

## **COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY OT PROGRAM FIELDWORK MANUAL**

This Fieldwork Manual is provided to all students at the Colorado Mesa University Department of Kinesiology to make clear the purpose, objectives, policies and methods of evaluation of students as related to fieldwork experiences. Be sure to keep this manual accessible throughout the course of the occupational therapy program so you can refer to it when questions arise regarding fieldwork.

We appreciate the support of the University of Utah, University of Mary and the University of North Dakota as they have given permission to use segments of their fieldwork manuals to assist us in the development of our own manual.

A copy of this manual is available on the MSOT Program website.

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## Accreditation

In August of 2023, Colorado Mesa University's Occupational Therapy program was granted a seven-year accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is located at 7501 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 510E Bethesda, MD 20814. ACOTE's telephone number c/o AOTA is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org).

The [National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy \(NBCOT\)](#) is the credentialing agency responsible for certifying occupational therapy practitioners in the United States. The NBCOT's certification process ensures that occupational therapists have the knowledge and skills necessary to practice safely and effectively. Graduates of the MSOT program will be eligible to take the NBCOT exam. Successful completion of the NBCOT exam and state licensure are required to become an occupational therapist. The OTR/L credential indicates an occupational therapist is registered with the NBCOT and licensed to practice in their state.

## **Purpose of Fieldwork Experiences**

### **Level I Fieldwork**

The first level of fieldwork includes those experiences designed as an integral part of the OT course series offered throughout the occupational therapy program, including practice areas of mental health, pediatric, and adult physical disabilities. Directed observation, participation, and clinical reasoning experiences will be provided by qualified competent personnel, who may or may not be occupational therapy personnel. These experiences are designed to enhance initial learning of basic material and are not to be considered substitutes for or part of sustained fieldwork experience as defined by Level II Fieldwork.

#### **Relationship to Curricular Design:**

The didactic, experiential, and assessment components of the MSOT will ensure students demonstrate in-depth knowledge and scholarly application as evidenced by the following educational outcomes:

1. Critically apply the latest research and knowledge bases that support occupational therapy practice and contribute to the growth and dissemination of research and knowledge.
2. Articulate and apply therapeutic use of occupations with individuals or groups for the purpose of participation in roles and situations in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings.
3. Develop and implement client-centered care that is inclusive of cultural values, beliefs and needs.
4. Articulate and apply occupational therapy theory and evidence-based evaluations and interventions to achieve expected outcomes as related to occupation.
5. Plan and apply evidence based occupational therapy interventions to address the physical, cognitive, functional cognitive, psychosocial, sensory, and other aspects of performance in a variety of contexts and environments to support engagement in everyday life activities that affect health, well-being, and quality of life, as informed by the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF).
6. Exemplify professionalism by employing therapeutic use of self and science driven evidence in all practice areas and settings inclusive of a direct care provider, consultant, educator, manager, researcher, and advocate for the profession and the consumer.
7. Uphold the ethical standards, values, and attitudes of the occupational therapy profession in all aspects of practice and professional interactions.

**No portion of the Level I Fieldwork placement may be substituted for any part of a Level II Fieldwork placement.**

## Level II Fieldwork

Level II Fieldwork is that portion of the student's educational program which is designated for full-time occupational therapy training in the clinical or community setting. During these experiences, the student will engage in evaluation, planning, implementation and integrating knowledge from the occupational therapy program in collaboration with other disciplines within the health care facility and the community.

Experiences are designed to include the analysis of psychosocial factors influencing the engagement in occupation and facilitate client-centered, meaningful, and occupation-based outcomes.

Level II Fieldwork provides the opportunity to demonstrate entry-level practice competencies under the supervision of a fieldwork educator. A minimum two 12-week experiences are required, twelve weeks full time in a health care, clinical setting and twelve weeks in a community, rural or emerging practice setting.

Students have access to a FW website which contains general information about all fieldwork sites including previous student evaluations of those sites. Once the AFWC completes all of the students' placements for any given level I or level II placement, the assignments will be published on the FW class website in D2L.

Level II fieldwork is full-time, and students are expected to follow the schedule of their FW educator, which may include weekends or holidays. In special circumstances, and with the approval of the Program Director, a student may be able to complete a Level II fieldwork on a part-time basis. This arrangement must be consistent with the fieldwork placement's usual and customary personnel policies, and it must be 50% or greater of a full-time equivalency at that site. If a site that accepts part time students is not available, then the student will not be allowed the part-time scheduling option and must complete the full-time option or be placed in a different setting if available.

### **General Objectives of Fieldwork**

Each center offering fieldwork has its own unique characteristics. The philosophy of the facility, its organization and environment directly affect the occupational therapy program. Thus, each setting must establish its own educational objectives in collaboration with the Colorado Mesa University OT program curriculum, reflecting those learning experiences available. Concomitantly, objectives have been identified by clinical and academic educators in occupational therapy which are generally applicable. Student performance is evaluated according to the level at which a student

demonstrates appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes during the fieldwork experience.

These general objectives reflect the AOTA Fieldwork Evaluation for the Occupational Therapist including judgment, attitude and performance in assessment, planning, treatment, problem solving and administration/professionalism.

