

COMMISSION ON EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LEVEL II FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

History and Purpose:

The intent of this document is to describe the desired characteristics of a fieldwork placement for occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant students in Level II Fieldwork Education. It is not intended to be interpreted as a standard of performance or requirement of a program, rather as a reference or as instructional materials. It is for internal use by members of the AOTA.

This document was originally prepared by the Loma Linda Fieldwork Council at the request of the Commission on Education and approved by the Commission on Education on April 15, 1985. The document was revised by the AOTA Fieldwork Issues Committee in 1992, and is now again revised by COE in June, 2000.

Definition:

The ACOTE/AOTA Standards (1998) describe Level II Fieldwork as...a crucial part of professional preparation...The goal of Level II Fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. The fieldwork experience is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate academic knowledge with the application of skills in a practice setting. (AOTA, 1999a & b; AOTA, 1996)

- 1. The fieldwork agency should have currently participated in a review process as established by the appropriate body, such as Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities or a state regulatory board. In lieu of this review body there should be a review by the university/program which is using the center as a fieldwork site.**
- 2. The fieldwork agency should have a stated philosophy regarding service delivery.**

A philosophy of the fieldwork agency is a statement of the foundation or principles underlying its operation. This statement should serve as a guide for the delivery of service for individuals and groups, the degree of emphasis on research, and the commitment to education.

- 3. There should be regular professional conferences to evaluate patient/client programming regarding intervention needs.**

In situations where there is little possibility for professional conference due to the nature of the fieldwork placement, the occupational therapist may independently

establish intervention plans and goals when providing consultation, evaluation and treatment services.

4. **There should be occupational therapy representation in planning programs and formulating policies which would affect occupational therapy services or involvement.**

Occupational therapy representation may be through participation in program-related conferences, quality review processes, or in groups in which planning and policy-making may be carried out.

5. **The administrators and staff of the fieldwork placement should understand the philosophy and principles of the occupational therapy fieldwork education program and should accept the responsibility for making it an integral part of their function.**

Since the occupational therapy fieldwork education experience exists within the philosophy and policies of the fieldwork agency, it is essential that the administration and staff accept and support the program.

6. **The fieldwork agency recognizes that the primary objective of the fieldwork experience is to benefit the student's education.**

The educational value of the student fieldwork experience should be of primary importance, and the placement should not be used to extend services offered by the fieldwork agency.

7. **Opportunities for continuing education and professional development of the occupational therapy staff and students should be supported.**

- A. Attendance at workshops, institutes, conferences, courses and professional meetings should be encouraged.
- B. Financial support should be given for professional development whenever feasible with the budget of the fieldwork agency.
- C. Inservice education programs should be developed and made available.
- D. Fieldwork students should be encouraged to participate in continuing education and be provided time to do so, when content is relevant to the fieldwork experience.

8. **Occupational therapy staff members should participate actively in occupational therapy associations and in occupational therapy educational programs, whenever possible.**

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants as role models should be actively involved with national and state occupational therapy associations.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants should be involved with the occupational therapy educational programs from which they accept students on an ongoing basis. Such involvement may include education council meetings, on-site visits, correspondence, telephone calls, etc.

- 9. The fieldwork placement shall meet all existing local, state, and/or federal safety and health requirements and should provide adequate and efficient working conditions.**

Space for client-related consultation, preparation, writing, in-service education and research activities by occupational therapists, practitioners and students should be provided.

- 10. There must be adequate financial resources to support the fieldwork placement with adequate staff, equipment, and supplies.**
- 11. Client records should be available to the staff and students for intervention planning and practice, educational and research purposes.**
- 12. The occupational therapy philosophy regarding practice and education programs should be stated in writing. The written objectives of the program should reflect the specific contribution occupational therapy makes to the overall agency and program.**

The philosophy of the occupational therapy services should be written and should include the following: purpose; responsibility to society, profession, staff, and service recipients; degree of commitment to service recipients, education and research; and attitude toward future growth. The objectives should be based on the concepts, beliefs, and values established in the philosophy.

- 13. The occupational therapist and occupational therapy practitioner should comply with state regulations governing referrals from qualified physicians and from others seeking service in the medical, educational and broader human services community. Occupational therapy staff should collaborate with duly licensed physicians in those instances where medical management is active, indicated or required.**
- 14. Fieldwork educators responsible for educating Level II Fieldwork occupational therapy students shall meet state regulations governing practice and have as a minimum 1 year of practice experience, subsequent to initial certification by NBCOT as an occupational therapist.**
- 15. Fieldwork educators responsible for educating Level II Fieldwork occupational therapy assistant students shall meet state regulations governing practice and**

- have as a minimum 1 year of practice experience, subsequent to initial certification by NBCOT as an occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant.**
- 16. The fieldwork agency's communication system ensures accountability in service provision and documentation.**
 - A. There should be regular procedures for communication among all fieldwork educators and students.
 - B. Adequate records and reports should be maintained in accordance with AOTA standards and legal requirements.
 - C. Records should be maintained to provide sufficient data for quality improvement. Records may include administrative, service and other data. Administrative reports would include such information as numbers of persons serviced, attendance records, schedules and budgets. Service records should include such information as referral data, client assessments, intervention plan progress notes and discharge summaries.
 - 17. The fieldwork educator and student should have access to current professional information, publications, texts, and Internet resources related to occupational therapy and pertinent topics related to populations and systems being served.**
 - 18. The fieldwork experience shall meet requirements in accordance with the Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist and/or the Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant."**
 - 19. The educational program and the fieldwork placement should work collaboratively to develop objectives in which the aims are compatible with those of the educational program. The objectives should be reviewed at least annually. These objectives should be clearly defined for the student and continually evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the educational experience.**

