



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

FIELDWORK II MANUAL

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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

OVERVIEW OF FIELDWORK II

Requirements:

To participate in Fieldwork II, the OTA student is required to successfully complete all prior coursework, be of good moral character and demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with others. Typically the student registers for two fieldwork courses of 6 credits each; each fieldwork is full time for a period of at least eight weeks. This allows the student to complete a minimum of 16 weeks of full-time level II fieldwork in at least two different settings that represent different age and disability groups or populations. Diversity in fieldwork is needed to allow the student to acquire entry level competencies to fulfill educational standards (ACOTE Standards, C.1.12 and C.1.13). It is possible for a student to complete fieldwork in one setting when multiple services are provided to diverse populations at the facility; or a student can elect to complete fieldwork in three settings, providing arrangement can be arranged to meet student learning and supervision needs.

Professional Behaviors:

The OTA student is expected to adhere to AOTA's Code of Ethics (2010) and the NYS Rules of the Board of Regents Part 29 on unprofessional conduct while on fieldwork. In addition it is expected that the fieldwork educator will orient the student to the facility's policy and procedures, provide onsite education and training as indicated, and model best practice which includes professional behaviors and client safety. It is the right of the clinical site administration to discontinue a student from a fieldwork placement due to negligence which has the potential to, or actually resulted in physical or psychological, harm to the client. It is also expected that the facility will notify the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) in a timely manner to communicate the incident prior to dismissing the student. A student's disregard of the facility's policies and procedures, especially when such behaviors result in unethical and unprofessional behavior, may also be grounds for immediate dismissal from the OTA Program.

In the event that a student is 1) not demonstrating professional behaviors consistent with the needs of attending fieldwork or 2) the student is dismissed due to unprofessional behaviors, the OTA Program may require the student to successfully complete a learning contract developed to address the specific behavioral and/or ethical concerns before proceeding with fieldwork. A determination regarding continuation in the OTA Program and re-assignment to an alternate fieldwork will be at the discretion of the AFWC in consultation with the OTA Program Director. In the event a student is not successful in fieldwork, and therefore not meeting criteria to earn an OTA degree, the AFWC, OTA Program Chair and/or the student's academic advisor will work with student on an alternative educational plan.

Passing Fieldwork:

Successful completion of two (2) fieldwork education courses (OCT 216 and 217) are required components of the OTA Program. The *AOTA's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA* (FWPE) will be the instrument used by all sites providing clinical education to Maria College OTA students. It is expected that the student's performance will be measured at mid-point as well as at the completion of the rotation based on site specific FW II goals. The student must achieve a Pass rating on AOTA's FWPE for each fieldwork in order to graduate from the OTA Program. Additional information is provided in the policy document titled *Fieldwork II Grading*.

Not Passing Fieldwork:

In the event that a student receives score below the acceptable required minimum performance level on the FWPE, he/she will be required to repeat the fieldwork course. The student will be permitted to repeat the fieldwork experience one time, thus demonstrating entry-level competency for the OTA. The student will be assigned to a different facility in recognition that the context or learning environment is a factor in student learning. The type of site and client population will be determined by the learning needs of the student and the consideration that the site meets the requirement to gain diverse experience to graduate as an entry-level generalist OTA. The timing of the repeat FW II course will be determined by the AFWC and the OTA Program Director. The student may first need to complete a learning contract with the assistance of the AFWC and may be required to audit selected OTA courses.



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LEVEL II FIELDWORK RATIONALE and GENERAL OBJECTIVES

I. RATIONALE

The Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) curriculum is structured so that each semester of the program provides a foundation for the next semester and for additional future learning. Students are gradually introduced to practice settings and the roles and responsibilities of the OTA practitioner as they progress through the program with didactic educational preparation. **Fieldwork II (FW II)** is completed during the final semester as a culmination of this learning.

FW II provides the student with an opportunity to engage in situational learning with clinical practice under the guidance and supervision of experienced occupational therapy staff. The clinical experience is vital to the development of the OTA as a clinician; it helps the student transition from classroom learning of theory and skills to practical application. Fieldwork situations foster clinical reasoning, application of knowledge and skills, and opportunities to develop professional behaviors. FW II prepares the student to join the work force as an entry-level Occupational Therapy Assistant. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards for OTA Education state:

The goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapy assistants. Level II fieldwork must be integral to the program's curriculum design and must include an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation. It is recommended that the student be exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings. The program will ensure that the fieldwork experience is designed to promote clinical reasoning appropriate to the occupational therapy assistant role, to transmit the values and beliefs that enable ethical practice, and to develop professionalism and competence in career responsibilities. (ACOTE, 2011, p. 35).

II. GENERAL FIELDWORK II COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student will utilize the Level II Fieldwork experience to:

- A. Apply classroom knowledge, occupational therapy theory, therapeutic skills, and therapeutic use of self in a clinical setting.
- B. Utilize the AOTA's *Occupational Therapy Guide to Practice* and the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process, 3rd edition (AOTA, 2014)* to communicate with other professionals, select, apply and modify intervention programs and complete required documentation for client centered, occupation-based treatments.
- C. Utilize current occupational therapy scholarly reports and publications to support decisions about evidence-based, best practice choices for clients on assigned caseload.
- D. Participate in the fieldwork setting as an educated member of the clinical team consistent with the facility's policies and procedures and role expectations of a student.
- E. Increase didactic knowledge through participation in staff meetings, training sessions, field trips, scholarship, mentoring, supervision, and discussions with OT personnel.
- F. Increase knowledge of administrative and support activities in occupational therapy.
- G. Gain a working knowledge of the roles of the OT and the OTA in each FW II setting.
- H. Reflect on the fieldwork learning experience to appreciate personal knowledge and skill strengths, competencies and areas that require additional learning and development.
- I. Integrate psychosocial factors that influence engagement in occupations into the development of client centered, occupation based outcomes.

