

# Specialist Standard for Occupational Therapists



SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF  
**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS**

## **Specialist Standard for Occupational Therapists**

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# Introduction

The complexity of contemporary occupational therapy requires both professional breadth and advanced expertise. The specialist standard is a way to safeguard and strengthen advanced competence within the occupational therapy profession and its practices.

## The role of a specialist in occupational therapy includes

- Integrating, synthesizing, and applying knowledge in occupational therapy in relation to evidence and theory within their specialty field.
- Reflecting on ethical issues specific to their specialty field.
- Applying a professional approach in the role as specialist in occupational therapist in accordance with the profession's Code of Ethics.
- Identifying needs for, implement, and lead improvements and developments within their field of specialization.
- Identifying needs for, and leading competence development within their field of specialization.
- Applying advanced understanding of how external factors shape the professionalisation of the profession and the development of their field of specialization.
- Evaluating and reflecting on their role as a specialist and as a resource for other colleagues.
- Acting on and communicating their specialist expertise in various interdisciplinary forums (locally, regionally, and nationally).

# The Specialist Advisory Council

## Responsibilities

The Specialist Advisory Council is appointed by the Board the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists to oversee the Specialist Education in Occupational Therapy in accordance with the specialist standard decided by the General Assembly.

## The Specialist Advisory Council is responsible for

- Planning and implementing the parts of the specialist education organized by the Association.
- Granting specialist accreditation to occupational therapists who have completed specialist education in accordance with the Association's Specialist Standard.

Decisions by the Specialist Advisory Council can be appealed to the Board of the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists.

## Composition and work methods

The Specialist Advisory Council consists of a chairperson and five to seven members appointed by the Board. The composition and work methods of the Council are defined in the Statutes of the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists.

# Specialist standard

The Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists' specialist standard includes seven specialty areas within which specialization in occupational therapy can be acquired:

- Activity and health in working life and education
- Activity and health for children and youth
- Activity and health for older people
- Activity and health in long-term disability
- Activity and somatic health
- Activity and mental health
- Activity and public health

The specialist title is specific to the specialty area, for example, "Specialist in Occupational Therapy in Activity and Health in Work Life and Education". Additionally, it is possible to further specify the specialty area on an individual basis e.g. linking it to a specific diagnosis or an area of practice.

## Entry requirements for starting Specialist Education

Applicants must be occupational therapists licensed in Sweden.

# The Specialist Education for Occupational Therapist in Sweden

The specialist education consists of three modules:

1. Introductory course
2. Elective courses (including a master's degree)
3. Professional course

## Introductory course, Module 1

The first part of the specialist education consists of a mandatory introductory course organized by the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists. This course introduces the specialist role and its implications. During this module, an individual study plan is developed, which is assessed by the Council. The duration is equivalent to three weeks of full-time study conducted at half-time pace.

## Module 2

This module includes courses and/or programmes at the advanced level, resulting in at least a one-year master's degree (60 Swedish higher education credits (HECs\*), corresponding to 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits in occupational therapy or a related subject.

Only courses completed after entry-level education in occupational therapy may be included as part of Module 2. Courses and/or a thesis equivalent to a minimum of 15 higher education credits must be clearly linked to the chosen specialty area.

If the master's degree is awarded in a related subject, Module 2 must additionally include 7.5 HEC at the advanced level focusing on occupational concepts and occupational therapy theories and/or models.

## Professional course, Module 3

The final part is the professional course (Module 3) equivalent to 10 weeks of full-time study, delivered at a half time pace through distance learning by the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists.

The aim of the professional course is for the participant to increase their competence in their chosen specialist area through in-depth analysis and synthesis.

\* 1 HEC = 1 week of full-time study, approximately 40 hours.

## Admission to Module 3 requires

- Completion and passing of Module 1 and all components of Module 2, including at least a one-year master's degree (60 ECTS) documented in the individual study plan.
- At least five years of professional experience as an occupational therapist during the past ten years, of which a minimum of two years must be within the field corresponding to the chosen specialization. The professional experience must correspond to at least half-time employment.

## Specialist Accreditation

The Specialist Advisory Council issues certification for specialists upon completion and examination of all modules in the specialist education.