

Vision, strategies and focus areas 2025–2027



SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS



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The illustrations in this document are made by Matilda Petersson and ties in with the ankh symbol in our logo which originally is a hieroglyph that stands for life. Matilda's illustrations continue to build on this story of life, energy and movement!

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Introduction

Vision, strategies and focus areas 2025 – 2027 is a strategy document that points the way for the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists in both the short and long term. It is based on the governing document that was produced in collaboration with the analytical company *Kairos Future* and adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, and which was further developed at both the 2018 and the 2021 General Assembly.

During preparations for the General Assembly 2024 the Board of the association, together with the association's various councils and secretariat, have conducted external monitoring and discussed priorities. This has resulted in a strategy document where the focus areas have become fewer, but clearer. The new focus areas were also discussed at the association's chairman's council in May 2024.

The strategy document *Vision, strategies and focus areas 2025 – 2027* begins with a description of the association's fundamental mission, followed by the association's long-term vision. Next, our catalyzing strategies – what we need to do to make things happen – are described, as well as the approaches that reflect the association's culture. Finally, two areas that will be in particular focus during the period are described. These focus areas are to be understood as the strategic direction for the association's work over the next three years.



Our basic mission – a strong association in constant development

According to the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists' statutes, the association's mission is to safeguard and pursue the members' trade union and professional interests. For us to be able to do this in the best possible manner and achieve the greatest possible success, we need to be a strong association that constantly evolves.

A strong association with many members has greater chances to influence and change the world around us. All occupational therapists should feel at home in the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists, regardless of where they practice their profession or what title they have. For the association to continue to grow and increase the number of members, we work constantly to develop and show the benefits of membership for all of our various groups of members – students, employees, managers / leaders, researchers and self-employed occupational therapists in both public and private sectors. A strong association also requires strong and purposeful local activities, whereby both individual members and elected representatives can create activity and participation. One significant prerequisite is having an active student body that contributes to safeguarding and shaping our future, laying the foundation for lifelong participation and co-creation within the association.

A constantly evolving organization needs to be flexible and bold as well as constantly ready to reconsider what we think we know. We show the way forward as well as welcome new ideas and working methods, adjust when necessary and learn new things. We continuously review our way of working and organization, both centrally and locally, ensuring that we are an association that best matches the needs of our members, now and in the future, effectively supporting both individual members and elected representatives.

We make sure to be present in all arenas and contexts in which conditions for the profession are formed. That is where we influence our environment, the development of occupational therapy and work to improve our members' working conditions. We do so by monitoring, driving public opinion and educating in areas that are strategically important to our members, now and in the future – issues relating to research, education, professional development, lifelong learning, working conditions and salaries.

Based on our vision and with the support of our strategies and approaches our intention is always to continuously improve and advance the positions of our profession and our members. In this way we ensure that the skills of occupational therapists are used in the most appropriate ways in the pursuit of an equal and sustainable society in accordance with the UN Agenda 2030 and global goals.

Vision

The vision is based on three distinct objectives: an occupational therapy perspective; development of the occupational therapy profession and working conditions and being a pro-active association.

- Knowledge-based occupational therapy is to be a recognized pathway towards an equitable and sustainable society. The world around should see that occupational therapists, regardless of where they carry out their work, enable people's everyday lives to function.
- Occupational therapists are to have sustainable working lives with sound competence and positive salary developments.
- The Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists is powered by dedicated members and is the natural home for everyone who has an Occupational Therapy qualification and all Occupational Therapy students.



Catalyzing strategies

Catalyzing strategies are strategies which, in turn, boost other things, not least implementation of the two key strategies of the association. In the association we are to focus on three catalyzing strategies in the coming years:

Take command

It is crucial to our ability to succeed that our association is permeated by a spirit of taking command of situations, large or small. We are to take command and highlight what is important to us: in coffee-break discussions, TV debates as well as in discussions with major policymakers. Wherever and whenever the opportunity arises, we are to highlight our competencies and, using creativity and innovative models, show the way towards tomorrow's solutions utilizing knowledge-based occupational therapy.

Initiate astute collaborations and interactions

The whole idea of trade unionism is based on the fundamental concept that we are strong together. We neither can, nor should, do everything on our own. But there is a risk that we, out of convenience, choose old relationships without thinking about if there are others that can give greater benefits for us. By actively identifying which possible partners there are and deliberately choosing those we can ally ourselves with, we can ensure that $1 + 1 = 3$.

Increase co-creation among members

We are, and will continue to be, a member-based movement. Without committed members we lose energy and our fire fades. So it is extremely important to create real commitment among members. We must always understand that our association is nothing other than ourselves and conduct dialogue about this. This will be achieved through involvement and co-creation.