III. FIELDWORK SITE-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The student will utilize background knowledge and demonstrate treatment interventions consistent with the type of facility and identified client needs. Specific FW II objectives for each site should be used to guide learning during fieldwork in order to meet fieldwork educator's expectations. Specific FW II objectives are prepared by the OT fieldwork educators using Maria College's **GENERAL FIELDWORK II COURSE OBJECTIVES**, knowledge of OT practice demands for the population served, and the following official documents as reference:

- Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2010).
- Standards of Practice (AOTA 2010).
- Scope of Practice (AOTA, 2009).
- Guidelines for supervision, roles, and responsibilities during the delivery of OT services (AOTA, 2009).
- Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, Domain and Process, 3rd ed. (AOTA, 2014).
- Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA (FWPE) (AOTA, 2002).

The specific objectives for each facility's fieldwork program should incorporate the philosophy and domain of occupational therapy in order to prepare the student as a generalist for entry-level practice in that setting. The objectives should help guide learning regarding the typical case load, frames of reference, assessments, modalities, interventions and documentation that are used in the fieldwork setting. Site-specific fieldwork objectives help the student understand the expectations of the fieldwork educator and assist the fieldwork supervisor complete the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) at both the midpoint and conclusion of the clinical experience. FW II specific objectives are to be on file at the OTA Fieldwork Office at Maria College and given to the student by their fieldwork educator during the initial orientation to the facility for the FW II assignment.

IV. PLAN

Level II Fieldwork follows the completion of the academic portions of the program and traditionally takes place in the final spring semester of the OTA curriculum. The student will participate in two (2) different full-time clinical experiences, lasting a minimum of eight (8) weeks each. The total number of weeks and credits must meet minimum requirements of sixteen (16) weeks of full-time level II fieldwork (ACOTE, Standard C.1.12) and 12 academic credits (Maria College OTA Program curriculum). The student can complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of three different settings. Fieldwork settings are chosen from facilities offering a wide range of services in developmental disabilities, physical dysfunction, or psychosocial dysfunction. In all settings, psychosocial factors influencing engagement in occupation must be understood and integrated for the development of client-centered, meaningful, occupation-based outcomes. A student may select a specialty or emerging area of OT practice depending on interest, availability of clinical sites and with Academic Fieldwork Coordinator approval.

It is the intent of the Maria College OTA Program to use OT practitioners to provide fieldwork education for all OTA students. However, should it be appropriate make alternate supervision arrangements to allow the student to gain experience in non-traditional areas of practice where full time OT supervision is not available, the student must receive minimum of eight (8) hours per week supervision by a qualified OT or OTA (ACOTE Standard C.1.17).



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FIELDWORK II STUDENT GUIDELINES

I. FUNCTIONS

The student will function as a learning participant with gradually increasing responsibility for the delivery of appropriate occupational therapy services to assigned clients. At no time should a student be considered to have the responsibilities of an employee even though he or she is expected to abide by the policies and procedures and rules and regulations of both the OT department and the facility. The facility must inform the student of the policies, procedures, rules and regulations that he or she is required to follow.

During fieldwork II the emphasis should be on the *art of practice*, not on the *science of* “textbook” *learning*. The student and fieldwork educator should collaborate on required new learning as necessary to augment existing level of knowledge or that is required to understand the specific needs of a given client’s treatment program. The full time level II fieldwork experience should allow the student to develop skills related to therapeutic use of self and clinical reasoning while engaging the patient/client throughout the occupational therapy process in treatments that are client-centered and occupation and evidence-based.

II. ETHICS and BEHAVIOR

The student is responsible for conducting himself or herself in a manner consistent with the ethical, moral and legal criteria of Maria College, the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program and the Fieldwork site during fieldwork assignments. The AOTA *Code of Ethics* (2010), Maria College mission and core values, and state licensure laws should be used as a guide to ethical practice.

The student is expected to exhibit professional behaviors. The fieldwork educator is expected to model professional behavior, to acknowledge positive behaviors, and to critique negative behaviors as indicated by making suggestions for positive change. The fieldwork site has the right to terminate a student placement if the student behavior remains inappropriate after providing input and opportunities for the student to correct and modify identified behaviors. (See the Fieldwork II Policy)

III. DRESS CODE

The student will be neat and clean in their appearance at all times and will adhere to the fieldwork site’s dress code. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a uniform, lab coat, and/or other clothing as specified by the facility. The student should identify themselves by wearing his/her Maria College photo name tag while on fieldwork and especially in facilities where the NY State *Rules of the Board of Regents Part 29-2 a. (9) – Unprofessional Conduct* states that an identifying badge is part of the expected professional behavior. These include hospitals, nursing homes and clinics.

Student may be required to remove body piercings (eyebrow, nose, lip and tongue rings), cover tattoos, remove artificial fingernails, and keep hair color to those that occur naturally (i.e. no bright blue hair). Shoes must provide support and safety during patient treatments, close-toed with soft, non-skid soles (i.e. no sandals or high heels).

