

Role Statement – Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy

Updated March 2026

ROLE DETAILS

College	College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Reporting to	Dean (Education) or Dean (Students)

ROLE SUMMARY

The Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy provides integrated academic, strategic, research, and operational leadership for the discipline and its associated courses.

This role provides leadership in ensuring academic quality, accreditation compliance, staff capability, resource sustainability, strong research/scholarship integration, and an outstanding student experience.

In addition, the Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy plays a critical role in advancing the discipline, strengthening its national and international profile, fostering innovation in curriculum and pedagogy, and leading engagement with industry, professional bodies, government, and community partners. Through active external collaboration and thought leadership, the role contributes to shaping policy and practice, ensuring the discipline remains future-focused, impactful, and aligned with emerging professional and societal needs.

The Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy is an academic leader (Teaching Specialist, Teaching and Research, Research Only) who works collaboratively with the College Executive Leadership Team, Course Coordinators, researchers, and external stakeholders to deliver high-quality, future-focused education that embeds research/scholarship excellence within discipline curriculum and practice, aligned with the University and College Strategic Plans. The Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy will foster a positive, inclusive, and collaborative workplace culture.

UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES

All staff at Flinders are responsible for understanding their obligations and responsibilities as set out in the University's code of conduct and are expected to:

- demonstrate commitment to the University's values of Integrity, Courage, Innovation, Excellence, and the underlying ethos of being Student Centred;
- contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the team or work unit to meet the University's objectives. This includes demonstrating appropriate and professional workplace behaviours, providing assistance to team members, if required, and undertaking other key responsibilities or activities as directed by one's supervisor;
- promote and support an inclusive workplace culture which values diversity and embraces the principles of equal opportunity;
- perform their responsibilities in a manner which reflects and responds to continuous improvement; and
- familiarise themselves and comply with the University's *Work Health and Safety, Injury Management and Equal Opportunity* policies.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy reports to the Dean Education, with strategic and operational collaboration with the College Executive Leadership Team, to deliver on the following:

Academic Leadership and Program Quality

- Provide overall academic leadership for the discipline and its courses, ensuring high standards of curriculum design, delivery, assessment, and review.
- Oversee the design, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of courses to ensure learning outcomes, student success, graduate qualities, employability objectives, and accreditation requirements are met.
- Lead the discipline in addressing complex or urgent teaching and learning issues, acting as an escalation point for Course Coordinators where required.
- Promote and embed the research/scholarship-teaching-practice nexus across courses and the broader discipline.
- Responsibility for decisions relating to college student appeals, progression and grade reviews as delegate for Dean Education.

Accreditation, Compliance, and External Engagement

- Lead the preparation, submission, and review of accreditation and curriculum documentation, including coordination of panels, site visits, working parties, and reporting obligations.
- Ensure ongoing compliance with professional, regulatory, and university accreditation standards and policy for existing and new programs.
- Represent, advocate for, and advance the discipline locally, nationally, and internationally, including active engagement with government, professional bodies, industry, community organisations, and the broader education sector.

Strategic Planning and Discipline Development

- Contribute to and lead strategic initiatives related to learning, teaching, and research/scholarship within and between disciplines, aligned with the College and University Strategic Plans.
- Identify opportunities and risks for discipline sustainability, growth, innovation, and market positioning, including domestic and international load planning.
- Propose, lead, and implement new courses, discipline and cross-disciplinary innovations, and significant curriculum changes that reflect contemporary research, scholarship, disciplinary advances, and emerging policy directions.
- Provide discipline specific advice on admissions, marketing, and promotional materials in collaboration with the Dean (Education).

People Leadership and Staff Development

- Provide leadership in fostering a positive, inclusive, and collaborative workplace culture that supports staff wellbeing, diversity, professional excellence, and research/scholarship-informed teaching and practice.

- Facilitate orientation, mentoring, and ongoing support for new fixed term and continuing academic staff, including those taking on new teaching or research/scholarship-led curriculum responsibilities.
- Guide and support Course Coordinators in curriculum delivery, assessment practices, student management, academic governance, and integration of research/scholarship within teaching.
- Provide advice on workload model implementation and escalate issues to the Dean (People and Resources) as required.

Resource and Workforce Management

- Lead the strategic allocation and management of academic resources, including staffing and non-salary budgets, in collaboration with the Dean (People and Resources).
- Oversee teaching allocations and the appointment, management, and performance monitoring of sessional staff within approved budgets.
- Oversee course and topic performance (e.g. class sizes, delivery modes, staffing profiles) to ensure an appropriate balance between educational quality, research/scholarship engagement, and financial sustainability.