1. Ability to interpret and report orally or in written form on results of assessments and evaluations, patient's/client's behavior and patient/client progress.
2. Ability to analyze and segregate the elements involved in processes and activities.
3. Proficiency in evaluation and treatment procedures.
4. Ability to apply theoretical knowledge appropriately: to plan, present, execute and adjust the patient's/client's occupational therapy program.
5. Ability to instruct, to present processes and activities in logical sequence at an appropriate level for the patient/client.
6. Ability to communicate accurately and appropriately, purposes of treatment, treatment rationale and treatment procedures.
7. Ability to maintain effective therapeutic and professional relationships.
8. Ability to maintain confidentiality and privacy of client/ patient/ facility information.
9. Employ judgment to analyze situations, grasp essentials, reach sound conclusions and plan necessary steps in accordance with priorities.
10. Demonstrate the maturity to appraise situations realistically and objectively and to maintain professional composure in reacting to them.
11. Demonstrate a sense of responsibility for readiness and dependability in organizing and discharging all assigned duties in relation to patient welfare and department administration.
12. Demonstrate your resourcefulness by utilizing personal assets, available resources and facilities alone or under supervision as indicated.
13. Show professional behavior as evidenced by an appropriate attitude toward institutional, departmental and personal standards involving grooming, bearing and manner, professional ethics and etiquette.
14. Professional Ethics: understands the core values and principles of the AOTA Code of Ethics and is able to apply them to the ethical decision-making process including the use of systematic and critical reflection.

The above objectives are accepted by the fieldwork site when supervising students from the Colorado Mesa University Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program. Adapted, with permission, from University of North Dakota, University of Mary & University of Utah Fieldwork Educator Manuals



## Fieldwork Prerequisites

Students must complete all required coursework prior to entering Level II Fieldwork. Level I Fieldwork will be woven within the framework of the course sequence. Failure to pass requirements imposed by fieldwork sites and the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapists (NBCOT) may negatively affect a student's eligibility for fieldwork placements and to sit for the national certification exam.

Requirements at fieldwork sites include but are not limited to the following: criminal background checks, drug screening, and health/immunization requirements. Students who claim an exemption to immunizations must know and acknowledge that:

- there are a limited number of sites who may allow unvaccinated individuals to participate in any activities or programs with that facility;
- they may not get their desired sites;
- they will not or may not go to any medical facility; and,
- their graduation may be delayed in order to ensure that they get the variety of sites for fieldwork that are required to meet accreditation requirements.

## **General Level I Fieldwork Objectives**

### **Definition and Purpose from [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)**

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

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

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

### **Objectives for all Level I:**

By the end of the Level I experience the student will be able to:

- Develop an increased comfort level interacting with persons who have occupational performance issues related to disabilities, emotional problems, psychiatric disorders and having difficulty performing desired occupations.
- Describe the needs of clients served by the agency/facility.
- Demonstrate respect for the values and diversity of persons with differences in culture, ethnicity, health status, disabilities, and the caregivers, staff and volunteers who work with people.
- Demonstrate an attitude of inquiry to enhance creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.



- Actively observe staff interactions, assessments and/or treatment sessions with agency/facility clients. When an occupational therapist is employed by the facility, observation of occupational therapy assessments and treatment sessions will be included.
- Participate in group or individual treatment sessions as appropriate depending on the skill level of the student and the severity of the client's disability/illness.
- Observe OT/OTA role delineation when Occupational Therapy Assistants are employed by the agency/facility.
- Display effective communication skills (verbal and nonverbal) and professional behavior at the fieldwork site.
- Display appropriate safety in site with clients and equipment.
- Adhere to site safety policies and procedures.
- Displays knowledge of appropriate ethics for practice setting.

(From AOTA *Standards*, COE Guidelines for Occupational Therapy Fieldwork – Level I, The Essentials Guide to Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Education)

The above objectives are accepted by the fieldwork site when supervising students from the Colorado Mesa University Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program.

## **General Level II Fieldwork Objectives**

### **Requirements established in the AOTA Essentials for Level II Fieldwork include:**

- A minimum of 24 weeks of Level II Fieldwork experience, full-time sustained basis.
- Completion of all fieldwork experience no later than 24 months following completion of academic preparation.
- Direct supervision provided by a registered occupational therapist with at least one year of experience. (The year start date is the day of official registration in the United States.)

### **Upon completion of Level II Fieldwork, the student will demonstrate the following:**

- Competency in utilizing assessment tools and evaluation procedures routinely used by OTs at the fieldwork site.
- Proficiency in implementing treatment and justifying treatment plans based on the models and theories of occupational therapy practiced at the fieldwork site.
- Proficiency in working with persons who have occupational performance issues related to social emotional factors and/or psychiatric disorders and having difficulty performing desired occupations.
- Proficiency in identifying occupational performance issues with a wide variety of disease processes impacting clients through the lifespan including but not limited to neurological conditions, physical impairments, psychiatric and/or emotional conditions.
- Effective oral and written communication of ideas and objectives relevant to the roles and duties of an occupational therapist. This includes the ability to interact with patients and staff in a professional manner.
- Acquisition of professional characteristics that demonstrate the following:
  - the ability to establish and sustain therapeutic relationships;
  - a sensitivity to and respect for confidentiality;
  - the ability to work collaboratively with others and to relinquish or assume responsibility when appropriate to the task at hand;
  - responsibility in maintaining, assessing, and improving self-competency;
  - the ability to use supervision as a tool for self-directed learning;
  - the development of a broad sense of professional responsibility to the community at large and concern for social and health care issues;
  - understanding of the roles of other health professionals;
  - development of a positive professional self-image.
- Apply evidence-based, scientific and theoretical principles to address client needs in practice settings.