IV. ATTENDANCE

The student is responsible for reporting to the fieldwork site as assigned and at the time specified by the fieldwork supervisor; they are to follow the facility's schedule and calendar, not the calendar for Maria College.

In case of illness or any other unscheduled absence or when timely arrival is not possible, the student is to contact the fieldwork supervisor according to the rules of that facility. Any student with three or more absences may be required to make up this time. Lengthy or numerous absences may result in cancellation of the clinical and require the student to complete another fieldwork experience at a later date. Failure to complete fieldworks during the originally assigned time frame (for any reason) may delay graduation. (See Fieldwork Grading Policy - #3)

V. EVALUATIONS

The student must complete the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) and the Fieldwork Educator/Supervisor must complete the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student (FWPE – a white, AOTA official booklet) during the last week of the assignment. A time should be scheduled to present evaluation finding to each other on the final day of fieldwork. The FW Educator/Supervisor should review the FWPE first, followed by the student's evaluation of the fieldwork experience. Signatures are required on both forms to signify that the evaluations were completed and reviewed in person. (See Fieldwork Grading Policy - #1)

VI. GRADUATE SEMINAR

Following the completion of two level II fieldwork courses, the student is required to attend a two-day seminar at Maria College. This Graduate Seminar experience includes: (1) an opportunity to share and discuss fieldwork experiences with classmates and academic faculty; (2) a review of professional and legal requirements and procedures necessary to practice OT; (3) a formal course and a practice examination in preparation for the NBCOT certification examination; and (4) an opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the OTA Program curriculum through constructive feedback.

***NOTE:**

Some fieldwork sites have additional requirements including finger printing and background checks, drug Testing, CPR, and completion of an orientation and volunteer application prior to the beginning of fieldwork. Any additional time and expenses are the responsibility of the student. This information will be shared with the student as indicated by his/her fieldwork placements. Students are encouraged to ask questions when in doubt about the rules, policies, procedures and expectations of them as a student. Questions can be addressed to the Academic and/or Clinical Fieldwork Coordinators.



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FIELDWORK II SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

The student will participate in the Fieldwork II Program for OTA students according to the FW Facility's SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES and related learning assignments. The specific fieldwork objectives, developed by the facility's OT department in collaboration with and support of the OTA Program's learning objectives for level II fieldwork, should be practice and client based enabling the to:

- Meet the Field Work II GENERAL OBJECTIVES from the Maria College OTA Program
- Gain experiences that are reflected in and evaluated by the AOTA's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student (the FWPE - 2002).

In addition, Fieldwork II should be designed to help the student:

- Transition from the classroom to the work environment - this is an educational process!
- Learn about the roles and functions of occupational therapy practitioners in the assigned setting;
- Develop competency related to observation skills, client assessment, communication and collaboration, planning and implementation of OT treatments, discontinuation planning, and documentation;
- Engage in clinical reasoning, and ethical decision making;
- Develop professional behaviors and skills consistent with client-centered, occupation-based and evidence based practice;
- Manage an assigned or selected case load (approximately 75% of a staff OTA's expected case load) with the proper supervision in order to develop entry-level competency as an Occupational Therapy Assistant generalist.

**Suggested learning assignments for the OTA Student on level II fieldwork include:

- Activity analysis - demonstrates the way OT practitioners think about and problem solve many aspects of client treatment; when the AA is attached to a given client, the student is required to think specifically in order to meet the client's needs.
- Case study - This client-centered assignment allows the student to demonstrate the ability to gather pertinent data from the chart, to interview client, family and other staff, to research relevant medical, therapeutic, educational, and community based information, that also contributes to developing a treatment plan that is occupation focused on existing evidence.
- Collecting information for quality assurance and/or research projects. Involves the student in the administrative and professional activities that help to promote OT within the work site and within the community.
- Development of treatment activities, games, fine motor tasks, pre-writing/writing activities, etc. The student is required to exercise clinical reasoning skills in order to select and/or create appropriate treatment activities for each client on caseload.
- Documentation - the ability to express the client's needs, goals and response to therapy is a vital component of the role of the OT practitioner. The ability to reflect best practice and justify the need for OT services is crucial in the majority of settings to qualify for reimbursement. The student should be expected to produce the same documentation that an OTA in this or a similar work setting

would as an employee. The decision to incorporate student notes into the client's official chart is at the discretion of the facility.

- Fabrication of an orthotic device or adaptive equipment is the only way to learn these hands-on skills. Fabrication allows the student to practice cognitive and fine motor skills while at the same time using creative thought processes.
- Oral article summaries - The ability to verbally communicate a specific body of information to others is critical to professional practice. The use of an article allows the student to learn new information related to the population being served and to present a summary of the important points to others.
- Oral reports at department meetings, case reviews, teacher conferences, parent and family conferences, etc. The student must be able to determine the important information to convey about the client in each of these settings and circumstances.
- Participation in the assessment/evaluation process. Initially this helps the student understand how the therapist knows what the client's strengths and weaknesses are in order to develop goals and recommend an OT treatment program. The student gains experience with collaboration, critical thinking and frames of reference.
- Participation in an existing group. Reinforces information learned in classes about group process.
- Planning and running an existing or new group. The next step; allows the student to clinically reason regarding the needs of the group members, plan the appropriate activities, and engage in the role of group leader.
- Written summary of observations, interviews, in-services, field trips, etc. Writing is a good method to use to allow the student to organize thoughts, ideas and factual information; the student needs practice in determining objective and subjective information and appropriate times and ways to convey each. Writing also allows the student to assess what they do know and what they may need to learn.

