



**NOTCE AND THE
COMPETENCIES
FOR OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPISTS IN
CANADA:**

UPDATE 2023

There is currently a multi-phase process underway to update the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination (NOTCE) that will structure the exam around the new Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada.

The first step is to revise the exam Blueprint, which describes the major domains that will be covered by the exam. Following this, the item bank will need to be examined for where there are gaps, and new item generation will occur over several years. Please note that an exam based on the new competency document is not anticipated before the end of 2025, and NOTCE communications will ensure that exam information is kept up to date.

A NOTCE working group completed its work on the Blueprint between March 2022- April 2023 and their recommendations were approved by the Certification Examination Committee, Exam Oversight Committee, and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' (CAOT) Board of Directors in April and May 2023.

The following describes the changes that are proposed to the NOTCE Blueprint, which will be published in the [Exam Resource Manual](#).

The first section will remain the same:

The purpose of the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination (NOTCE) is to assess the written application of academic knowledge and professional behaviour of individuals entering the occupational therapy profession in Canada. Successful completion of the NOTCE allows candidates to meet a registration requirement for **regulatory organizations** (except Quebec), subject to change by regulatory organizations.

The following sections have been re-written:

PURPOSE OF THE BLUEPRINT

The NOTCE is designed around a Blueprint or Table of Specifications. The purpose of the Blueprint is to depict the major content areas of the exam, provide a structural map indicating the relative distribution of desired content and reflect the way in which exam questions are coded. In addition, the Blueprint provides direction to the item generation process, the construction or make-up of each exam and informs candidates and other stakeholders of the main exam areas. The Blueprint assumes that exam content is at the entry-level of occupational therapy practice in Canada.

BACKGROUND

The Blueprint was revised in 2023 to reflect the updated **Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (2021)(COTC)**. The competency document was developed through an extensive process to ensure that it reflected the current competencies required to practice as an occupational therapist in Canada. The project was undertaken jointly by The Association of Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO), The Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs (ACOTUP) and CAOT) as directed by a Steering Committee that was comprised of members from each organization. It was developed as a single document for use amongst regulators, university curricula, academic accreditation, and the NOTCE.

The previous NOTCE Blueprint was built around the Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada (CAOT, 2007, 2012), a role-based model. The updated Blueprint is based on a competency model which groups individual competencies into domains.

WHAT IS A COMPETENCY?

The Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (COTC) (2021) were informed by a practice survey across Canada undertaken as part of the competency project. A description of the development process can be found in the Competency document. The current Blueprint components are built on the Domains as defined in the COTC (2021) that relate to the various domains of competence a Canadian occupational therapist needs during provision of occupational therapy services. An extensive review process was undertaken, guided by a Blueprint Working Group, consultation with professional psychometrists, and external consultants.

THE EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT

An examination blueprint describes the domains that will be covered by each NOTCE exam. The table below defines the proportion of exam items that will examine each concept. The Blueprint also directs the writing of exam items for the item bank. To ensure a variety of cases, practice areas, and client populations are used within an examination form, items are coded or have descriptors that are considered when items are developed and selected for each exam. This Blueprint is intended to help exam writers understand the exam content.

The process of using the Blueprint to construct an exam ensures that the exam evaluates the competencies relevant to occupational therapy practice. For example, the more important a Domain is for entry to practice, the more questions related to it will appear on the examination.

TABLE 1: EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT

To review the relevant descriptions and definitions of each Domain, please view the [Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada \(2021\)\(COTC\)](#)

COMPETENCY DOMAIN	PERCENTAGE RANGE ON EXAM
A. OT Expertise	20-25%
B. Communication and Collaboration	19-21%
C. Culture, Equity, and Justice	20-25%
D. Excellence in Practice	11-14%
E. Professional Responsibility	13-15%
F. Engagement with the Profession	5-8%

OTHER CODES/DESCRIPTORS:

The examination will contain a variety of questions as described by various categories such as type of client (e.g. individual, group), practice setting (e.g. hospital, community), characteristics of the person (e.g. age, gender), and cognitive taxonomy (knowledge, application, critical thinking).