Industry, Community, and Research/Scholarship Partnerships

- Build and maintain strong industry, community, and research/scholarship partnerships to enhance curriculum relevance, placement opportunities, employability outcomes, applied research/scholarship activity, and knowledge translation.
- Strengthen the profile and reputation of the discipline through strategic external engagement that showcases discipline research/scholarship strengths, societal impact, and contribution to policy and practice.
- Represent the discipline in key external forums to shape and influence professional standards, regulatory expectations, and sector policy.

Research and Scholarship Leadership and Integration

- Provide academic leadership to showcase discipline research and scholarship excellence within teaching programs, including the incorporation of current research, case studies, and translational outcomes into curriculum design and delivery.
- Identify and promote opportunities to embed research and scholarship within discipline curriculum and professional practice, including research/scholarship-led teaching, inquiry-based learning, and student partnership in research/scholarship activities.
- Work collaboratively with discipline researchers/scholars, research centres, and the Dean (Research) and Dean (Students) to ensure alignment between research/scholarship strengths, curriculum content, and future workforce needs.
- Support and encourage academic staff to integrate their research/scholarship into teaching practice and to develop innovative, research/scholarship-informed pedagogies.
- Champion initiatives that enhance student exposure to research and scholarship culture, methods, and impact, including honours, capstone, industry-linked research, and higher degree pathways.

Governance, Policy, and Continuous Improvement

- Participate in internal and external committees relevant to the role and establish effective communication structures within the discipline.
- Ensure compliance with University policies, including education quality, research integrity, work health and safety, equity, and conduct requirements.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and evidence-informed decision-making across teaching, research/scholarship integration, and academic governance.

Other Duties

- Any other responsibilities commensurate with the level of the role as assigned by the supervisor, Vice-President and Executive Dean and/or the University.

WORKLOAD ALLOCATION

The workload allocation for the Lead, Discipline of Occupational Therapy will reflect the scope and complexity of duties and align with obligations outlined in the University Workload Model.

KEY CAPABILITIES**Academic and Professional Credentials**

- Completion of a PhD or other relevant and equivalent qualification and/or experience.

Strategic Academic Leadership

- Ability to provide clear academic direction for a discipline or program aligned with College and University strategy
- Capacity to balance long-term vision with short-term operational decision making
- Sound judgement in navigating complexity, ambiguity, and competing priorities

Curriculum and Accreditation Expertise

- Deep understanding of curriculum design, assurance of learning, and continuous improvement processes
- Demonstrated capability in leading accreditation, reaccreditation, and curriculum review activities
- Ability to translate regulatory and professional standards into coherent, high quality curriculum

Research and Scholarship Integration

- Strong understanding of the research/scholarship–teaching–practice nexus
- Ability to identify, showcase, and embed discipline research and scholarship within curriculum and professional practice
- Leadership in creating opportunities for staff and students to engage with research informed teaching, inquiry based learning, and applied scholarship

People Leadership and Capability Development

- Proven ability to lead, support, and influence academic staff across career stages and appointment types
- Strong coaching, mentoring, and performance enablement skills
- Capacity to foster an inclusive, collaborative, and psychologically safe academic culture
- Demonstrated knowledge of the diversity and equality agenda and appreciation of a proactive approach to diversity within a complex organisation.

Stakeholder Engagement and Influence

- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build trust and credibility
- Effectiveness in engaging internal stakeholders (Course Coordinators, researchers, professional staff, College leadership)
- Confidence in representing the discipline with external stakeholders including industry, professional bodies, and accrediting agencies

Resource and Workforce Management

- Capability to make evidence based decisions about staffing, workloads, and resource allocation
- Understanding of academic workload models and constraints in a higher education context
- Ability to balance educational quality, research engagement, and sustainability

Change Leadership and Innovation

- Demonstrated capacity to lead change sensitively and effectively in academic environments
- Willingness to challenge established practices and introduce innovation in curriculum, pedagogy, and program delivery
- Resilience and adaptability in the face of organisational and sector wide change

Governance, Policy, and Risk Awareness

- Strong understanding of academic governance, policy frameworks, and institutional accountability
- Ability to identify and manage academic, reputational, and compliance risks
- High level of integrity, professionalism, and ethical judgement

Student Centred Orientation

- Commitment to enhancing student experience, success, and employability
- Ability to integrate student voice, feedback, and outcomes into decision making
- Understanding of diverse student cohorts and contemporary higher education challenges

Personal Effectiveness

- Strong organisational and prioritisation skills
- High level of self awareness, emotional intelligence, and reflective practice

- Capacity to sustain performance in a demanding, high visibility leadership role