Approach in everyday lives

Even though strategies are about what we should do, we also need something to adhere to on a daily basis, actions that create a common culture and reinforce our common mission towards significantly better conditions for occupational therapists and occupational therapy. Here, we call this our approach.

Dare to experiment

Sticking to the old solutions just does not work, neither in the role of occupational therapist nor as a professional organization. We must build an internal culture in which we see, and dare to capture, opportunities that occur in a changing world.

Clarity in everything we do

A joint mission requires that we, more or less, have a common view of what lies ahead. This requires us to be clear and succinct in whatever we do. It is also important that those around us understand what we want and what we put forward - no one ought to be able to doubt what the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists is capable of and intends to accomplish.

Leadership and coaching

Showing the way, for others and each other, is natural in a member-based movement. This is also the case for us. We must continue to actively support and help one-another with common objectives and constantly have our strategies in mind.

Be knowledgeable

Just talking about things doesn't give rise to respect. A clear foundation, based on solid knowledge, provides a more resonant sounding board. So, we are to make sure that we inform and educate those around us about matters related to the value of occupational therapy for individuals and Society.

Be curious and attentive

Being curious and attentive to where the world is heading will be critical to our ability to keep up with developments. This is often referred to as "business intelligence". We must, therefore, all have an ear to the ground and tell each other what we notice.

Spur one-another

Challenge, inspire and encourage each other in everything we do. We shall build a culture in which we pep one-another up and affirm one-another in daring to try new things.

Active, adapted communication

Involving and convincing others is crucial if we are to succeed. Communication is not about information - it's about sharing between people. In our daily lives we have to train ourselves to interact, inwardly and outwardly, in smart ways.

Focus areas 2025-2027

If we are to achieve our vision, our association needs to be clear and precise for us to use our resources in the best possible manner.

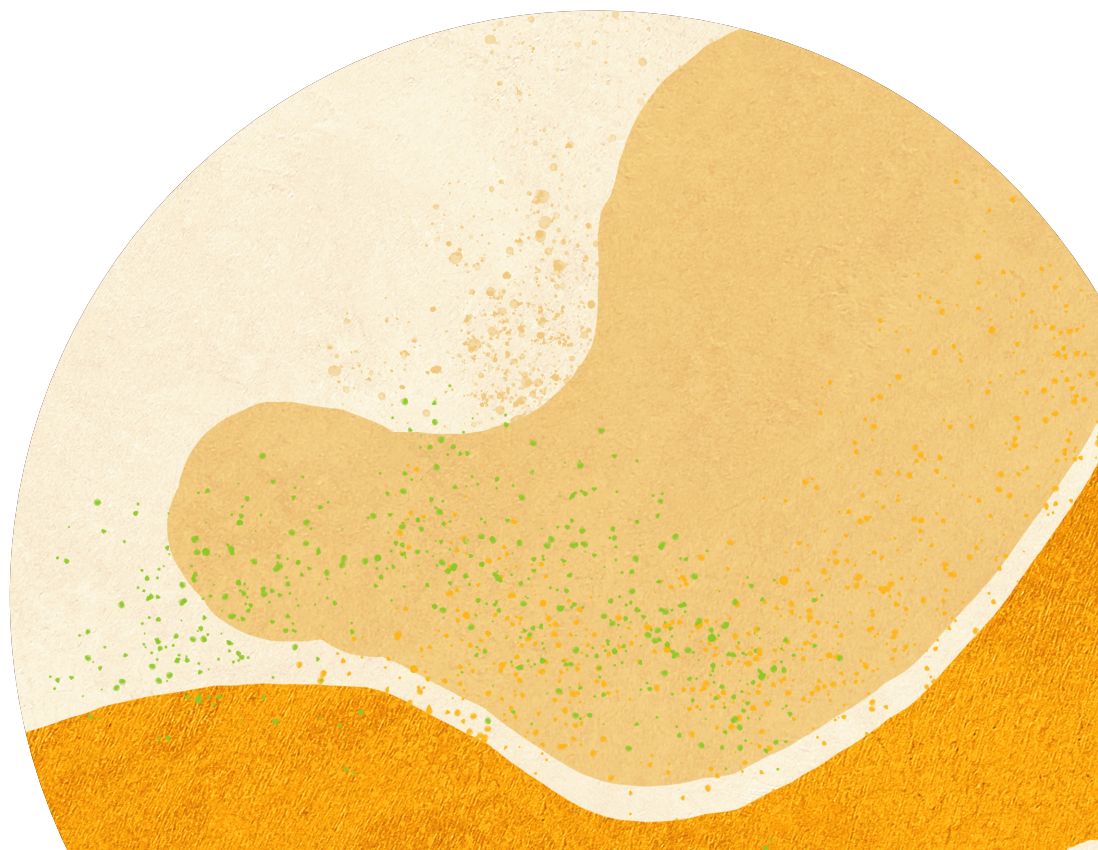
To achieve this, the association has highlighted two areas that will be in special focus during the current term of office – our focus areas. Focusing and directing efforts on a smaller selection of areas increases and enhances the impact of our work.