- Intervention planning that is client-centered, purposeful and meaningful occupations.
- Demonstrate and apply appropriate safety in site with clients and equipment.
- Adhere to site safety policies and procedures.
- Demonstrates behaviors that are in alignment with professional standards and the AOTA Code of Ethics.

The above objectives are accepted by the fieldwork site when supervising students from the Colorado Mesa University Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program. Adapted from AOTA's Guide to Fieldwork Education, copyright 1984 & The Essential Guide to Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Education

## **Fieldwork Assignments and Dates**

Fieldwork placements shall be provided to offer experience with various groups across the life span, persons with various occupational performance issues and various service delivery models reflective of current practice in the profession. Every student is required to complete one Level II fieldwork experience in a clinical health care setting and one Level II fieldwork in a community or rural setting. Each Level II Fieldwork requires a minimum of 12 weeks full time equivalent fieldwork experience.

Anticipated FW dates are published on the MSOT FW Program website and are subject to change.

Students are strongly encouraged to complete their level II fieldwork with as much diversity of population and setting as possible. The CMU is committed to graduating generalist occupational therapy students with entry level practitioner skills who are prepared to work with people across the lifespan.

Additionally, students will not be able to complete any level of fieldwork at a site where they have already completed a previous fieldwork, where they have previously worked or where they or a close family member or friend has worked.

During fieldwork assignments students are **not** considered employees of the facility for purposes of compensation, fringe benefits, worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, minimum wage laws, income tax withholding or social security.

Fieldwork Level I and Level II assignments are made based on a variety of factors. Students will be asked to identify preferred fieldwork sites. Previous work and volunteer experience will be taken into account. The CMU MSOT Program has a commitment to provide each student with a wide range of observation/participation experiences. Preference will generally be given to students who do not have previous experience in the type of fieldwork selected. Students are not allowed to complete a fieldwork at a site where they have been employed in the last five years or where they have been a patient receiving OT treatment. A student's professional behavior in class and other curriculum related activities is considered in making a good match between the student and the placement

Some fieldwork sites have additional requirements which may include an interview prior to accepting a student reservation for fieldwork, additional immunizations/vaccinations, fingerprinting, or a drug screen. Individual student priorities are respected, as conditions permit, in making assignments. The placement of the student in a particular fieldwork assignment is ultimately the decision of the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

Students may attend placements out of state in some circumstances. To participate in a placement out of state, the student must have demonstrated strong independent learning skills.

In special circumstances, and with the approval of the Program Director & AFWC, a student may be able to complete a Level II fieldwork on a part-time basis. This arrangement must be consistent with the fieldwork placement's usual and customary personnel policies, and it must be 50% or greater of a full-time equivalency at that site. If a site that accepts part-time students is not available, then the student will not be allowed the part-time scheduling option and must complete the full-time option or be placed in a different setting if available. This policy is available in the Colorado Mesa University Fieldwork Manual.

### **Fieldwork Supervision Guidelines**

ACOTE standard C.1.13 outlines that the CMU OT program must ensure that Level II fieldwork supervision is direct and then decreases to less direct supervision as appropriate for the setting, the severity of the client's condition, and the ability of the student to support progression toward entry-level competence.

Guidelines for student supervision and Medicare requirements can be seen [here](#).

Guidelines for student supervision as outlined by the [AOTA Commission on Education](#) Guidelines for Occupational Therapy Experience- Level II (2013) state:

There are multiple sources of supervision guidelines that are applicable to Level II fieldwork.

1. The first source are state laws and state practice acts ([Colorado State Practice Act](#)) that govern the practice of occupational therapy. These documents will specify if there are any specific requirements for supervision that need to be upheld in that state.
2. Another source of supervision guidelines are federal regulations such as Medicare that specify what type of supervision must be provided to fieldwork students in certain healthcare settings and with certain types of Medicare coverage. The [AOTA](#) Web site is a good source for the most up-to-date information on Medicare regulations for student supervision.
3. The ACOTE Standards specify that during Level II fieldwork, students must be supervised by a licensed or credentialed occupational therapy practitioner with at least 1 year of experience who is adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator.

4. The Standards state that supervision should initially be direct, and then progress to less direct supervision as is possible given the demands of the fieldwork site, the complexity of the client's condition being treated, and the abilities of the fieldwork student. The COE and Commission on Practice (COP) Fieldwork Level II position paper (COE/COP, 2012) additionally recommends that supervision of occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant students in Fieldwork Level II settings will be of the quality and scope to ensure protection of consumers and provide opportunities for appropriate role modeling of occupational therapy practice, and that the supervising occupational therapist and/or occupational therapy assistant must recognize when direct versus indirect supervision is needed and ensure that supervision supports the student's current and developing levels of competence (COE/COP, 2012).

