



January 2024

## State of the Journal: Introducing the Policy and Advocacy Category

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### Recommended Citation

Dirette, D. P. (2024). State of the Journal: Introducing the Policy and Advocacy Category. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 12(1), 1-5.

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### Keywords

accomplishments, education, global impact, policy, advocacy

### Erratum

Corrected page limit in Appendix A and added a link to OJOT's full Author Guidelines.

### Credentials Display

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DOI: 10.15453/2168-6408.2300

## Year in Review

This past year was another wonderful year for the *Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* (OJOT), with new additions to the boards, transitions of members in various roles, and the achievement of new milestones. OJOT now has seven members on the OJOT Advisory Board; 16 members on the OJOT Editorial Board, including six assistant editors; and 87 members on the OJOT Editorial Review Board. Dr. Jennifer Fortuna transitioned from the OJOT Art Editor to the OJOT Editorial Review Board, and we welcomed Erin Barrus as the new OJOT Art Editor beginning with this issue. Check out her first [Occupation and the Artist](#) feature profiling a group of adult artists with disabilities who work at ArtWorks in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

One of our proud milestones this year was reaching ONE MILLION full-text downloads! In the short time since reaching that milestone in August, readership has continued to accelerate, and we have now reached over 1,073,700 full-text downloads. We are still amazed by the breadth and depth of the OJOT readership and the quality of the submissions we receive. The global impact of OJOT has continued to expand, and we now have a readership in every country worldwide. In addition to the readership, OJOT fosters a global exchange of evidence through international authorship. Of the 524 peer-reviewed articles published in OJOT, 97 have at least one author from a country outside of the US, constituting 18.5% of our publications. We are proud to be a globally connected conduit for open access to clinical solutions and educational resources for the profession of occupational therapy (OT).

Maintaining the publication of a quality open-access journal is costly. Because of these rising costs, we have decided that we must revise our fee structure. Previously, fees were paid by individual authors. The new fee structure will be based on the entire manuscript and depend on the category in which it is published. This change is made in fairness to authors of shorter manuscripts that require less editing, reference editing, copy editing, and formatting. The fee will remain a publication fee and not a submission fee. Therefore, fees are paid at the time of acceptance rather than at the time of submission. The following are our new publication fees for the manuscripts by publication category.

| Category  | Fee in U.S. Dollars |
|---|---------------------|
| Applied Research, Topics in Education, or Guidelines for Practice | \$700               |
| Opinions in the Profession, or Policy and Advocacy                | \$500               |
| Letters to the Editor   | \$300               |

## New Category: Policy and Advocacy

Along with the accomplishments and changes this year, we are excited and proud to introduce a new category of OJOT publication titled Policy and Advocacy. At the annual OJOT Editorial Board meeting in Kansas City in April 2023, the board added this new category of articles intended to address policy and advocacy issues that impact the OT profession. Policy and advocacy are two interrelated concepts that are critical for influencing decision-making by governing bodies, increasing public awareness of critical issues, and promoting laws and regulations that secure the profession of OT for current and future practice. Policy is a set of rules or principles created by organizations to guide decision-making and actions. Advocacy is the act of promoting a particular cause or idea, often with the goal of educating the public, influencing policymakers, and promoting the adoption and implementation of policy. These two concepts work in tandem as advocacy increases awareness and policy helps achieve tangible results.

Like many health care and education professions (Burnworth et al., 2021; Lawrence, 2017; Nagro et al., 2019; Rechtchaffen & Kapoor, 2021), the OT profession has seen advocacy and policy become increasingly important not only for sustaining the profession but also for providing quality therapy to the clients who seek OT services. Advocacy efforts can work to impact policies that reduce bias and discrimination, protect and increase access to care, reduce health care discrepancies, support students with disabilities, influence public perceptions, increase funding for research, and promote the value of OT services. Because multiple stakeholders are competing for limited resources, advocating for changes that improve client care has become a moral and ethical professional obligation (Nagro et al., 2019). As advocates, we can become drivers of changes that impact the OT profession rather than passive recipients of policies occurring through the legislative and judicial processes. We encourage occupational therapists to become advocates who build strong relationships with decision-makers and stakeholders, identify allies, and mobilize resources and supports to achieve goals that protect and advance the OT profession.

Educational programs can foster advocacy and policy by teaching OT students health care policy literacy to encourage them to become consumers, advocates, and drivers of policy changes. Health care policy literacy is the awareness and understanding of legislative and regulatory efforts conducted by policymakers, insurers, and quality assessment organizations (Lawrence, 2017). Building students' awareness of legislative and regulatory activities at the local, state, and federal levels is a vital first step to becoming consumers and advocates for health care policy (Rechtschaffen et al., 2021). Educational programs can also help develop an advocacy disposition, advocacy skills, and political leadership (Nagro et al., 2019). Events, such as Capitol Days or the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association's Lansing Lobby Day, can involve students and help build their confidence in their ability to advocate for the OT profession and develop advocacy as part of their professional identity.

