



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

FIELDWORK II GUIDE 2021-2022

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Evaluation Documents:

- Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA (FWPE)
- Fieldwork Experience Assessment Tool (FEAT)
- Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE)

Common Abbreviations:

- Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC)
- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)
- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, Licensed (COTA/L)
- Fieldwork Level II (FW II)
- Fieldwork Educator (FWE)
- Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA (FWPE)
- Fieldwork Experience Assessment Tool (FEAT)
- Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)
- Occupational Therapy, Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA)
- Registered Occupational Therapist, Licensed (OTR/L)
- Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE)
- World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT)



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

FIELDWORK II RATIONALE AND GENERAL LEARNING 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. The OTA Program's **Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC)** is specifically responsible for all aspects of the Fieldwork II planning and site assignments.

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 workforce as an entry-level Occupational Therapy Assistant. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) 2018 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.

II. MARIA COLLEGE OTA GENERAL FIELDWORK II LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The successful Level II Fieldwork student will be able to:

1. Apply classroom knowledge, 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, 4th edition (AOTA, 2020)* to communicate with other professionals, select, apply and modify intervention programs and complete required documentation for client centered, occupation-based treatments.
3. Utilize current occupational therapy scholarly reports and publications to support decisions about evidence-based, best practice choices for clients on assigned caseload.
4. 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.
5. Increase didactic knowledge through participation in staff meetings, training sessions, field trips, scholarship, mentoring, supervision, and discussions with OT personnel.
6. Increase knowledge of administrative and support activities in occupational therapy.
7. Gain a working knowledge of the roles of the OT and the OTA in each FW II setting.
8. Reflect on the fieldwork learning experience to appreciate personal knowledge and skill strengths, competencies and areas that require additional learning and development.
9. Integrate psychosocial factors that influence engagement in occupations into the development of client-centered, occupation-based interventions and outcomes.

III. FIELDWORK SITE-SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Specific FW II Learning Objectives for a fieldwork site may be used to guide learning during fieldwork II in order to meet fieldwork educator's expectations. Site-Specific Learning Objectives would be prepared by the OT fieldwork educators using the **MARIA COLLEGE OTA GENERAL FIELDWORK II LEARNING OBJECTIVES**, knowledge of OT practice demands for the population served, and the following official documents as reference:

- Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020).
- Standards of Practice (AOTA 2015).
- Scope of Practice (AOTA, 2014).
- Guidelines for Supervision, Roles, and Responsibilities During the Delivery of Occupational Therapy Services (AOTA, 2014).
- Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, Domain and Process, 4th ed. (AOTA, 2020).
- Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA (FWPE) (AOTA, 2020).

The specific objectives for each facility's fieldwork experience 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 site and assist the fieldwork educator complete the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) at both the midpoint and conclusion of the clinical experience. FW II specific objectives are to be given to the student by their fieldwork educator during the initial orientation to the facility for FW II and shared with the OTA Program.

The **MARIA COLLEGE OTA GENERAL FIELDWORK II LEARNING OBJECTIVES** will be the default goals for fieldwork facilities that do not have site-specific objectives prepared.

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.1.10.) 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. (ACOTE Standard C.1.10.). Fieldwork settings are chosen by the AFWC 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 interventions and outcomes. Students will be placed in fieldwork settings according to learning needs, geographical location, and availability of sites.

Availability of sites may mean that a student could be assigned a specialty or emerging area of OT practice. 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.1.14). Refer to the Non-Traditional Fieldwork II Policy for sample Objectives.



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FIELDWORK II STUDENT OVERVIEW AND GUIDELINES

I. REQUIREMENTS

To participate in Fieldwork II, the OTA student is required to successfully complete all prior coursework, receive a passing score on the professional behaviors assessment, have required OTA department health records on file with Maria College, be of good moral character and demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with others. There are two fieldwork courses (OCT216 and OCT217) of 6 credits each, and each fieldwork is at least eight weeks full-time. 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 ACOTE educational standards. 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.

Fieldwork sites may have additional requirements, including but not limited to fingerprinting, background checks, CPR, drug testing, completion of an orientation or application prior to the beginning of fieldwork. Any additional time and expenses are the responsibility of the student and will be communicated prior to the site assignment.

