

WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND



REDE METUIA
TERAPIA OCUPACIONAL SOCIAL



Social Markers of Difference and Occupational Therapy Education in Brazil: A Documentary Research

PhD Magno Nunes Farias, University of Brasília, Brasília, Brazil.

Amanda Carvalho Vieira, University of Brasília, Brasília, Brazil.

PhD Jaime Daniel Leite Junior, University of Southern California, California, United States.

Funded by the Foundation for Research Support of the Distrito Federal (FAPDF)



WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

Introduction

- Occupational therapy education should extend its perspectives beyond the biomedical field, considering the various transformations, changes, and complexities that comprise the social fabric.
- The study of Social Markers of Difference, which include issues of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and class, among other factors, is essential in this debate.
- Social Markers of Difference are crucial for rethinking the technical and political actions of occupational therapists, as these topics are directly related to the history of the profession, which, shaped with the participation of social movements, aims to defend and ensure social rights.



WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY

BANGKOK, THAILAND

Objective

Our goal was to evaluate how issues of **gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and social class** are addressed in Occupational Therapy programs at public Higher Education Institutions in Brazil.

WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

Methodology

- This is a qualitative documentary study, which used the **Pedagogical Policy Projects and Curricular Structures of the public Higher Education Institutions** programs as primary sources.

- We analyzed 17 universities, out of a total of 22, that met the inclusion criteria, which was to have the course active, to be a public Higher Education Institutions and to have the information online.

Acronym of the institution	Type of document found	Year of PPP found
UFS	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2011
UFMG	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2008
UFES	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2015
UFPR	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2016
UNIFESP	Pedagogical Policy project	2023
UFPA	Pedagogical Policy project	2022
UFTM	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2020
UFPEL	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2020
UFSCAR	Pedagogical Policy project	2015
UNB	Pedagogical Policy project	2023
IFRJ	Pedagogical Policy project	2018
UFBA	Pedagogical Policy project	2020
UFPB	Pedagogical Policy project	2008
UNESP	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	Não declarado
UNCISAL	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2017
UEPA	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2023
USP	Pedagogical Policy project and curriculum matrix	2022



WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

Results

We observed that the analyzed institutions are, in the majority, in the process of recognizing the importance of social markers in professional practices, outlining ways to foster this education.

- We identified **22 courses** that addressed Social Markers of Difference, offered across 13 Higher Education Institutions. The good news is that **more than 60% of these courses are mandatory**, underscoring the importance of Social Markers of Difference in occupational therapy education.
- Of the 22 disciplines, which appear in some institutional disciplines more than once, this is the number of times each theme appears in the disciplines: 9 Address Social Class; 14 Address Gender ; 8 Address Sexuality; 10 address race/ethnicity.
- However, **half of these mandatory courses are concentrated between semesters 4 and 6**. This reveals a limitation in integrating this discussion transversally and earlier throughout the bachelor's program.
- A point of major concern is that only approximately **30% of the courses** addressing Social Markers of Difference make a direct connection to Occupational Therapy.



WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

Discussion

- Despite the growing recognition, there is still a long way to go to effectively consolidate the discussion of Social Markers of Difference in the mandatory curriculum and ensure that it occurs in direct dialogue with the occupational therapy field, rather than superficially or in isolation.
- This limitation may lead to an Occupational Therapy that is “immune” to mechanisms of oppression or “incapable” of advocating for social transformation.
- Education based on Social Markers of Difference aims to cultivate professionals who are socially and culturally committed, capable of recognizing their country's political and social history and aligning their practice with public policies to promote social well-being.
- Social Occupational Therapy, from a Brazilian perspective, contributes significantly to the debate, given its focus on social issues and their relationship to daily life.



WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

Conclusion

- The results reinforce the urgent need to reconstruct the professional profile and to integrate Social Markers of Difference into the theoretical-methodological foundations and practices of Occupational Therapy.
- This study aims to encourage both institutions and the occupational therapy scientific community to further engage in these discussions and to integrate new reflections into proposals for revising the national curricular guidelines.
- It is important to emphasize that the Brazilian National Curriculum Guidelines were recently revised (a movement led by the National Network for Teaching and Research in Occupational Therapy), and are still in the approval process. It is noticeable that, in this new context, issues of gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, disability, and social class appear much more explicitly. Further studies are needed to monitor the progress of this new phase.

WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

References

- Farias, L., & Rudman, D. L. (2019). Practice analysis: Critical reflexivity on discourses constraining socially transformative occupational therapy practices. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 82(11), 693-697.
- Malfitano, A. P. S. (2023). Contexto social e atuação social: generalizações e especificidades na terapia ocupacional. *Terapia ocupacional social: desenhos teóricos e contornos práticos*, 123-140. EdUFSCar.
- Hirano, L.F.K (2019). Marcadores sociais das diferenças: rastreando a construção de um conceito em relação à abordagem interseccional e a associação de categorias. In: Marcadores sociais das diferenças: fluxos, trânsitos e intersecções / Luis Felipe Kojima Hirano, Maurício Acuña; Bernardo Fonseca Machado (Org.). – Goiânia: Editora Imprensa Universitária, 2019. https://files.cercomp.ufg.br/weby/up/1249/o/marcadores_sociais_das_diferencas.pdf.
- World Federation of Occupational Therapists - WFOT. (2010). Tomada de posição: diversidade e cultura. Recuperado em 08 de outubro de 2025, de <https://www.wfot.org/resources/diversity-and-culture>



WFOT Congress 2026

9-12 FEBRUARY BANGKOK, THAILAND

**Obrigado.
Thank you.**

**E-mail:
magno.farias@unb.br**