****NOTE:** the above suggested assignments are given in alphabetical order, not in any order of importance. The fieldwork supervisor should select and or develop assignments that allow the student to demonstrate their understanding and competence in applying knowledge and skills consistent with the entry-level role of the occupational therapy assistant. Fieldwork assignments should be appropriate to the setting and to the role of the fieldwork student. They should be oriented to promoting clinical reasoning, clinical practice and professional behavior. The student should recognize how the assignments contribute directly to client care and to their own learning

Student and Fieldwork Educator Weekly Supervision Summary

Directions: Fieldwork Educators are to meet formally at a scheduled time with each student at least once a week even if there have been opportunities for periodic informal communication. This form is to be used by both the supervisor and student to help ensure understanding of verbal communications. The weekly supervision sheets should be kept for reference.

Student: _____

Date: _____

Attendance Summary: _____

Summary of Weekly Responsibilities: Interventions, communication, documentation, etc.:

Discussion Topics:

Performance Strengths:

Improvement Needs:

Additions/Changes in Responsibilities/Assignments:

Comments by Fieldwork Educator:

Comments by Student:

Student Signature

Fieldwork Educator Signature



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NONTRADITIONAL LEVEL II FIELDWORK PLACEMENT OBJECTIVES

The student will utilize the Level II Fieldwork experience to:

1. Apply knowledge of occupational therapy theory, therapeutic skills, and therapeutic use of self in a clinical setting.
2. Utilize the AOTA's *Occupational Therapy Guide to Practice* and the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process, 3rd edition (AOTA, 2014)* as a foundation when promoting the occupational therapy profession to other professionals and consumers.
3. Assess the needs of clientele at the site and determine how to integrate occupational therapy into current programming.
4. Utilize current occupational therapy scholarly reports and publications to support decisions about evidence-based, best practice choices for clients on assigned caseload.
5. Plan occupational based interventions and modify as needed.
6. Demonstrate professional behaviors in all interactions including during the supervisory process.
7. Exhibit work behaviors reflective of the professions philosophy, ethical principles, knowledge base and practice guidelines.
8. Exhibit the ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with members of other disciplines and with clients and families.

III. FIELDWORK SITE-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The student will utilize background knowledge and demonstrate treatment interventions consistent with the type of facility and identified client needs. Specific FW II objectives for each site should be used to guide learning during fieldwork in order to meet fieldwork educator's expectations. Specific FW II objectives are prepared by the OT fieldwork educators using Maria College's **GENERAL FIELDWORK II COURSE OBJECTIVES**, knowledge of OT practice demands for the population served, and the following official documents as reference:

- Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2010).
- Standards of Practice (AOTA 2010).
- Scope of Practice (AOTA, 2009).
- Guidelines for supervision, roles, and responsibilities during the delivery of OT services (AOTA, 2009).
- Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, Domain and Process, 3rd ed. (AOTA, 2014).
- Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA (FWPE) (AOTA, 2002).

The specific objectives for each facility's fieldwork program should incorporate the philosophy and domain of occupational therapy in order to prepare the student as a generalist for entry-level practice in that setting. The objectives should help guide learning regarding the typical case load, frames of reference, assessments, modalities, interventions and documentation that are used in the fieldwork setting. Site-specific fieldwork objectives help the student understand the expectations of the fieldwork educator and assist the fieldwork supervisor complete the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) at both the midpoint and conclusion of the clinical experience. FW II specific objectives are to be on file at the OTA

Fieldwork Office at Maria College and given to the student by their fieldwork educator during the initial orientation to the facility for the FW II assignment.

IV. PLAN

Level II Fieldwork follows the completion of the academic portions of the program and traditionally takes place in the final spring semester of the OTA curriculum. The student will participate in two (2) different full-time clinical experiences, lasting a minimum of eight (8) weeks each. The total number of weeks and credits must meet minimum requirements of sixteen (16) weeks of full-time level II fieldwork (ACOTE, Standard C.1.12) and 12 academic credits (Maria College OTA Program curriculum). The student can complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of three different settings. Fieldwork settings are chosen from facilities offering a wide range of services in developmental disabilities, physical dysfunction, or psychosocial dysfunction. In all settings, psychosocial factors influencing engagement in occupation must be understood and integrated for the development of client-centered, meaningful, occupation-based outcomes. A student may select a specialty or emerging area of OT practice depending on interest, availability of clinical sites and with Academic Fieldwork Coordinator approval.

It is the intent of the Maria College OTA Program to use OT practitioners to provide fieldwork education for all OTA students. However, should it be appropriate make alternate supervision arrangements to allow the student to gain experience in non-traditional areas of practice where full time OT supervision is not available, the student must receive minimum of eight (8) hours per week supervision by a qualified OT or OTA (ACOTE Standard C.1.17).



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Dear OTA Fieldwork Educator:

The AOTA’s Accreditation Council for OT Education Standards specify that during Level II fieldwork, students must be “supervised by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapy practitioner with at least 1 year of full-time practice experience subsequent to initial certification.”

Please help us ensure that we meet these Standards by completing this form and returning it to the OTA Program by email, fax or mail at the addresses listed below prior to the start of the assigned fieldwork.