The fieldwork experience should be an extension of the educational program into the clinical or community setting. The objectives should reflect both the curriculum design of the educational program and the model of service delivery of the fieldwork setting.
 - 20. Adequate staff to provide occupational therapy services and educational services should be maintained with supervisory and administrative responsibilities clearly defined.**
 - A. The ratio of fieldwork educators considered adequate to carry out a fieldwork experience is dependent upon the complexity of the services and the ability to

ensure proper supervision and frequent assessment in achieving fieldwork objectives.

B. Administrative and staff responsibilities should be clearly defined.

21. **The fieldwork educator should carry out an organized procedure of orientation to the agency, services, and the fieldwork experience.**
22. **The fieldwork placements should provide the student with experience with various groups across the life span, persons with various psychosocial and physical performance challenges, and various service delivery models reflective of current practice in the profession.**

Within the required total of 16 weeks for the occupational therapy assistant student and 24 weeks for the occupational therapy student, there should be exposure to a variety of traditional and emerging settings and a variety of client ages and conditions.

23. **The fieldwork educator shall provide ongoing supervision of the student.**

A. The student should be supervised in all aspects of his/her fieldwork experience by adequate supervisory staff who should have full knowledge of and responsibility for all aspects of the program being carried out by the student under her or his guidance and protection.

The fieldwork educator should have full knowledge of the student's assigned workload and responsibilities and how they are being handled and should be available to the setting and to the needs of the student.

- B. Ongoing supervision should be provided daily and/or weekly as an essential part of the fieldwork program. It should be flexible in accordance with the interests, needs and abilities of the student. Supervision should begin with more direct supervision and gradually decrease to less direct supervision as the student demonstrates competence with respect to the setting and client's condition and needs.
- C. The ratio of fieldwork educators to students shall be such as to ensure proper supervision and frequent assessment in achieving fieldwork objectives.
- D. In a setting where there is no occupational therapy practitioner on site, ACOTE/AOTA Standards requires a minimum of 6 hours of supervision per week by an occupational therapy practitioner. This should include direct observation of client/student interaction, role modeling, meetings with the student, review of student paperwork, consultation and communication regarding the learning experience. The fieldwork educator may work with students in groups, but should be aware of the individual student needs and respond accordingly. In addition, a designated on-site professional person

should be available for communication throughout the experience. A documented plan for provision of occupational therapy services in accordance with state regulations and in coordination with the educational program should be in place. This fieldwork shall not exceed 12 weeks for the occupational therapy student or 8 weeks for the occupational therapy assistant student.

- 24. Level II fieldwork shall be required and designed to promote clinical reasoning and reflective practice, to transmit the values and beliefs that enable the application of ethics related to the profession, to communicate and model professionalism as a developmental process and a career responsibility, and to develop and expand a repertoire of occupational therapy assessments and interventions related to human occupation and performance.**

Level II fieldwork experience should include in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation.

- 25. The student shall have the opportunity to develop increased knowledge, attitudes, and skills in administration, research and professional relationships.**

Suggested ways to implement this guideline, for example, are actual supervision of support staff, volunteers, or Level I Fieldwork students in certain tasks or work assignments; involvement in research projects; and attendance at administrative meetings.

- 26. The student shall be evaluated and be kept informed on an ongoing basis of her/his performance status.**

- A. The AOTA Fieldwork Evaluation (FWE) should be used as a rating tool. The student should be formally evaluated using this form when the fieldwork experience is completed. Performance should be reviewed by the fieldwork educator and the student at both midterm and end of the fieldwork experience. Other structured forms of feedback that promote educator/student communication on the student's progress may also be used on an ongoing basis.
- B. The fieldwork experience should be evaluated by the student, using the AOTA Student Evaluation for Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) form, and should be reviewed by the fieldwork educator and the student at the conclusion of the fieldwork experience. Other structured forms of feedback that promote educator/student communication on the learning experience may also be used on an ongoing basis.
- C. If the student's performance is not satisfactory at mid-term or at any point in the fieldwork experience, both the student and academic institution must be notified immediately and documentation concerning the student's progress and outcomes of interventions should be maintained.

References:

American Occupational Therapy Association. (1999a). Standards for an accredited educational program for the occupational therapist. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 53, 575-582.

American Occupational Therapy Association. (1999b). Standards for an accredited educational program for the occupational therapy assistant. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 53, 583-591.

American Occupational Therapy Association. (1997). Purpose and Value of Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Education. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 50, 845.

***AOTA Commission on Education and Fieldwork Issues Committee (FWIC)
Amended and Approved by FWIC June 2000 and COE August 2000***

Last Updated 08/05/00

From <http://www.aota.org/nonmembers/area13/links/LINK06.asp> on 6-21-06