

Equity Policy
<p>Purpose: To affirm the commitment of the North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association (NCOTA) to equitable, inclusive, and accessible processes and activities, and to provide guidance for how we will work to facilitate equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in our organization.</p>
<p>Policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NCOTA is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment where all Board members, staff, volunteers, and members feel respected and valued regardless of gender, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities or abilities, education, or other identities. 2. NCOTA is committed to being nondiscriminatory and providing equal opportunities for participation in all areas of our work. 3. NCOTA recognizes the value that diverse life experiences bring to our Board, leadership, and membership, and we strive to listen to all views with respect. 4. NCOTA aims to recognize and address inequities in our policies, programs, and services.
<p>Procedure: NCOTA agrees to abide by the following action items to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in our work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board members and others in leadership roles will complete annual group training to ensure they are consistently developing skills and knowledge related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. 2. NCOTA leadership will commit energy and resources in support of the work of the NCOTA DEI Committee. 3. NCOTA leadership will evaluate the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives represented by Board members at least yearly and actively recruit individuals with diverse backgrounds/perspectives to serve as Board members. 4. The NCOTA Strategic Plan will include goals and strategies related to improving the inclusivity, equity, diversity, and access in the organization's policies, initiatives, and/or activities. 5. NCOTA will maintain a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, racism, and intolerance in the context of all activities organized or sanctioned by the Association.
<p>Responsibility:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NCOTA Board will complete annual DEI training (generally at the NCOTA Board Retreat each year, unless otherwise scheduled). 2. The DEI Committee Chair will organize the committee and ensure regular meetings, open communication with the full NCOTA Board, and implementation of ideas to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Association. 3. The DEI Committee Chair will make an effort to ensure that committee members are representative of various backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives.
Effective Date: 7/2025
Review Date: 7/2030
Addendum A: Definitions

Diversity: existence of a wide variety of traits, identities, experiences, lifestyles, values and beliefs, and desires within a group of people.

Zero-tolerance: refusal by an individual, group, or institution to accept any violation of a rule or law, regardless of the severity of the violation or the context in which it happened, necessitating the application of the punishment or consequence to anyone who violates the rule.

Race: a social construct used to group people. Race was constructed as a hierarchical human-grouping system, generating racial classifications to identify, distinguish and marginalize some groups across nations, regions and the world. Race divides human populations into groups often based on physical appearance, social factors, and cultural backgrounds (National Human Genome Research Institute, 2023; <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/Race>).

Racism: discrimination, hatred or violence towards a person or a group of persons based on the belief that race determines intellectual, physical, and moral qualities and that there is a racial hierarchy, i.e., that one's own race is superior to that of the other person or persons.

Equity: affordance of opportunities and resources a person or group needs to meet their goals in a manner that recognizes imbalances in starting points. Equity differs from equality in that resources are provided based on the needs of the person or group (equity), rather than being distributed in the same amount across all persons or groups (equality).

Inclusion: the practice of providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be marginalized or disenfranchised. Inclusion also may be defined as providing a sense of belonging for all people within a group, regardless of diverse aspects of their identities, traits, experiences, lifestyles, or values and beliefs.

Bullying: the use of verbal, physical, or social behavior that is intended to threaten, coerce, intimidate, or harm someone who is vulnerable or holds less power and who feels unable to stop the behavior.

Harassment: any unwanted behavior, physical, verbal, or implies, that is intended to demean, humiliate, or embarrass a person, or that makes a person feel uncomfortable, humiliated, embarrassed, or mentally distressed.

Intolerance: unwillingness or refusal to consider, respect, or accept the beliefs, values, or behaviors of another person or group of people.

Microaggressions: a statement, action, or incident that communicates, whether intentional or unintentional, hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward a person or people from stigmatized, minoritized, or marginalized groups.