

USING VOLUNTEER HOURS TOWARDS THE COTM CURRENCY REQUIREMENT (Hours of Practice)

One of the requirements for registration with the College of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba is 600 hours of occupational therapy practice within the three years immediately preceding your application. Applicants who have graduated from an entry level occupational therapy program or re-entry program within the past 12 months are not required to meet this requirement. In some situations, hours of occupational therapy service provided as a volunteer can be counted towards the 600-hour currency requirement.

I work part-time and anticipate having difficulty maintaining 600 worked hours over the next few years. Can the volunteer work that I do count towards the 600-hour currency requirement?

Perhaps, but there are a number of requirements.

- You must be on the Register of Practising members of COTM at the time the volunteer hours are worked.
- The volunteer service you provide must be the practice of occupational therapy as described in *The Occupational Therapists Act*.
*The **practice of occupational therapy** is the application of occupational therapy knowledge, skills and judgment in the*
 - a. promotion of health and optimal occupational performance;*
 - b. prevention of disability; and*
 - c. assessment and resolution of occupational performance issues.*
- The organization you volunteer for and the clients you interact with (if applicable) must understand and acknowledge that you are providing occupational therapy service. A formal role-description is helpful.

Is there a specific process for using volunteer hours towards the currency requirement?

You must make a request in writing to COTM. Any volunteer work that you intend to use towards the currency requirement must be approved by COTM prior to when the hours are accrued.

If volunteer occupational therapy service has been provided outside Canada, it may be possible to have this work approved retrospectively under limited and specific circumstances. Retrospective review and approval is done on a case-by-case basis and would need approval by the Board of Assessors.

If you are contemplating doing volunteer work as an occupational therapist outside of Manitoba which you may potentially hope to use to contribute to your COTM currency then you are encouraged to connect with COTM.

I volunteer on the board of MSOT and some other not-for-profit organizations. Can I count this time?

No. Though you may be able to provide valuable insight and perspective, volunteering on board is not considered to be the practice of occupational therapy. Fund-raising activities for a board or organization are also not applicable.

This does not mean that you cannot be formally hired to work as an occupational therapist for a Not-for-profit organization in a paid or unpaid capacity.

What types of volunteer hours are typically approved?

COTM has pre-approved some volunteer activities such as providing therapy support to Manitoba Riding for the Disabled.

Other examples of volunteer occupational therapy service that may be approved include developing written materials, running a stress management group, teaching energy conservation skills or leading a cooking group for seniors or a disability organization.

How do I provide proof of having completed volunteer work?

You will be asked to submit a record of the hours of volunteer service, signed by the program manager or supervisor, to COTM.

Are there other specific requirements?

You must be able to meet other relevant regulatory requirements such as being fully accountable for your services, abiding by the COTM Code of Ethics, complying with other standards and guidelines, and maintaining continuing competence requirements. Carrying adequate malpractice insurance coverage is also essential; the insurance coverage that you may have with your paid employment will not cover the service you provide in a volunteer capacity.

For more information, please contact COTM at (204) 957-1214 or by email at registration@cotm.ca

This publication is provided for general information. For more specific information see
The Essential Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada,
The COTM Code of Ethics for Occupational Therapists and
The Occupational Therapists Act and Regulation.
COTM publications are available on our website at www.cotm.ca