Our focus areas aim to clarify the direction of the association's work during the term of office and consequently do not specify in detail which activities will be carried out. Each focus area must be understood in the context of the association's basic mission – to safeguard members' trade union and professional interests – and with sights set on our vision.

► SHOW THE VALUE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN INTEGRATED CARE

The transition to integrated care that is currently underway is one of the biggest changes in Swedish health care in modern times. The focus is shifted towards more health-promoting, preventive and rehabilitative efforts with the individual as the starting point. The transition affects all areas of healthcare, as well as efforts from authorities, schools and civil society. In this way, we will be better off to meet the challenges of welfare and to achieve more equal health in the population.

The competence of occupational therapists is a crucial element in the transition. The association's focus during the council period is therefore on **the occupational therapist's mission and prerequisites for integrated care**. We work to clarify the occupational therapist's health-promoting, preventive and rehabilitative efforts with the



person as a point of departure in both primary care and specialized health care, as well as in related areas such as schools and various labor market activities. A particular focus will be on occupational therapists' competence regarding a **person-centered way of working**.

The transition requires **changed working methods**. AI, digital solutions and e-health will be significant catalysts in the work to ensure efficient, safe and person-centered interventions of high quality. As a trade union, we actively follow and participate in the developments that take place. Our members must be equipped with **digital skills** to meet the new needs that arise in occupational therapists' professional practice, with the aim of countering digital exclusion and promoting digital participation for all.

The transition also requires new and changed combinations of competences. In order to secure the **supply of skills**, the association works for more occupational therapists to graduate and for occupational therapists to have access to and the right conditions for the continuing and further education required for a sustainable transition.

In order to create better **structural conditions** for the transition, competence within governance and management is needed around health promotion, prevention and rehabilitation efforts. During the term of the council, the association therefore works to ensure that the skills of occupational therapists are better used in the **governance and management** of health care, at national as well as regional and municipal level.

► SHOW THE VALUE OF A HEALTH-PROMOTING WORKING LIFE

It is a key issue for us as a trade union that our members are in a context that promotes health, with working conditions and wages that are sustainable in the long term.

Today, many members have a work situation that is unsustainable in the long term. Increased pace, too few colleagues and shrinking resources mean major challenges. Working for a **sustainable working environment**, with a focus on health factors, secure employment and the possibility to **influence one's working conditions** is consequently a priority area for the association – not least to also **secure regrowth** in the profession.

Occupational therapists' efforts benefit the economy, but studying to be an occupational therapist is unprofitable. It is crucial that employers understand and value the resource that the occupational therapist is. **Improving the living wage** – the lifetime income, including pension – for our members is an area that we will particularly focus on, in order to bring about improvement.

In addition to a salary that reflects the competence and requirements of the work, occupational therapists must of course also have access to and the right conditions for the



continuing and further education that the practice of the profession requires. During the term of the council, the association will therefore in particular work for an increased use of **competence models** as well as a **nationally regulated continuing education and specialist training** for occupational therapists.

By gaining **influence locally**, we increase our chances of achieving success in important matters. In order to improve occupational therapists' working environment and salaries, we need more people who want and can influence locally. The strength of knowing the business and influencing where it happens is a prerequisite for success. Therefore, we must continue to have **more locally elected representatives** who can take command in our matters.

In order to further strengthen the association's work for a better, health-promoting work environment and gain more influence locally, we need to invest in **strengthening the association's local elected representatives and safety representatives** in their assignments. We do this by continuing to offer training and various skills-enhancing efforts.

CATALYZING STRATEGIES

TAKE COMMANDO

INITIATE ASTUTE COLLABORATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

INCREASE CO-CREATION AMONG MEMBERS

VISION

- Knowledge-based occupational therapy is to be a recognized pathway towards an equitable and sustainable society. The world around should see that occupational therapists, regardless of where they carry out their work, enable people's everyday lives to function.
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**APPROACH IN
EVERYDAY LIVES**

**LEADERSHIP AND
COACHING**

**D
A
R
E
TO EXPERIMENT**

**CLARITY IN
EVERYTHING
WE DO**

**BE KNOW-
LEDGEABLE**

**BE CURIOUS AND
ATTENTIVE**

**ACTIVE, ADAPTED
COMMUNICATION**

**SPUR
ONE-ANOTHER**

Show the value
of occupational
therapy in inte-
grated care

FOCUS AREAS

Show the value
of a health-
promoting
working life

Notes



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