- **[Nova Scotia Labour, Skills, and Immigration](#)**



Having difficulties logging into the COTNS Online Portal?

Staff are available to assist. If you need to update your log-in e-mail or cannot re-set your log-in password because you do not have access to an old e-mail, please e-mail **admin@cotns.ca** or phone us at **902-455-0556** and press 1 to speak with Josef.

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