*The OTA department at Maria College requires all students to create an “Exxat student profile”, entering in all mandatory information requested. The Exxat system is a fieldwork management software program. Students will be invited to create a profile using a link sent to their respective Maria College email accounts.

II. 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 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 learning* facts. 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 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* (2020), Maria College Mission and Values, and State licensure laws and regulations 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. It is the right of the fieldwork site to immediately discontinue a student from a fieldwork placement due to negligence which has the potential to, or actually resulted in physical or psychological, harm to a client. It is expected that the facility will notify the 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 Director and the student's academic advisor will work with student on an alternative educational plan.

III. ATTENDANCE

The student is responsible for reporting to the fieldwork site at the times specified by the fieldwork supervisor. Students are to follow the facility's schedule and calendar, not the calendar for Maria College. Students are expected to work the same hours as their respective supervisors. 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. The supervisor can require any absences to be made up, potentially extending the fieldwork time. Numerous absences may result in failure of the experience. Inability to complete fieldwork during the originally assigned time frame, for any reason, may delay graduation. **In the event that a student does not inform their supervisor of an absence, leaves the site before their shift ends without notifying the fieldwork supervisor, or does not return to a site, the student will automatically fail the fieldwork II experience.**

IV. 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, 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. Shoes must provide support and safety for client treatments, close-toed with soft, non-skid soles (no open-toed shoes or high heels).

V. EVALUATIONS

The student must complete the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) and the Fieldwork Educator must complete the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student (FWPE) during the last week of the assignment. A time should be scheduled to present evaluation findings to each other on the final day of fieldwork. The FW Educator should review the FWPE first, followed by the student's SEFWE. The FW educator will electronically sign the FWPE to verify that it was reviewed with the

student. Both signatures are required on the SEFWE to signify that it was completed and reviewed in person. Electronic signatures are acceptable. (See Fieldwork Grading Policy - #1)

VI. **GRADUATE SEMINAR**

Following the completion of both level II fieldwork experiences, students are required to attend a two-day seminar at Maria College in the week prior to Commencement. This Graduate Seminar experience includes: (1) an opportunity to share and discuss fieldwork experiences with classmates and academic faculty; (2) a review of the 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 through constructive feedback.



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POLICY AND PROCEDURE: FINAL EVALUATION REPORTS FOR FIELDWORK II

Policy: The Fieldwork Educator (FWE) and the Occupational Therapy Assistant student (OTAS) 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. The student has a responsibility to have the SEFWE signed and dated by both parties prior to leaving the facility. The FWPE will be completed and electronically signed by the FWE indicating that they have reviewed with the student.

Required forms:

- **Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE)**
- **Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE)**

Procedure:

1. The OTA Program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) will send the FWE a link which grants them access to the FWPE at the midterm point.
2. The FWE electronically submits the completed midterm to the AFWC. Once it is submitted, a PDF of the completed midterm document, along with a separate link to the final evaluation will be generated and sent to the FWE's email address.
3. The FWE will schedule a midterm review meeting with the student and share the completed midterm form with the student.
4. The FWE will use the final link to complete the student's final evaluation and submit electronically to the AFWC.
5. The FWE will schedule a final evaluation review meeting with the student and share the final evaluation with the student.
6. The student must complete the SEFWE prior to the final evaluation meeting date with the FWE.
7. At the scheduled evaluation meeting, the FWPE and SEFWE reports will be exchanged, reviewed, and discussed.
8. The student will return the completed SEFWE to the AFWC via email attachment or via mail within (3) days of completing the Fieldwork II assignment prior to receiving a final "Pass" grade for the fieldwork rotation. The student should leave a copy of the SEFWE with the fieldwork supervisor and retain a copy for his/her own personal records.

*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 AFWC detailing the area(s) of concern as directly related to the ratings and comments on the final FWPE.
- d. Following the AFWC'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 FWE.

- e. When the student's expressed concern potentially affects the final outcome of the fieldwork experience, an appointment will be scheduled with the FWE to discuss the issues.
- f. When a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should review the Fieldwork II 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 FWE.

