



## **Change in the Hand Therapy Certification Examination eligibility requirement from five (5) years to three (3) years after certification or licensure as an occupational or physical therapist**

As of May 2017, candidates for the Hand Therapy Certification Examination will be required to be licensed as an occupational therapist or a physical therapist for three (3) years instead of five (5). The requirement of 4000 hours in direct hand therapy practice experience remains unchanged.

This change was influenced by several observations by the Hand Therapy Certification Commission (HTCC) Examination Committee. In 2014, HTCC in consultation with Professional Examination Service (ProExam), performed a practice analysis study of hand therapy, the fifth in a series of similar studies performed by HTCC over a 30-year period. In 2016, HTCC published the results of this analysis in the *Journal of Hand Therapy*. Through the practice analysis process and feedback received since it was completed, it was identified that new therapists appear to be acquiring hand therapy knowledge at a more accelerated rate than their predecessors due to immediate access of information through technology and advanced academic requirements. The practice analysis showed that much of the knowledge gained by therapists was obtained in the first two years of specialization. In addition, both occupational therapists and physical therapists now enter practice with a graduate degree instead of a bachelor degree.

The HTCC board has adopted new eligibility requirements to sit for the Hand Therapy Certification Examination. The new eligibility requirements with the changes in bold are as follows:

*You must be an occupational therapist (OT) or physical therapist (PT) with a current professional credential. Depending on your profession and where you practice, a professional credential may include a license, certificate, or registration. In all cases, it is the credential that you need to legally practice in that location. This credential must be active, and you must be in good standing with the agency that issued it.*

- ***You must have been certified or licensed for a minimum of three years, based on the date of issue of the certificate or license.***
- *Examples of acceptable proof for length of practice include a copy of your original license, or a copy of your NBCOT certificate, or a print-out from your state licensure board with your original date of licensure. Work under a temporary license cannot be included.*
- *You must have accrued a minimum of 4,000 hours of direct practice experience in hand therapy as described below. This experience may have been obtained at any time during your practice as an OT or PT. It may have been obtained in any country. Clinical hours obtained as an occupational therapy or physical therapy assistant or on a temporary license cannot be submitted.*