

LEVEL I FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

The AOTA *Standards* describe the goal of Level I Fieldwork "to introduce students to the fieldwork experience, and develop a basic comfort level with an understanding of the needs of clients." Level I Fieldwork is not intended to develop independent performance, but to "include experiences designed to enrich didactic coursework through directed observation and participation in selected aspects of the occupational therapy process."

Services may be provided to a variety of populations through a variety of settings. Experiences may include those directly related to occupational therapy, as well as other situations to enhance an understanding of the developmental stages, tasks, and roles of individuals throughout the life span. Day care centers, schools, neighborhood centers, hospice, homeless shelters, community mental health centers, and therapeutic activity or work centers are among the many possible sites. Level I Fieldwork may also include services management and administrative experiences in occupational therapy settings, community agencies, or environmental analysis experiences. Populations may include disabled or well populations; age-specific or diagnosis-specific clients.

Qualified personnel for supervision of Level I Fieldwork may include, but are not limited to, academic or fieldwork educators, occupational therapy practitioners initially certified nationally, psychologists, physician assistants, teachers, social workers, nurses, physical therapists, social workers, etc. The supervisors must be knowledgeable about occupational therapy and cognizant of the goals and objectives of the Level I Fieldwork experience.

Fieldwork Level I Objectives:

The Fieldwork 1, Level I experience will occur within a community based behavioral health setting and Fieldwork 2 Level I experience will be based on faculty/student choice. Individualized treatment and group projects will be incorporated within this course. Students will implement knowledge gained from previous coursework in this setting. Time will be allowed for completion of assignments, discussion, and group projects. Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

A. Level I Fieldwork will allow the student to develop and demonstrate personal and professional work behaviors. The student will:

1. demonstrate punctuality and adherence to attendance guidelines
2. recognize and follow formal and informal procedures, including dress code, in the clinical setting
3. demonstrate care and maintenance of equipment and supplies utilized in the clinical setting
4. articulate and practice adequate safety and emergency practices in the clinical/community setting
5. apply ethical guidelines to the clinical/community settings
6. maintain strict confidentiality of patients/clients

7. utilize professional judgment in communication and practice skills
8. receive and demonstrate responsiveness to constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement
9. express educational curiosity through demonstrated enthusiasm, relevant questioning, and initiation to pursue learning opportunities
10. manage time to schedule work for self and allow for completion of tasks

B. Level I Fieldwork will expose the student to a diversity of practice models and increase awareness of community resources and needs. The student will:

1. observe and describe the resources available in the community/clinical setting
2. articulate sponsorship, philosophy, and mission of the agency
3. discuss the role or the potential role of occupational therapy in the clinical/community setting
4. recognize and identify channels of authority in the clinical/community setting
5. demonstrate an understanding of the roles and functions of various team members observed in the clinical/community setting

C. Level I Fieldwork will provide the student with opportunities to develop observation, communication, and documentation skills and to integrate and apply classroom and laboratory material. The student will:

1. define the unique nature of OT to various audiences
2. observe and practice communication and interaction skills, including therapeutic use of self, with staff and patients/clients
3. document data or observations of patient/client performance using professional terminology
4. identify various forms of documentation that meet standards for reimbursement
5. under supervision, identify and administer selected assessments appropriate to the setting and to the role of a COTA
6. analyze tasks relative to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain

7. describe the patient's clinical condition/performance skills/client factors/context and the impact upon occupational performance
8. under supervision, participate in ongoing treatment programs, practicing previously acquired skills
9. select and adapt/grade therapeutic activities to achieve goals of the patient/client
10. develop group leadership skills

Fieldwork Education Site

- Evaluate administrative aspects of the program to determine the feasibility of providing education experiences of high quality while maintaining the effectiveness of services. Some considerations are: providing the necessary supervision, scheduling learning experiences, and staff attitudes toward.
- Review objectives and learning experiences with academic representatives to assure that they address the Level I Fieldwork objectives of the program.
- Review the evaluation form and associated protocols and seek any necessary clarification prior to its implementation.
- Review the Level I Fieldwork objectives and the evaluation form to determine if the learning experiences can be provided at your fieldwork site and if they are compatible with the philosophy of the program.
- In collaboration with the academic program faculty, identify, and design, if possible, specific learning activities which will meet Level I objectives.
- Those sites providing fieldwork for both the professional and technical level student should have different learning experiences designed to clearly reflect role delineation.

LEVEL II FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

AOTA asserts that Level II occupational therapy fieldwork students may provide occupational therapy services under the supervision of a qualified occupational therapist in compliance with state and federal regulations. Occupational therapy assistant fieldwork students may provide occupational therapy services under the supervision of a qualified occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant under the supervision of an occupational therapist in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Occupational therapy Level II fieldwork students are those individuals who are currently enrolled in an occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program accredited, approved, or pending accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE; 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). At this point in their professional education, students have completed necessary and relevant didactic coursework that has prepared them for the field experience.

