

Occupational Therapist Assistant & Physiotherapist Assistant Education Accreditation Program

NOTIFICATION OF PILOT PEER REVIEW TEAM COMPOSITION

March 2018

BACKGROUND

Recruiting sufficient peer reviewers to complete scheduled accreditation reviews has always been challenging, more so as the OTA & PTA EAP grows, and especially with respect to the recruitment of OTA/PTA educators. The information in this memo outlines these challenges and describes a pilot solution that will be implemented in 2019.

As per [TOR-01 Peer Review Teams](#), each of the OTA & PTA EAP's Peer Review Teams (PRT's) is composed of four members:

- one occupational therapist representing the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT);
- one occupational therapist OTA/PTA educator;
- one physiotherapist representing Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC) and;
- one physiotherapist OTA/PTA educator.

The PRT for single discipline programs (e.g.: PTA only) is composed of two members of the program's discipline. Further requirements for peer reviewers are outlined in section 3.0 of TOR-01 and include minimum levels of experience, and approval from representative organization.

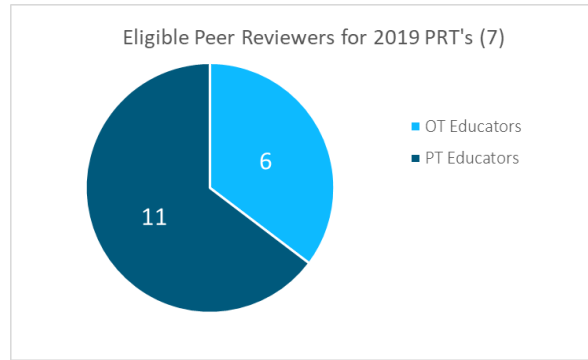
PEER REVIEWER NEEDS 2019

Currently, the OTA & PTA EAP has 12 accreditation reviews scheduled across Canada in 2019-2020, and 7 reviews in 2019 alone. Our current pool of peer reviewers holds 53 volunteers. 28 volunteers are OTA/PTA educators (15 occupational therapists and 13 physiotherapists).

Despite the number of OTA/PTA educators in the pool, these PRT roles are the most challenging to fill. Ability to join a PRT is influenced by the following:

- whether the educator's program is undergoing an onsite accreditation review, or writing an SSR during that year;
- whether another peer reviewer from the same education program is part of a PRT that year;
- whether program administration will approve a request for leave to attend an onsite review.

Before accounting for volunteers from the same education program, the table below demonstrates that there are not sufficient numbers of OTA PTA educators who are OT's to fill the need for 2019.



Of the eligible reviewers, there are 8 from the same 3 programs. Assuming only 1 reviewer from each program can participate per year, the overall pool size shrinks beyond that depicted.

It is worth noting that the numbers above represent the *possible* pool. Not all eligible peer reviewers that are offered the opportunity to join a PRT are able to commit to doing so. Of the current pool of OTA/PTA Educators, 6 OT's (40% of pool) and 4 PT's (30% of pool) have turned down all opportunities to participate in a review over the last two years, for a variety of valid reasons.

OVERVIEW OF PILOT

The Joint Accreditation Committee of the OTA & PTA EAP met in February 2018 and discussed the challenges of PRT recruitment and possible alternative PRT composition to ensure the sustainability of the accreditation program. The JAC agreed to pilot a contingency process to allow more flexibility in the composition of peer review teams as follows:

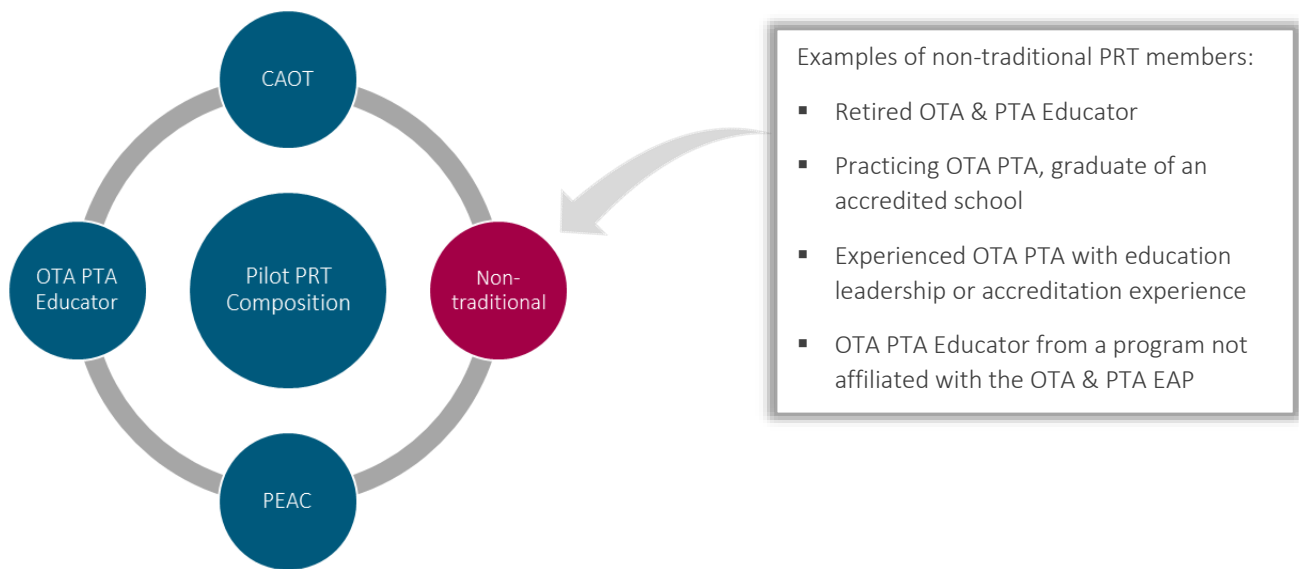
When two OTA / PTA educators cannot be recruited for a Peer Review Team, the OTA & PTA EAP staff has discretion to choose a suitable candidate from outside of the OTA/PTA educator eligibility guidelines, in consultation with the education program under review. The education program will have the right to approve a substitute, creating a non-standard team formation.

Examples of appropriate substitutes for one of the two OTA/PTA educator positions on a peer review team might include:

- Retired OTA/PTA Educator
- Practicing OTA/PTA, graduate of an accredited school
- Experienced OTA/PTA with education leadership or accreditation experience
- OTA/PTA educator from a program not affiliated with the OTA & PTA EAP

In cases where an OTA PTA Educator member is substituted with a non-standard peer reviewer, the team will always include one college educator representative. If the substitute member is not an educator, either the PEAC or CAOT member will have education experience.

Below is a diagrammatic representation of a pilot team:



WHEN WILL THE PILOT BEGIN?

Recruitment for 2019 accreditation reviews has already begun. Where availability of eligible OTA PTA Educator reviewers is insufficient, we will propose teams that consist of one OTA/PTA educator and an appropriate substitute from the options described above. A small pool of alternative peer reviewers will be recruited in 2018. This will allow sufficient time for training of any new reviewers to ensure they are prepared for 2019 reviews, if they are needed.

HOW WILL THIS PILOT AFFECT MY ACCREDITATION REVIEW?

We have measures in place to ensure that having an alternative PRT will not adversely affect your accreditation review. Training and mentorship will be provided to non-traditional reviewers who join a PRT to prepare them for their role. Alternative peer reviewers will bring valuable experience as front-line clinicians, graduates of OTA PTA education programs, and as educators, which will serve to complement the overall PRT. We anticipate that measures put in place to support alternative peer reviewers will allow them to serve as fully contributing members of the PRT.

HOW WILL THESE ALTERNATIVE PEER REVIEWERS BE RECRUITED?

A small group of potential alternative reviewers who have the appropriate experience and qualifications has already expressed interest and will be contacted about their interest in joining the pool. Other interested applicants are encouraged to contact the OTA & PTA EAP directly for more information and to apply to join the pool of reviewers.

QUESTIONS?

Still have questions? Please do not hesitate to contact Program Manager Amanda Walton at amanda.walton@otapta.ca or by phone at 226-636-0632, ext. 103.