***These are the general guideline principles of supervision from AOTA (2014) for occupational therapy assistants that also pertain to supervision of a student:***

- Supervision involves guidance and oversight related to the delivery of occupational therapy services and the facilitation of professional growth and competence. It is the responsibility of the occupational therapist to provide adequate and appropriate supervision.
  - The specific frequency, methods, and content of supervision may vary and are dependent on the:
  - Complexity of client needs,
  - Number and diversity of clients,
  - Knowledge and skill level of the occupational therapy fieldwork student
  - Type of practice setting,
  - Requirements of the practice setting, and
  - Other regulatory requirements.
- There are a variety of types and methods of supervision. Methods can include but are not limited to direct, face-to-face contact and indirect contact.
  - Examples of methods or types of supervision that involve direct face-to-face contact include observation, modeling, client demonstration, discussions, teaching, and instruction.
  - Examples of methods or types of supervision that involve indirect contact include phone conversations, written correspondence, and electronic exchanges.
- Occupational therapy fieldwork students must abide by facility and state requirements regarding the documentation of a supervision plan and supervision contacts. Documentation may include the:
  - Frequency of supervisory contact,
  - Methods or types of supervision,
  - Content areas addressed,
  - Evidence to support areas and levels of competency, and
  - Names and credentials of the persons participating in the supervisory process.

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If questions or concerns, please contact the AFWC at Colorado Mesa University.

### **Student: Therapist Ratio for Fieldwork**

The CMU OT Program, generally, utilizes sites that are outlined as 1:1 or 2:1 (student: therapist); however, on a case-by-case basis, at site may utilize a ratio of up to 4:1. This higher ratio may be more appropriate for group supervision in a more community-based setting or emerging practice setting with assurance of the adequate provision of supervision, which would be documented between the AFWC and the site. These ratios established by the CMU OT Program enables proper supervision, ensures protection of consumers, provides appropriate role modeling, and the ability to provide frequent assessment of student progress in achieving stated fieldwork objectives.

To ensure the ratio of fieldwork educators to students enables proper supervision, protection of consumers, and opportunities for role modeling the Colorado Mesa University OT Program provides fieldwork sites with resources on supervision models and assessment of progress resources such as feedback forms, and weekly progress forms for utilization during the Level II fieldwork.

Level I experience may have a higher therapist to student ratio depending on the services provided at the facility. This will be determined by the AFWC based on the site and therapist experience for fieldwork students. Faculty may also assist a fieldwork educator to lower the therapist to student ratio if needed. Faculty may be utilized for supervision in Level I experiences based on the course content in which the Level I experience is occurring.

### **Requesting an Unlisted FW Experience**

Students **MAY NOT** arrange fieldwork sites themselves. However, if you have an interest in a site not currently on our list, you may facilitate a request for the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to contract with a site. Things to consider when looking at a facility:

- Identify a particular site in the geographic or practice area of the student's interest.

- Investigate the site, using their website, printed materials, or other sources, to determine what kind of treatment or services are provided at that site. Think about one's learning needs and whether the site appears to meet one's learning needs or not.
- Find out the name of an appropriate contact person and either the phone number or email address for the contact person.
- Discuss with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator what has been learned and why the student is interested in the site.
- The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator may make a contact to determine if it is a suitable site and has the final decision on whether to pursue an affiliation agreement.
- Keep in mind affiliation agreements can take several months to a year to complete depending on the site, and not all facilities agree to contract with us.

### **Changing or Canceling Fieldwork Experiences**

Once the student has been placed at a facility, the student may make changes only by petitioning the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Changes are made only for educational reasons or in the case of an unanticipated substantial life change. If the student is requesting a fieldwork at a facility that does not already have an Affiliation Agreement with the Colorado Mesa University, MSOT Program, an effort will be made to set up an Affiliation Agreement when possible. Affiliation Agreements can take up to a year to process through the facility and Colorado Mesa University legal departments. An Affiliation Agreement is required before any fieldwork placement can occur.

Occasionally, a facility may be forced to cancel a student's fieldwork for a variety of reasons. The student and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will work together to find a suitable alternate placement as quickly as possible.

### **Absences**

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors with regard to attendance and punctuality during fieldwork experiences. Should the student need to be absent due to illness or an emergency, it is assumed the student will take the professional



responsibility of notifying the fieldwork supervisor in accordance with the established policies and procedures of the department to which you are assigned.

During Fieldwork II any absence due to illness or an emergency will need to be made up, at the discretion of the Fieldwork Supervisor, in order to ensure the successful completion of the fieldwork experience. For unusual circumstances, the student may request limited time off. It is the prerogative of the Fieldwork Supervisor to grant or deny the request. Time off, under these circumstances, should be made up by working extra days, such as Saturdays, or extending the length of the fieldwork.

During Fieldwork II it is expected the student will work the same schedule as the Fieldwork Supervisor, which may include taking the same holidays as the staff at the facility to which the student is assigned. University student holidays do not apply during the affiliation. Holidays taken during fieldwork are not a part of the three-day limit of days off due to illness or emergency, and it is the discretion of the fieldwork supervisor whether the holiday has to be made up or not. *Planned absences of more than one day must first be approved by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator prior to requesting approval of the fieldwork supervisor.*

### **Policy Regarding Level I Fieldwork Evaluation/Grades**

A professional behavior evaluation form will be completed by the facility fieldwork supervisor. In addition to this form, fieldwork and non-fieldwork assignments from Seminars will be used to assign a grade for the Seminars. Students need to receive a standard of 'Passing' on the *Level I Fieldwork Student Performance Evaluation* in order to have successfully completed the Fieldwork I experience. If a student receives a standard of 'Unsatisfactory', the student may be required to repeat the fieldwork experience at another location at a different time and will be required to meet with their faculty advisor to develop a learning plan.