If any concerns or problems arise at any time during the Fieldwork II assignment, the OTA student and/or the FWE should immediately contact the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, Meghan DeNitto, at (518) 861-2549 or by email at mdenitto@mariacollege.edu



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POLICY AND PROCEDURE: GRADING FOR FIELDWORK II

The required 12 credits of level II fieldwork (OCT 216 and OCT 217) are graded using a Pass/No Pass system based on entry-level competency as determined by the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE). The Fieldwork Educator is responsible for completing the FWPE and reviewing it with the student at the mid-term 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 may consult with the Fieldwork Educator and the OTA Program faculty as necessary.

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 31 different items. *Scores at "1" are not permitted on any item in the final evaluation in order to pass. Scores of "3" or higher required for items 1 - 3 (Fundamentals of Practice) in order to pass.*
2. 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 FWE based on the student's ability to meet the fieldwork site's learning objectives. The FWE should be shared during a face-to-face meeting with the student on their last day of the fieldwork experience.
3. **The comments** on the individual evaluation items and the summary statements are 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.
4. **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 full 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 or she is considered to be passing the fieldwork experience.
- When the student has had significant absences **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.)
- In certain circumstances, the grade of "T" (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.)

Grading of Fieldwork II

The AOTA's *Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student* (FWPE) is used to evaluate the student's experience and clinical performance. It is based on thirty-one items using a rating scale of 1-4 with recommended overall 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 within the evaluation along with additional information about the evaluation process. Students can find a PDF of the evaluation items on the AOTA website here: <https://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/EducationCareers/Fieldwork/Fieldwork-Performance-Evaluation-Occupational-Therapy-Student.pdf>.

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. Educators are encouraged to add comments to each section of the FWPE to reflect the student's specific strengths and 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 student cannot pass the fieldwork with a score of "1" entered for any item.

The Fieldwork Educator is to complete the electronic evaluation and review it with the student at both the mid-term and final points of the fieldwork assignment. The mid-term evaluation should be used to help develop or modify student learning objectives for the second half of the fieldwork experience.

The completed FWPE stays at the College as part of the student's academic record; it is not sent to AOTA.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURE: GRIEVANCE RELATED TO FIELDWORK II

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.

Procedure: 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 (FWE) 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 best to 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 FWE. Each student is encouraged to be proactive regarding his or her education and to 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.** The student must submit a *written statement* requesting a conference with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC).
- The written statement must detail the nature of the grievance and the parties involved. This must explain the efforts the student has already made to resolve the issue 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 FWE.
 - The AFWC will review the student's statement and interview the student and the 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 above, the student can:
- Submit a written statement requesting a conference with the OTA Program Director and the Health Sciences Department Chair. 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 Director and Health Sciences Department Chair 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 Advisory 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, OTA Program Director and the Health Sciences Department Chair will provide written determination to all parties within five (5) days of the meeting.
 - The OTA Program Director and the Health Sciences Department Chair's decisions and 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.
- Developing and completing a plan of correction with the student's Academic 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 OTA Program.

NOTES: 1. Decisions will be guided by the 2018 ACOTE Educational Standards, 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 bearing on equitable decision making.

2. A student's ability to continue with his or her subsequent semester or begin another fieldwork II 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 or 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/ 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

Policy:

For students wishing to pursue international (outside of the United States) fieldwork II, the following additional ACOTE Standard applies:

C.1.16. Fieldwork Supervision Outside the US:

The OTA Program must document and verify 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 at least 1 year of experience in practice prior to the onset of Level II fieldwork.

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 OTA Program Director and 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.1.16). 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 OTA Program curriculum requirements will be shared. Questions about the length of the workday, 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 FWPE (Fieldwork Performance Evaluation) and the SEFWE (Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience) are not specifically required for international fieldwork, however, in the case of an international fieldwork placement, the College will document a mechanism for requiring formal evaluation of student performance on Level II fieldwork and for evaluating the effectiveness of supervision (e.g., student evaluation of fieldwork) and for providing resources for enhancing supervision and share with the FWE.

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, fieldwork educator, supervisory 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.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

POLICY and PROCEDURE: NON-TRADITIONAL FIELDWORK II PLACEMENTS

Policy:

The Maria College OTA Program defines a Non-Traditional Fieldwork II site as one that provides services to clients common to occupational therapy practice, yet OT practitioners are not presently employed at the site. Such sites can be considered emerging areas of practice for potential expansion of OT services, or areas that are currently under-represented with OT practitioners due to socioeconomic or other employment factors. A student may select a non-traditional specialty or emerging area of OT practice depending on interest, experience, availability of clinical sites and with Academic Fieldwork Coordinator approval.