On behalf of the OTA students and faculty of Maria College, we sincerely appreciate your time, patience and expertise as you fulfill a vital role in our profession’s future as a Fieldwork Educator.

Thank you,

Meghan Malone, BS, COTA, CH

Meghan Malone, BS, COTA/L, CH
Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

Maria College
700 New Scotland Ave.
Albany, NY 12208
malonem@mariacollege.edu
Phone: (518) 861-2549
Fax: (518) 489-7437

Fieldwork Educator’s Name and Credentials: _____

NBCOT Certification #: _____

Date of Initial Certification: _____

State License #: _____

Date of Initial Licensure: _____

Additional supervisory qualifications: _____

- To find your NBCOT certification number and date of initial certification, see: <https://my.nbcot.org/OnlineCredentialVerification/>
- To find your New York State license number and date of initial licensure, refer to: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/opsearches.htm> or call (518) 474-3817, ext. 270.



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Policy and Procedure: Qualified Supervisors for Fieldwork II

Rationale:

Level II Fieldwork is integral to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program in that it allows the student to transition from classroom learning to experiential learning and clinical practice. Fieldwork II is designed to be completed in the last semester of the program following the completion of the majority of the academic courses. Fieldwork II meets the ACOTE Educational Standards for Occupational Therapy Assistant Education which state:

The goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapy assistants. Level II fieldwork must be integral to the program's curriculum design and must include an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation. It is recommended that the student be exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings. The program will ensure that the fieldwork experience is designed to promote clinical reasoning appropriate to the occupational therapy assistant role, to transmit the values and beliefs that enable ethical practice, and to develop professionalism and competence in career responsibilities. (ACOTE, 2011, p. 35).

Policy:

The Fieldwork Educator (FWE), or FW Supervisor, serves as an extension of the College faculty by mentoring students into the profession and facilitating the transition of classroom learning into practice. To ensure that FWEs are qualified to undertake this important educational role, the ACOTE Educational Standards for Occupational Therapy Assistant Education provides the following Standard:

C.1.14. Qualified Level II FW Supervisors: The program must ensure that the student is supervised by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant who has a minimum of 1 year full-time practice experience subsequent to initial certification and who is adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator.

Procedures:

1. The OTA Program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) will request that each potential FW II site provides the names and credentials of any OT practitioners who will be taking a supervisory role in the FW experience. This communication occurs prior to the FW commencing, via email, phone or mail.
2. Using the OT Credentials Form (attached), the Fieldwork Educator should complete the requested items identifying license and certification dates and numbers prior to the start of the FW II assigned rotation.
3. Should a completed OT Credentials Form not be returned in a timely manner, it is the AFWC's responsibility to verify the FWE's qualifications through the NBCOT and State Licensure websites.
4. Updated information will be logged into the OTA Program's Fieldwork database to maintain records.
5. If any potential supervisor does not have the adequate preparation and credentials to comply with this Policy, and a suitable supervisor cannot be provided, the FW II placement will be cancelled.



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Policy and Procedure: Final Evaluation for Fieldwork II

Policy: The Fieldwork Educator (FWE) and the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) student share a mutual responsibility to have appropriate evaluation reports ready on the date scheduled to review the findings. This should be on or around the last day of the assigned clinical rotation. Both parties also have a responsibility to have all copies signed and dated prior to the student leaving the facility. The student is NOT to sign the FWPE prior to reading/reviewing it in person with the supervisor.

Procedures:

1. The OTA Program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) will have provided the student and the FWE with the evaluation forms prior to, or in conjunction with, the start of the fieldwork assignment.
2. Using the white FWPE (AOTA, 2002) which was also used at mid-term, the Fieldwork Educator should complete the evaluation of student performance, including comments, prior to the scheduled final evaluation meeting date.
3. The student must complete the Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) prior to the final evaluation meeting date with the Fieldwork Educator.
4. At the scheduled evaluation meeting, reports will be exchanged, reviewed and discussed.
5. Following the evaluation review, each party will sign both evaluations. The student's signature on the FWPE denotes "I HAVE READ THIS REPORT" (see page 1 of the FWPE). It does not necessarily indicate full agreement – see # 8 below.
6. After signing:
 - a. Two copies should be made of each of the evaluation instruments.
 - b. The Fieldwork Educator is responsible for mailing the original FWPE booklet to the AFWC (unless alternate directions have been communicated) and for giving the student a copy; the second copy should be retained by FW site for their records.
 - c. The student is responsible for mailing the original of the Student's Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) to the College and for giving the fieldwork supervisor a copy; the student must retaining a copy for his/her personal records.
7. All evaluations must be sent immediately to the AFWC as they are due within three (3) days of completing the Fieldwork II assignment. This is imperative for the first rotation to assure timely grading for the student to continue to the second Fieldwork II experience. It is equally important following the completion of the second FWII rotation to ensure that the student has passed, meeting the requirements necessary for graduation.
8. Should the student disagree with the facility's evaluation of his or her performance:
 - a. The student should make every effort to resolve the issue(s) with the fieldwork supervisor during the final evaluation discussion.
 - b. If resolution is not reached the student **MUST** sign the report, adding a statement that he/she does not agree with the findings.