The fieldwork supervisor has the right to terminate, at any time, the student's participation in the fieldwork experience for safety issues, ethical issues, or inappropriate professional behavior. If this occurs the student will be required to repeat the fieldwork experience at another location.

Placement for this repeated fieldwork will be at the discretion of the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and when the next appropriate site is available. Issues raised by the professional behavior evaluation form, completed by the fieldwork supervisor, will be discussed with the student and the student's advisor. After discussion with the student and the student's advisor, plans will be developed to address performance

problem areas as needed. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will follow up to ensure the development plan is completed.

### **Policy Regarding Level II Fieldwork Evaluation/Grades**

Upon successful completion of academic course work each student is expected to complete three months of fieldwork in a clinical health care environment and three months of fieldwork in a rural, community or emerging practice environment. In order to successfully complete fieldwork, the student must earn a total score of at least 111 points and must score at least a 3 on the ethics and safety items on the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student (FWPE). Final scores are determined through collaboration of the Fieldwork Supervisor and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

Students are enrolled in fieldwork for credit (OCCU 554, 555 or 594). Although students are not on campus during the fieldwork period, the cost to the University for the fieldwork experience portion of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Program includes faculty time, secretarial help, telephone, paper and mailing costs, travel expenses for faculty to visit the facilities regularly and for attendance at regional and national Occupational Therapy meetings pertaining to education. In order for students to complete the requirements for a grade, both the FWPE and Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) must be sent to the Colorado Mesa University MSOT Program's Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, who is then authorized to send the grade report to the Registrar's Office to be recorded on the student's transcript. The grades for Level II Fieldwork (OCCU 554, 555 and 594) are credit/no credit. Grades will not be turned in to the registrar's office until all course requirements are completed. A syllabus will be provided explaining all assignments.

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator reserves the right, on behalf of the MSOT Program, to assign a grade other than that which is reflected by earned points alone. Justification for doing so could include such things as the failure of the student to maintain and/or provide in a timely fashion proof of requirements for Level II Fieldwork including CPR certification or evidence of academic misconduct. Prior to adjusting the grade, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will consult with the student, the Fieldwork Supervisor and/or Program Director as deemed appropriate.

The process for appealing a grade for fieldwork would begin with discussing the issue with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and, if appropriate, the Fieldwork Supervisor. If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the next step is to start the appeal process follows the steps outlined in the Academic Policies on pages 19 and 20 in [The Maverick Guide](#).

It is the MSOT Program's expectation that students will not experience major difficulties and will successfully complete all fieldwork requirements. However, should the student experience difficulty leading to the discontinuation of fieldwork, the following categories for termination apply as described below.

Terminated Passing: In this situation, the student, fieldwork supervisor and Colorado Mesa University Academic Fieldwork Coordinator mutually agree at some point prior to the mid-term that the student is unable to perform to his/her potential due to a mismatch of student and facility. The student is permitted to withdraw from the fieldwork or receives an incomplete and is rescheduled immediately for another fieldwork. Rescheduling of another fieldwork is dependent on availability of fieldwork sites.

Terminated for Medical Reasons: This may occur at any time during the fieldwork experience in which the student is currently meeting competencies. The student is allowed to withdraw passing and take an incomplete for the course and complete it when he/she is medically stable, upon recommendation by the referring medical professional.

Terminated Failing: The student is not meeting competencies and receives a non-satisfactory (failing) mid-term evaluation. This would be reflected with an unsatisfactory grade on the student's transcript. In addition, the fieldwork facility may terminate a student at any time, whose performance is not competent and threatens the patient's treatment/safety. Terminated failing could also occur if the student violates a facility policy or procedure, the violation of which, if done by an employee of the facility, would cause immediate termination of the employee. Examples include drug use, theft of property, or discussion of a patient in an inappropriate situation. It is important for students to be familiar with facility policies and procedures, particularly policies related to patient confidentiality.

### **Reassignment After Failure of Fieldwork**

Should a student fail a Fieldwork II experience, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will schedule another 12-week fieldwork for the student when such fieldwork is available. If a student fails two Fieldwork II experiences, he/she will be academically disqualified from the occupational therapy program.

When a student fails the first Fieldwork II assignment, a plan will be established to assist the student to successfully complete the next Fieldwork II assignment. This plan will be designed by the student, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and appropriate faculty members of the MSOT Program. The plan may include, and is not limited to, tutoring on specific topics, special assignments and/or registration for University

courses with content that will provide the student an opportunity to develop needed skills.

Students must complete all required fieldwork within 24 months of completion of academic course work. If a student is unable to complete the fieldwork within this time frame, the student must retake pertinent academic course work prior to fieldwork assignment.

### **Professional Ethics**

Students are expected to become familiar with the rules and regulations of facilities to which they are assigned. Students should request that this information be provided to them during facility orientation if the facility does not volunteer the information.

Students are expected to incorporate AOTA standards and code of ethics policies into professional practice. Student must take personal responsibility for future professional development plans in order to maintain a level of practice consistent with set standards or expectations. Students frequently encounter situations in fieldwork that create ethical dilemmas, including but not limited to high productivity standards, conflict between didactic preparation and clinical practice, and witnessing unethical behavior or perceived mistreatment of others. Students should consult with the CMU MSOT program as they work to resolve ethical issues.