Eligibility and Procedures:

Students seeking a Non-Traditional Fieldwork II site should be mature, able to work independently, highly motivated and able to clearly articulate the role of occupation in the promotion of wellness.

In non-traditional areas of practice where OT services do not exist, the student must receive “supervision by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant (under the direction of an occupational therapist) with at least 3 years’ full-time or its equivalent of professional experience prior to the Level II fieldwork. Supervision must include a minimum of 8 hours of direct supervision each week of the fieldwork experience. An occupational therapy supervisor must be available, via a variety of contact measures, to the student during all working hours. An on-site supervisor designee of another profession must be assigned while the occupational therapy supervisor is off site.” (ACOTE Standard C.1.14).

Maria College most often accomplishes this supervision by assigning an OTA Faculty member to oversee the non-traditional site fieldwork experience along with the site educator. Faculty schedules and availability will be a determining factor in the ability of a student to take a Non-Traditional fieldwork II.

NON-TRADITIONAL FIELDWORK II LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The student will utilize the non-traditional 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 occupation-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 profession’s 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.
9. Integrate psychosocial factors that influence engagement in occupations into the development of client-centered, occupation-based interventions and outcomes.

The OTA student will utilize background knowledge and demonstrate treatment interventions consistent with the type of facility and identified client needs. Specific FW II objectives may be prepared by the non-OT fieldwork educators using Maria College's **NON-TRADITIONAL FIELDWORK II LEARNING OBJECTIVES**, consultation with OTA Faculty regarding practice demands for the population served, and the following official documents as reference:

- Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (AOTA, 2020).
- Standards of Practice (AOTA 2015).
- Scope of Practice (AOTA, 2014).
- Guidelines for Supervision, Roles, and Responsibilities During the Delivery of Occupational Therapy Services (AOTA, 2014).
- Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, Domain and Process, 4th ed. (AOTA, 2020).
- Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the OTA (FWPE) (AOTA, 2020).

The Site-Specific Learning 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 site and assist the fieldwork educator 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.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURE: QUALIFIED SUPERVISORS FOR FIELDWORK II

Policy:

The Fieldwork Educator (FWE) 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.1.11. Qualified Level II Fieldwork Supervisors: The OTA Program must document and verify that the student is supervised by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant (under the supervision of an occupational therapist) who has a minimum of 1 year full-time (or its equivalent) of practice experience as a licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant prior to the onset of the Level II fieldwork. Ensure that the student supervisor is adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator prior to the Level II fieldwork. The supervising therapist may be engaged by the fieldwork site or by the educational program.

Procedure:

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 fieldwork commencing, via email, phone or mail.
2. Using the OT Credentials Form, 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.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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 DeNitto, MPH, BS, COTA/L
Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

Maria College
OTA Department – McAuley Building
700 New Scotland Ave.
Albany, NY 12208
mdenitto@mariacollege.edu
Phone: (518) 861-2549
Fax: (516) 960-0391

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.

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



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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-based and client-centered enabling the fieldwork student to:

- Meet the Maria College OTA Program's GENERAL FIELDWORK II LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Gain experiences that are reflected in and evaluated by the AOTA's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student (AOTA 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!
- 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;
- Learn about the roles and functions of occupational therapy practitioners in the assigned setting;
- 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 activity analysis 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 educator 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

References

- ACOTE. (2018). Accreditation standards for an educational program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant. Retrieved from <https://acoteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2018-ACOTE-Standards.pdf>
- AOTA. (2020). Occupational therapy code of ethics and ethics standards. Retrieved from <https://ajot.aota.org/article.aspx?articleid=2442685>
- AOTA. (2020). Fieldwork performance evaluation for the occupational therapy assistant student. Bethesda, MD: AOTA Press.
- New York State Education Department. (2020). Rules of the Board of Regents, Part 29, Unprofessional Conduct. Retrieved from <http://www.op.nysed.gov/title8/part29.htm> - hp