- c. Within three (3) days of completing the fieldwork rotation, the student will submit a written statement to the OTA Program Director and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator detailing the area(s) of concern as directly related to the ratings and comments on the final FWPE.
 - d. Following the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator's review of the final FWPE and student's written rebuttal, the AFWC will meet with the student. Depending on the nature and impact of the findings, this meeting will be used to reach a decision, to help the student develop strategies to resolve similar concerns in the future, and/or to meet with the FW Educator.
 - e. When the student's expressed concern potentially affects the final outcome of the fieldwork experience (i.e. pass/no-pass), an appointment will be scheduled with the FW Educator to discuss the issues.
 - f. When a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome they should review the FW Grievance Policy and follow the procedures outlined in that document.
 - g. Should the expressed concern be related to the learning experience, supervision, and treatment of the student, the information will be considered relative to the continued use of the fieldwork site and/or specific FW Educator.
9. If any concerns or problems arise at any time during the Fieldwork II assignment, the OTA student and/or the FW Educator should contact the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, Meghan Malone, at (518) 861-2549 or by email at malonem@mariacollege.edu



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Policy and Procedure: Grading for Fieldwork II

The required 12 credits of level II fieldwork (courses OCT 216 – OCT 217) are graded using a Pass/No Pass system based on entry-level competency as determined by the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE; AOTA, 2002). Students are required to complete a minimum of 16 weeks of full time fieldwork in at least two different settings. Typically the student completes two eight-week clinical experiences for 6 credits each. A student may choose to complete three level II courses with approval from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and providing all of the necessary arrangements can be made. Should the student desire to complete three rather than two fieldwork experiences the actual credits earned for each fieldwork course when be determined on an individual basis and using the present formula in which 8 weeks equals 6 credits. It should be noted that additional time may be required in order to fulfill the learning objectives and demonstrate competency in each of the chosen areas of practice.

The Fieldwork Educator is responsible for completing the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) and reviewing it with the student at the midterm and final points of the fieldwork experience. While the stated criteria on the FWPE will indicate whether the student has *passed* or *not passed* the fieldwork assignment, the responsibility of assigning the Pass/No Pass grade for each required fieldwork course rests with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, who when a question arises, may consult with the Fieldwork Educator and the OTA Program faculty.

The final **Pass or No Pass** fieldwork grade is determined from the following:

1. **The final Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE)** score and accompanying comments of the student's performance on 25 different items.* It should be noted that it is mandatory for the student to pass the first three items related to ethics and safety in order to pass the entire fieldwork experience. The evaluation should reflect the student's demonstrated ability to adhere to ethics and safety, to understand OT philosophy, roles and evidenced-based practice; use clinical reasoning, apply clinical skills; and demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors. The FWPE should be completed by the FW supervisor/clinical educator based on the student's ability to meet the fieldwork site's specific student learning objectives. The evaluation should be shared during a face-to-face meeting with the student on their last day of the assigned fieldwork experience.
2. **The comments** on the individual evaluation items and the summary statements made by the supervising fieldwork supervisor or clinical educator. The comments should support and further define the student's performance in each related area of the FWPE.
3. **Attendance.** Full and consistent attendance is expected during each of the two required eight-week fieldwork courses. It is expected that the student will complete forty days, minus any single holidays that may fall during the assignment in which the OT department is closed. The impact of absences is as follows.

When a student has missed fieldwork:

- Days may be made up on weekends and/or evenings if the OT department staff provide services during those times.
- Students may use evening and/or weekend hours to observe another discipline, providing they have not already completed a similar learning assignment.
- Additional reading or written assignments are **not** acceptable ways of making up missed days.
- If the facility and supervising OT staff agree, the student may extend the fieldwork assignment beyond the original ending date in order to complete the minimum eight weeks, providing he/she is considered to be passing the fieldwork experience.

- When the student has had significant absences of 6 days or more **and is not** meeting minimum competencies for passing the fieldwork experience the student may be required to repeat a full 8 week clinical at a later time. (In this case absences and performance will prevent the student from graduating at the originally planned and expected time. See the Policy re: Fieldwork II for additional information.)
- In certain circumstances the grade of ‘I’ (incomplete) may be awarded, offering the student the opportunity to extend the fieldwork experience when it is the professional opinion of the parties involved that the student would benefit from additional time spent at the current assigned fieldwork facility in order to meet established competencies and pass the fieldwork experience. (This may prevent the student from graduating at the originally planned and expected time.)
- Note: Days missed sporadically throughout the eight weeks are *usually* less disruptive to the overall learning experience than days missed consecutively. Therefore, the Clinical and Academic FW Coordinators/Educators may use their discretion when three or less days have been missed.

The Grading of Fieldwork II

The AOTA *Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student* (2002) is used to evaluate the student’s experience and clinical performance. It is based on twenty-five items using a rating scale of 1-4 with recommended overall midterm and final score ranges for Satisfactory/Pass Performance and Unsatisfactory/No Pass Performance. Definitions of the rating scale and other terminology used in the FWPE are given in the booklet along with additional information about the evaluation process.

The evaluation should be based on student performance as a generalist for entry level practice and *not* based on the performance expected of an OT student or that of an experienced OTA practitioner. These comparisons can be avoided by having specific site specific learning objectives that complement the areas of the FWPE. FW educators are encouraged to add comments to each section of the FWPE to reflect the student’s specific strengths and/or weaknesses during the clinical experience. Ethical practice and client safety are extremely important and therefore it is mandatory for the student to pass the three items in section I. *Fundamentals of Practice* of the evaluation in order to pass the entire fieldwork experience.