Students are expected to understand the functions of national and state occupational therapy associations and other professional/human service organizations and be prepared to participate in the effective promotion of occupational therapy through educating other professionals, consumers, third party payers and the public.

Students are expected to comply policies, standards and guidelines contained within the Colorado Mesa University's Maverick Guide while training at fieldwork sites. The "Student Code of Conduct" is available for review [here](#).

### **Verification of Immunizations**

No student will be permitted participation in Level I or II Fieldwork without verification that immunizations are current. This includes immunization for Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, Tetanus Diphtheria Pertussis, Hepatitis B, COVID, annual Influenza and an annual screening for TB. These are the same immunizations that were required for admittance to the Colorado Mesa University Occupational Therapy Program. TB tests and Influenza must be updated yearly. COVID boosters must be up to date as they are available for the individual. Some organizations or facilities require additional

immunizations to participate in placements. Only medical exemption will be accepted for included immunizations.

It is the student's personal and financial responsibility to see that these immunizations, and records of the immunizations with the Colorado Mesa University Occupational Therapy Program, are kept current.

Students who claim an exemption to immunizations must know and acknowledge that:

- there are a limited number of sites who will allow unvaccinated individuals to participate in any activities;
- they may not get their desired sites;
- they will not go to any medical facility; and,
- they may have a delay in their graduation, in order to ensure that they get the variety of sites required to meet accreditation requirements.

### **CPR Certification Policy**

All students must be trained in CPR including adult, child and infant CPR. CPR certification must remain current during all semesters of the occupational therapy program including semesters that are spent off campus at Fieldwork Level II sites.

Certification is accepted from the American Heart Association and American Red Cross unless specified differently by the training facility. It is the student's personal and financial responsibility to see that the CPR certification is renewed in a timely manner, and a copy of the current CPR card is on file with the Occupational Therapy Program. Fieldwork sites may require additional training that would also be the student's personal and financial responsibility to fulfill.

### **Health Insurance Coverage**

Students are required to be covered by an appropriate health insurance plan during the entirety of the program, including both Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. The student will be asked to provide coverage information prior to beginning the program. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Occupational Therapy Program if the health insurance coverage status changes.

The student must obtain medical care from either their personal healthcare provider or the University's health center. Please see the Maverick Guide, p. 10 "Medical Services."

## **Criminal Background Checks, Drug Screening and Health Immunizations Required By Fieldwork Sites**

Fieldwork placement sites may have standards for determining whether potential employees, volunteers or fieldwork students/ interns have the appropriate qualifications to provide services to their clients.

These fieldwork sites may require one or more of the following student checks prior to confirming fieldwork placements:

- Updated criminal background check and/or finger printing
- Central Registry check for felony or child abuse charges
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Driving record
- Additional health and immunization requirements

Student refusal to consent to an above student checks may result in more limited choices for fieldwork placement. If a student agrees to the student check processes and the results are determined to be unacceptable according to the personnel standards for the fieldwork site, the fieldwork placement at that agency may be denied to the student. However, the Occupational Therapy Program fieldwork staff will make every effort to secure an appropriate placement.

Students are responsible for the costs of the above checks and obtaining the appropriate paperwork. Students must keep hard copy records of all of their immunizations and background checks to present to fieldwork sites as needed. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will have access to the records that the student uploads to the online tracking system.

If a student is rejected for a fieldwork placement based upon a site-specific requirement, the site may share background check results with the Occupational Therapy Program only if the student has given written consent to release the information to the CMU Occupational Therapy Program.

The details of any of these background checks or tests may result in an inability to place a student in a particular fieldwork site. In some situations, it may result in an inability to place the student in any fieldwork site. A master's degree for occupational therapy cannot be attained without completing the fieldwork portion of the program. Additionally, students are not eligible for the certification exam and therefore may not practice as an OT.

## **Dress Code and Schedule**

Clothing for Level I and Level II fieldwork must conform to the facility norm and not be in conflict with any agency's policies. The student is expected to be familiar with these policies and to provide himself or herself with appropriate attire. If an agency does not require uniforms for occupational therapy personnel, suitable and conservative street wear should be worn. Most facilities do not allow staff to wear jeans or open-toed shoes. Some facilities require all visible tattoos or piercings to be removed or covered. If a lab coat is required, you are expected to purchase one before your arrival to the fieldwork. Wear your Colorado Mesa University Occupational Therapy name tag at all times unless the facility prefers that you wear one of their own. It is recommended that your name tag says "student" on it, so clients and family have a clear understanding of your role at the facility.

In most instances, students are expected to follow the regular schedule of their fieldwork supervisor, not including any vacation time off. This may include regular weekend rotations or possibly even weekends in some settings.

## **Financial Responsibilities**

In addition to the tuition and fees required by the Colorado Mesa University, students must assume responsibility for transportation to and from fieldwork sites as well as any housing, uniform and meal costs. Occasionally, facilities provide stipends, or they may provide housing and/or meals for students either free of charge or at a reduced rate. Information on each fieldwork site is frequently updated to identify facilities that provide these benefits. This information can be found on the Fieldwork Data Form.