Effective policy and advocacy work requires a deep understanding of the issues and the ability to communicate ideas and proposals in a compelling way. Clear and concise dissemination of information is critical to advocacy and one of many skills required for current and future leaders who strive to be drivers of change (Nagro et al., 2019). For these reasons, OJOT endeavors to publish articles that educate the readers about the issues, foster advancements and protections for the profession, and positively shape practice. Scholars and researchers who can disseminate their work in a clear, concise, and convincing manner can provide education not only to OT students, clinicians, administrators, and academicians but also to policymakers, on whom we ultimately rely to take actions to support the profession. Well-written policy and advocacy articles can empower policymakers by providing them with talking points to support the actions that make positive legislative changes. Policy and advocacy submissions to OJOT are not limited specifically to OT policies. They may address general health care and education policies that will ultimately impact the OT profession. Submissions in this category may also discuss education programs and research regarding teaching occupational therapy students how to become advocates and influencers of policy changes.

The first OJOT article in the new Policy and Advocacy category was published in the last issue (Oselio et al., 2023). This inaugural article titled "A New Opportunity for Occupational Therapists to Open Cases in Home Health" describes the recent legislative changes that allow occupational therapists to be case managers in the home health care setting (Oselio et al., 2023). The authors encourage occupational therapists to advocate for this role with home health care agencies and develop or hone admission process skills. This Policy and Advocacy article details the process and benefits of occupational therapists working in this home health care role, aims to increase OT services for this population, and

promotes the OT profession's future in home health care delivery. We encourage more work focused on Policy and Advocacy and call for more submissions of scholarly reviews and research to this new OJOT category. See Appendix A for the official guidelines for submissions to the Policy and Advocacy category. See Appendix B for the reviewer checklist for this category.

We are looking forward to another productive year of publishing articles in this new OJOT category and all of the OJOT categories. We look forward to your submissions and working with you to continue publishing high-quality articles. We appreciate the people who continue to support the journal through scholarly and financial contributions and wish everyone a happy and healthy new year!

### References

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**If you enjoyed this article and are able to give, please consider a contribution to support OJOT's mission of providing open-access to high quality articles that focus on applied research, practice, education, and advocacy in the occupational therapy profession. <https://secure.wmualumni.org/s/give?funds=POJO>**

## Appendix A

### Guidelines for Submission for Policy and Advocacy

#### Policy and Advocacy Category

Manuscripts in this category include research or opinion papers that examine a policy or an avenue for advocacy related to the profession of occupational therapy. The manuscript should include a background of the problem, a succinct review of the policy or literature related to the topic, and suggestions for modification of policy or promotion of advocacy. Papers submitted in this category should be 10–20 pages, have adequate references (15–25), and include (1–6) tables and figures as needed to clarify information. An abstract should be included with a maximum of 200 words. If a manuscript submitted to this category involves human-subjects research, then the author(s) must follow the same guidelines in the Applied Research category pertaining to informed consent and approval by an independent, named human subjects/ethics committee. In addition, if the manuscript describes clinical trials, it must be registered with a clinical website, and the website address and registration number must be provided.

Access the full Author Guidelines here: [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/ojot/author\\_guidelines.html](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/ojot/author_guidelines.html)

## Appendix B

### Reviewer/Author Checklist for Policy and Advocacy



The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy  
*www.ojot.org*

#### Review Guideline/Checklist for Editorial Review Board Members

*Reviewers:* Please use the following checklist as a guide for your written review that will be uploaded to ojot.org and shared with the author(s). You may upload this checklist with comments to ojot.org in conjunction with your written report, but it is not intended to take the place of your full review.

#### Category: POLICY AND ADVOCACY

|                             |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Title</b>                | Reflects the paper   |  |
| <b>Abstract</b>             | Appropriate length for category of submission (200 words max)                                      |  |
|                             | Accurately and concisely conveys content   |  |
| <b>Content</b>              | Manuscript examines a policy or presents an advocacy discussion related to OT                      |  |
|                             | Presents a clear and concise position regarding the issue presented                                |  |
|                             | Supports that position with either adequate research methods or a clear, concise literature review |  |
| <b>References</b>           | Adequate (15–25)   |  |
| <b>Figures &amp; Tables</b> | As needed to clarify data or information (1–6)   |  |
|                             | Clearly labeled and understandable   |  |
| <b>Style</b>                | Well written, organized  |  |
|                             | Clear & precise language   |  |
|                             | Key terms well defined and retain the same definition throughout the paper                         |  |
| <b>Overall</b>              | Examines issue(s) of importance for the profession of OT   |  |
|                             | Potential to contribute to OT profession   |  |