The Fieldwork Supervisor/Clinical Instructor is to complete the evaluation form and review it with the student at both the midterm and final points of the fieldwork assignment. The midterm evaluation should be used to help develop or modify student learning objectives for the second half of the fieldwork experience.

The original FWPE should be mailed to the College after signatures are affixed and after making copies for the student and the fieldwork site’s file. The completed FWPE stays at the college as part of the student’s permanent academic record; it is NOT sent to AOTA.

NOTE: A free PowerPoint inservice **An Introduction to Understanding the OT and OTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluations (FWPEs)** by Karen Adler, MS, OTR and Roberta Wimmer, OTR/L, AOTA. (2002) is available from AOTA <http://www.aota.org/en/Education-Careers/Fieldwork/Supervisor/Inservice.aspx>. If you have not used the fieldwork evaluation form, it is recommended you view this slide presentation.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Policy and Procedure: Grievance Related to Fieldwork

Fieldwork includes all clinical components of the curriculum that are supervised by occupational therapy practitioners and other professionals who have agreed to share their knowledge and skills with student learners. OCT 117 Fieldwork I–Service Learning is a semester-long experience in which the OTA faculty grade the required written assignments and factor in the professional behaviors as rated by the FW supervisor on the FWI evaluation form. Community-based group experiences in OCT210 Fieldwork I - Psychosocial are graded by the course instructor based on behaviors, participation and completion of related assignments. Since these courses are graded by OTA Program faculty and a letter grade is awarded, any grievances should follow the outline for the Grievance Procedure located in the Maria College Student Handbook.

For Fieldwork II, completed during the final semester of the program, students are graded on a pass/no-pass system as indicated by the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) form completed by the Fieldwork Educator. However, it is the responsibility of the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to assign the grade based on the FWPE scoring and the supporting comments. Further details are provided in the course descriptions, objectives and learning expectations for each course. Additional information about grading of Fieldwork II is presented in the Grading Policy and Procedures. Any grievances related to Level II fieldwork should follow the policy and procedure stated in this document.

Policy: A student has the right to appeal a fieldwork decision that he or she believes to be less than what was earned or deserved. This may involve being dismissed from a fieldwork assignment before it is completed, a low or non-passing grade, and/or evidence of being treated unfairly or with prejudice.

Procedures: Prior to filing a formal appeal (following the steps outlined below) the OTA student should make every effort to resolve the issue with the Fieldwork Educator or other key personnel. Fieldwork problems are frequently related to miscommunications leading to misunderstandings. Students are encouraged to discuss the concern with an OTA faculty member, academic advisor or an OT mentor who can help identify strategies to improve communication and how to best request and respond to supervision. It is highly recommended that problems and concerns be addressed as they arise. Maria College OTA Program faculty members are available to visit a fieldwork site at any time as requested by the student or the FW educator. Each student is encouraged to be proactive regarding his/her education and advocate for learning opportunities, not waiting until the last day of fieldwork to confront new or ongoing concerns.

When a conflict or issue has a negative impact on a student's education and was not successfully resolved through informal measures, a formal grievance may be filed following these steps:

- STEP 1.** Submit a ***written statement*** requesting a conference with the Academic Field Work Coordinator (AFWC).
- The written statement must detail the nature of the grievance and the parties involved. It must explain the efforts the student has already made to resolve the issue/problem that led to the decision to pursue it as a grievance.
 - The student must also forward a copy of the statement of a grievance to the Clinical Fieldwork Coordinator and the FW Educator.

- The AFWC will review the student's statement and interview the student and the CFWC/FWE. This may be conducted via telephone, electronic communication and/or face to face as determined by the AFWC.
- The AFWC will inform the student of any decision reached through conference.

STEP 2. Should a satisfactory resolution of the issue *not* be reached during the process outlined in STEP 1 the student can:

- Submit a written statement requesting a conference with the OTA Program Chairperson and the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). In the documentation, the student must explain the nature of the grievance and attach supporting documentation from previous attempts to resolve the issues.
- Upon receipt of all data, the OTA Program Chair and VPAA will convene a meeting with all parties within five (5) school days.
- All persons involved in the grievance will be requested to be present.
- A member from the OTA Advisor Board may be invited to attend to act as a neutral party. This person should be familiar with fieldwork educational requirements, but without personal ties to the faculty or the parties involved in the grievance.
- After reviewing all issues, the OTA Program Chairperson and the VPAA will provide a written determination to all parties within five (5) days of the meeting.
- The Program Chairperson and/or Academic Dean's decisions/recommendations will be final and acted upon immediately. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Passing the FWII experience and moving forward with the OTA educational program sequence.
 - Failing the FWII experience but, with an opportunity to complete an alternate experience at another facility. Please see the Fieldwork II Policy and Procedures outline in a separate document.
 - Developing and completing a plan of correction with the student's advisor and AFWC. Continuation is conditional on successfully completing the plan of correction, which may include retaking relevant OTA courses.
 - Failing the FWII experience and being dismissed from the program.

NOTES: 1. Decisions should be guided by the 2011 AOTE Educational Standards for FW education, the FWPE, the AOTA Code of Ethics, the OTA Program materials related to fieldwork, the site specific fieldwork objectives, AOTA Standards of Practice and other professional and legal materials that bare on equitable decision making.