## **NBCOT Examination**

In order to apply for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy Certification examination students must have successfully completed Level II Fieldwork, have grades posted for graduation and must not have any outstanding financial obligations to Colorado Mesa University. Individual candidates are responsible for contacting NBCOT to complete an application and to ensure that all application materials are turned in on time. After the registration process is completed, the student will receive an Authorization to Test letter that provides instructions on contacting a test site to schedule the test. The NBCOT examination is computer delivered and is offered at certain test sites throughout North America. For current information on NBCOT visit their web site.

**NBCOT web site:** [www.nbcot.org](http://www.nbcot.org)

## **Colorado State Licensure**

Colorado State licensure is required before beginning the practice of occupational therapy in the state of Colorado. Contact the Colorado State Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) for information about occupational therapy licensure. 303-894-7855 or <https://dora.colorado.gov/>

## **Laws Related to Fieldwork**

**The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act:** (popularly known as the Buckley amendment)

Provides for uniform standards of educational institutions in regards to privacy of student records.

Fieldwork is an extension of the academic program. The faculty cannot release information regarding student grades to a fieldwork site. The student needs to sign a release of information form if the student would like the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to discuss academic performance with a Fieldwork Educator. This is a particularly important issue when a student is being reassigned after failing a Level II Fieldwork experience. It may be in the student's best interest to explain to the fieldwork site why there is a need for reassignment. The Fieldwork Educator may be able to structure the assignment in a way that will increase their chances of providing a successful experience. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will meet with the student to discuss this issue before reassignment. The student can then decide to disclose the issues that caused failure during the previous assignment, not disclose this information and/or sign a statement allowing the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to discuss the issues with the Fieldwork Educator.

**The Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** (Section 504)

Protects individuals with disabilities from being excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal funds.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** (ADA)

National mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the areas of: employment, public services, public accommodations and telecommunication services.



Fieldwork is viewed as a pre-employment situation as it is a requirement to become an occupational therapist. Fieldwork settings must use the same standards for students as they do for their employees.

The ADA requires reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability to perform the essential job functions.

#### Disclosure of a Disability:

The decision to disclose or not to disclose a disability is solely the right of the student. Under the ADA, institutions (including fieldwork sites) are obligated to make accommodations only for the known limitation of an otherwise qualified student with a disability. Notification of the need for accommodation must occur.

Students who wish to disclose a disability for the purpose of accommodation need to contact the Educational Access Services at Colorado Mesa University. Their office is located at Houston Hall Room 108, 970-248-1856 or [here](#). The Educational Access Services is responsible for determining appropriate accommodations.

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator does not have the right to disclose a student's disability to any fieldwork site without the written permission of the student.

Students with disabilities who wish accommodations are encouraged to disclose their disability as early as possible to the fieldwork site or to give the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator permission, in writing, to disclose **after** the placement has been made.

Students with disabilities must decide whether to disclose a non-evident disability to the fieldwork site. The CMU MSOT program is prohibited by law from divulging a student's disability to a fieldwork site without the student's permission. The student must decide whether to disclose or not disclose. A student who chooses not to disclose must understand that they cannot be given accommodations for which he or she is otherwise eligible under the ADA. If the student chooses not to disclose a disability, the student must also understand they have an ethical duty to ensure that they can provide safe and effective client intervention without accommodations.

Adapted from information provided at *Meeting the Fieldwork Challenge: Strategies for a New Century* presented by Christine Bird, MA, OTR/L and Rhona Zukas, MOT, OTR, FAOTA, June 1999.

#### References:

Wells, S.A. and Hanebrink, S. (1998). *A Guide to Reasonable Accommodation for OT Practitioners with Disabilities: Fieldwork to Employment*. AOTA: Bethesda, MD, Pg. 109.

Association of Higher Education and Disability (1996). *Confidentiality and disability in higher education*. Columbus, OH: Author.

### **Advising During and Pertaining to Fieldwork Experiences**

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will have the primary responsibility of advising students in the scheduling of both Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. Program faculty may also assist with the advising process. Using information held in the Department related to sites with which the Department has an affiliation agreement, students provide fieldwork preferences information to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator at several points in the program. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator considers those preferences in addition to student needs for growth in skills and the need for a variety of experiences when making Fieldwork placements. When fieldwork assignments are nearly finalized, pertinent faculty may be consulted to determine if there are any obvious conflicts between the student's observed classroom skills and the fieldwork site identified. The final decision for placement of the student rests with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. While the students are on placement, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will be responsible for telephone and in-person advising regarding the student's progress.

Counseling services are available on campus and may be used by students during off-campus fieldwork affiliations. The Colorado Mesa University Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services options can be found [here](#).

### **International Fieldwork Placement**

International Fieldwork Placements may be available at the discretion of the Occupational Therapy Program. On a case-by-case basis, the student will be evaluated on prior performance and must have the approval of the faculty. This type of fieldwork placement is most appropriate for a third, specialty placement, although some exceptions may be made. Colorado Mesa University, Occupational Therapy Program and the fieldwork placement site must have a current Affiliation Agreement in place. The fieldwork supervisor must be an occupational therapist who graduated from a program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists who has at least 1 year of experience in practice.

Fieldwork experiences outside of the United States require:

- Personal health insurance that covers care in the foreign country, evacuation to the United States if necessary for medical emergencies, and a repatriation policy.
- Students must work with the AFWC and OT Program Director on the process for fieldwork outside of the USA.
- Students are responsible for acquiring the appropriate immunizations for the areas to which they will be traveling.
- Students must provide a copy of their plane ticket and itinerary to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.
- Minimum 3.0 GPA for international fieldwork.