The fieldwork Level II experience is an integral and crucial part of the overall educational experience that allows the student an opportunity to apply theory and techniques acquired through the classroom and Level I fieldwork learning. Level II fieldwork provides an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of evidence based purposeful and meaningful occupations, administration, and management of occupational therapy services. The experience provides the student with the opportunity to carry out professional responsibilities under supervision and to observe professional role models in the field (ACOTE, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

The academic program and the supervising OT practitioner are responsible for ensuring that the type and amount of supervision meets the needs of the student and ensures the safety of all stakeholders. The following General Principles represent the minimum criteria that must be present during a Level II fieldwork experience to ensure the quality of services being provided by the Level II student practitioner: ¹

a. The student is supervised by a currently licensed or credentialed occupational therapy practitioner who has a minimum of 1 year of practice experience subsequent to initial certification and is adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator.

When the term occupational therapy practitioner is used in this document, it refers to both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants (AOTA, 2006).

b. Occupational therapy students will be supervised by an occupational therapist.

Occupational therapy assistant students will be supervised by an occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant in partnership with the occupational therapist who is supervising the occupational therapy assistant (AOTA, 2009).

c. Occupational therapy services provided by students under the supervision of a qualified practitioner will be billed as services provided by the supervising licensed occupational therapy practitioner.

d. Supervision of occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant students in fieldwork Level II settings will be of the quality and scope to ensure protection of consumers and provide opportunities for appropriate role modeling of occupational therapy practice.

e. The supervising occupational therapist and/or occupational therapy assistant must recognize when direct versus indirect supervision is needed and ensure that supervision supports the student's current and developing levels of competence with the occupational therapy process.

f. Supervision should initially be direct and in line of sight and gradually decrease to less direct supervision as is appropriate depending on the

- Competence and confidence of the student
- Complexity of client needs
- Number and diversity of clients
- Role of occupational therapy and related services

- Type of practice setting
- Requirements of the practice setting, and
- Other regulatory requirements. (ACOTE, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c)

g. In all cases, the occupational therapist assumes ultimate responsibility for all aspects of occupational therapy service delivery and is accountable for the safety and effectiveness of the occupational therapy service delivery process involving the student. This also includes provision of services provided by an occupational therapy assistant student under the supervision of an occupational therapy assistant (AOTA, 2009).

h. In settings where occupational therapy practitioners are not employed,

- Students should be supervised daily on site by another professional familiar with the role of occupational therapy in collaboration with an occupational therapy practitioner (see b above).
- Occupational therapy practitioners must provide direct supervision for a minimum of 8 hours per week and be available through a variety of other contact measures throughout the workday. The occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant (under the supervision of an occupational therapist) must have three years of practice experience to provide this type of supervision (ACOTE, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

i. All state licensure policies and regulations regarding student supervision will be followed including the ability of the occupational therapy assistant to serve as fieldwork educator.

j. Student supervision and reimbursement policies and regulations set forth by third-party payers will be followed.

It is the professional and ethical responsibility of occupational therapy practitioners to be knowledgeable of and adhere to applicable state and federal laws, and payer rules and regulations related to fieldwork education. (1)

As outlined by ACOTE, the objectives for Level II Fieldwork are as follows:

- Develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapy assistants
- Fieldwork experiences that are integral to the curriculum design
- Include an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation
- Be exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings

Level II Fieldwork requires a minimum of 16 weeks' full-time experience. Supervision must be carried out by a licensed (or otherwise regulated) occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant who has a minimum of 1 year full-time (or equivalent) practice experience. (ACOTE standard C.1.13, C.1.14). CMU has divided these Level II fieldwork experiences into two 8 week experiences. The Central Methodist University's OTA program objectives are as follows:

Level II Fieldwork Objectives:

1. Student will develop entry level competencies for the Level II fieldwork by the end of the experience (entry level competence is defined as achieving the minimal passing score or above on the AOTA Level II Fieldwork Evaluation)
2. Student will assume full client caseload, as defined by fieldwork site, by end of experience
3. Student will submit correct and complete documentation in a timely manner, according to policies and procedures of fieldwork site
4. Student will consistently report to site on time
5. Student will attend all meetings as directed by supervisor
6. Student will follow all policies and procedures of as directed by the fieldwork site and Central Methodist University Program in Occupational Therapy Assistants
7. Student will take initiative when exploring new learning opportunities
8. Student will actively participate in the supervisory process
9. Student will utilize resources available to them when planning and performing assigned duties. These resources include, but are not limited to other personnel at the fieldwork site, reference material, experts outside of those available at the fieldwork site
10. Student will plan and implement treatment/intervention plans that address the person, occupation and environmental issues presented by the client
11. Student will be familiar with and utilize treatment/intervention approaches that demonstrate in depth knowledge of the various frames of reference in Occupational Therapy practice
12. Student will demonstrate professional behaviors as indicated in the Fieldwork Handbook