2. A student's ability to continue with his or her subsequent semester or begin the second level II fieldwork assignment after initiating the grievance process will depend upon the nature of the grievance and whether the student is otherwise eligible to continue. ***Grievance proceedings may prevent continuation with OTA course work, fieldwork II, and/or delay graduation.***

3. When it is determined that a fieldwork site/supervisor has not acted in the best interests of the OTA student or the OTA Program, the intent of fieldwork education and the profession, the College will consider a range of options including future use of the practitioner as a fieldwork educator/supervisor to termination of the Fieldwork Agreement. A facility wishing to provide fieldwork education in the future is encouraged to provide education about fieldwork supervision before re-establishing a fieldwork agreement.

**For grievances involving academic coursework and/or student life on campus, refer to the Grievance Procedure in the Maria College Student Handbook.*



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Policy and Procedure: International Fieldwork II

Rationale:

Level II Fieldwork is integral to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program in that it allows the student to transition from classroom learning to experiential learning and clinical practice. Fieldwork II is designed to be completed in the last semester of the program following the completion of the majority of the academic courses. Fieldwork II is completed concurrently with *OCT230 Applying Learning to Practice*. Further, Fieldwork II is designed to meet the ACOTE Educational Standards for Occupational Therapy Assistant Education which state:

The goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapy assistants. Level II fieldwork must be integral to the program's curriculum design and must include an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation. It is recommended that the student be exposed to a variety of clients across the lifespan and to a variety of settings. The program will ensure that the fieldwork experience is designed to promote clinical reasoning appropriate to the occupational therapy assistant role, to transmit the values and beliefs that enable ethical practice, and to develop professionalism and competence in career responsibilities. (ACOTE, 2011, p. 35).

For international (outside of the United States) Fieldwork, the following additional Standard applies:

C.1.19. FW Supervision Outside the US:

Ensure that students attending Level II fieldwork outside the United States are supervised by an occupational therapist who graduated from a program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and has 1 year of experience in practice.

Eligibility and Procedures:

Students with a 3.2 GPA or better will be eligible for international fieldwork. Factors such as confidence, independence, strong critical thinking skills, strong interpersonal skills, adventurousness, strong academic and clinical performance, cultural awareness/competence, flexibility, and fluency in the local language would support student success in an international fieldwork opportunity. Although the ultimate decision rests with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC), the AFWC will work closely with the Program Chairperson and OTA faculty to determine if a student who is considering international fieldwork possesses these attributes. Students will be responsible for all travel and lodging expenses for international fieldwork. Students are also responsible for scheduling their travel and lodging.

Before considering matching a student with a particular international Fieldwork Educator (FWE), the AFWC will ensure that students attending Level II fieldwork outside the United States are supervised by an occupational therapist who graduated from a program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and has 1 year of experience in practice. (ACOTE Standard C.1.19). This will be accomplished by reaching out to WFOT delegates in the country of interest to the student. During these collaborations, it will be determined how the fieldwork experience will compare with domestic fieldwork, particularly in preparation for students taking the NBCOT exam. International fieldwork experiences may need to be taken as optional 3rd fieldwork if the nature of the experience will not contribute to areas assessed on the exam.

Once an eligible student has been identified and a potential international site begins to be explored, the AFWC will be in contact with the Occupational Therapist who will be serving as the FWE to determine the nature of the individuals receiving services at the fieldwork site—primary and secondary health issues, social, cultural, and political issues impacting the agency, the clients, and the surrounding community. Maria College's academic OT/OTA program curriculum requirements will be shared. Questions about the length of the work day, days of the week worked, and questions about student expected outcomes, impact of any language barriers, etc. will be discussed before agreeing to enter into any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Through these discussions, the AFWC will determine whether or not the presence of a U.S. fieldwork student would be a benefit or detriment. Supporting elective coursework or selected readings or assignments may then be given to help students develop contextual knowledge to prepare them to work more effectively at the fieldwork site.

If the fieldwork is decided to be a benefit to the student and the international FW site, a valid MOU will be entered into and signed by both parties. This will take place one year prior to the start of the fieldwork. The AFWC will also work with the College's administration on development and signing of any additional international fieldwork contracts.

The AOTA SEFWE (Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience) is not specifically required for international fieldwork, however, in the case of an international fieldwork placement, the college will document a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of supervision (e.g., student evaluation of fieldwork) and for providing resources for enhancing supervision and share with the FWE

The AOTA FWPE (Fieldwork Performance Evaluation) is not specifically required for international fieldwork, however, the college will document mechanisms for requiring formal evaluation of student performance on Level II fieldwork and share with the FEW.

Six (6) months prior to the fieldwork, the AFWC will meet with the student to orient them to the experience and monitor the progress of arrangements.

Three (3) months prior to the fieldwork, the AFWC will meet with the student to check in on progress of the arrangements and confirm the status of the fieldwork MOU. Confirm supervisory, fieldwork educator, arrangements and evaluation procedures.

During fieldwork, the AFWC will provide periodic check-in with the student and with the fieldwork site, fieldwork educator, and/or supervisor.

Following the completion of the international fieldwork, the AFWC will review the student's post-experience evaluation and communicate with fieldwork site on plans for future students.

References

- ACOTE. (2011). Accreditation standards for an educational program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant. Retrieved from <http://www.aota.org/Education-Careers/Accreditation/StandardsReview.aspx>
- AOTA. (2010) Occupational therapy code of ethics and ethics standards. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 64(6). <http://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/Practice/Ethics/Docs/Standards/Code%20and%20Ethics%20Standards%202010.ashx>
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