U.S. Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics
2 Massachusetts Ave. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20212

MAY 27 2009

[redacted]

Dear Mr. Repunte:

This letter is in response to your March 24, 2009 e-mail regarding the discussion of education and licensure requirements for occupational therapists that appears in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) produces the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* as a career guidance resource. Its target audience is students and career changers. The information provided by the *Handbook* on the educational requirements of an occupation pertains to the requirements for entry into that occupation. The information does not describe the educational profile of those individuals already employed in an occupation.

The BLS has no role in establishing educational, licensing, or practicing standards for any occupation; any such standards are established by national accrediting organizations and are merely reported by BLS in the *Handbook*. Education requirements for occupations may change over time, and often vary by employer or State. Each State may have individual requirements for licensure and practice of that occupation in that State. We have reviewed the *Handbook* statement on occupational therapists and determined that modifications were needed to clarify that 1) the educational attainment mentioned in the statement is for new entrants into this occupation, and not for individuals currently employed in this occupation, and 2) eligibility requirements for licensure vary by State. The modifications were made in the 2008-09 Web edition of the *Handbook* on March 30, 2009.

MAY 27 2009

Specifically, changes were made to the following paragraphs:

Original
Occupational therapists must be licensed, requiring a master's degree in occupational therapy, 6 months of supervised fieldwork, and passing scores on national and State examinations.

Modified
Individuals pursuing a career as an occupational therapist usually need to earn a master's degree in occupational therapy from an accredited college or university, which includes 6 months of supervised fieldwork.

Original
Licensure. All States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the District of Columbia regulate the practice of occupational therapy. To obtain a license, applicants must graduate from an accredited educational program and pass a national certification examination. Those who pass the exam are awarded the title "Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR)." Some States have additional requirements for therapists who work in schools or early intervention programs. These requirements may include education-related classes, an education practice certificate, or early intervention certification.

Modified
Licensure. All States regulate the practice of occupational therapy. To obtain a license, applicants must graduate from an accredited educational program and pass a national certification examination. Those who pass the exam are awarded the title "Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR)." Specific eligibility requirements for licensure vary by State.

I hope the modifications outlined above address your concerns. However, if they do not, this decision may be appealed within 45 days of receipt of this letter. Please direct any appeal to Cathy Kazanowski, Chief of the Division of Management Systems, at 202-691-7756 or kazanowski.cathy@bls.gov.

Roy T. Repunte, OTR/L--3

MAY 27 2009

Thank you again for bringing your concerns with the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* to my attention. I appreciate your interest in the Bureau's Employment Projection Program.

Sincerely yours,

John M. Galvin

JOHN M. GALVIN
Associate Commissioner for
Employment and Unemployment Statistics