### **Fieldwork Placement & Supervision Where No OT Services Exist**

Colorado Mesa University Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will document and verify that supervision provided in a setting where no occupational therapy services exist. This includes a documentation plan for the provision of occupational therapy services at the site and supervision by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist. This therapist must have at least 3 years' full-time or its equivalent of professional experience prior to the Level II fieldwork. The supervision must include a minimum of 8 hours of direct supervision each week of the fieldwork experience. The occupational therapy supervisor must be available to the student during all working hours via a variety of contact measures. An on-site supervisor designee of another profession must be assigned while the occupational therapy supervisor is off site.

Standard: Document and verify that supervision provided in a setting where no occupational therapy services exist includes a documented plan for provision of occupational therapy services and supervision by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated 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.  
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Plan for supervision provided in a setting where no occupational therapy services exist includes:

- Verification of licensure OT
- Verification of experience of supervising OT
- Documentation of means of contact for supervising OT
- Verification of onsite supervisor
- Documentation of means of contact for onsite supervisor
- Professional development for supervising OT and onsite supervisor

## **Fieldwork Responsibilities**

### **Colorado Mesa University Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Program Responsibilities:**

- To assure continuing compliance with the educational standards as established by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education.
- To maintain files of current information on fieldwork in the Occupational Therapy Program. This is the information provided by the fieldwork facilities annually and/or when major changes occur.
- To follow due process in working with students and fieldwork facilities.
- To establish and maintain on-going honest communication with fieldwork facilities and students.
- To schedule students for occupational therapy fieldwork and to assign only those students who have satisfactorily completed the required academic work. Close planning between faculty, students and fieldwork supervisors is essential.
- To collaborate with fieldwork facilities in defining measurable objectives for fieldwork education.
- To counsel students in fieldwork in collaboration with fieldwork supervisors.
- To visit fieldwork centers regularly (dependent upon CMU funding).
- To evaluate the total occupational therapy program regularly, including the fieldwork experiences. Fieldwork facilities are evaluated on the ability to meet curriculum goals, provide educational experiences applicable to the academic program, and have fieldwork educators who are able to effectively meet the learning needs of the students.
- To provide liability insurance and workman's compensation insurance for occupational therapy students in assigned fieldwork placements.
- To ensure that the fieldwork program reflects the sequence, depths, focus, and scope of content in the curriculum design.

### **Responsibilities of Level II Fieldwork Facilities:**

- To maintain competency in practice, keeping abreast of current theories and techniques.
- To provide the Occupational Therapy Program with current information on the educational program for occupational therapy students in fieldwork. This includes philosophy, purpose, types of patients/clients, evaluation and treatment theories and techniques, learning experiences available, site-specific objectives as appropriate, rules and regulations of the facility and method(s) of evaluating students.

- To maintain collaborative communication with students and with Colorado Mesa University faculty to improve practice, assist in improving academic course content and learning experiences, and identify trends in occupational therapy in health care and rehabilitation.
- To provide meaningful learning experiences for students in fieldwork.
- To make available to students at the beginning of fieldwork and throughout the fieldwork experience, the rules and regulations of the facility.
- To provide supervision of students by qualified personnel. Fieldwork II Supervisors must be registered occupational therapists with a minimum of one year experience in a clinical practice setting.
- To clearly define the channels of communication within the facility and to inform the students of these.
- To evaluate students by midterm, if not on a weekly basis. If there appears to be a problem, this should be discussed with the students as soon as possible, documenting the evidence of the problem. If it is serious, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator should be notified. If the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator is unavailable contact should be made with the Program Director of the Occupational Therapy Program or with the Department Head of Kinesiology. Consultation with the Occupational Therapy Program should be maintained until the problem is resolved. If a student's performance in relation to patient treatment is unsatisfactory, and/or the student is unable to function satisfactorily to meet the measurable objectives of the fieldwork experience, the student's fieldwork may be terminated by the facility and the Occupational Therapy Program. Due process must be adhered to throughout the proceedings.
- To notify the Occupational Therapy Program as soon as possible of major changes in staffing, program, scheduling, etc.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- Professional behavior begins in the classroom. The student will demonstrate professional judgment in all class-related activities by:  
being prepared for class, paying attention and participating with relevant material in class discussions
- Showing respect for the instructor, guest lecturers, and fellow students
- These characteristics carry over into the clinic and community. The individual with professional behavior is respected by patients, family, other members of the health care team and society. The professional person's behavior reflects the credibility of the profession.
- The student is expected to adhere to the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics as adapted by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

- Students are expected to know and to adhere to the regulations within the agencies in which they are assigned fieldwork. Such regulations may involve dress, behavior and attendance.
  - Students are expected to maintain respect and courtesy toward their own colleagues as well as toward their faculty, fieldwork supervisors, patients/clients and others with whom they come in contact.
  - Students are expected to assist in promoting honest and harmonious working relationships in the facility/agency.
  - Students are expected to maintain good health habits during both academic and fieldwork experiences. Students are expected to maintain appropriate health insurance during academic and fieldwork education.
  - Students are expected to engage in only those procedures in which they have achieved an appropriate level of competence.
  - Students are expected to integrate material from all their courses as they progress through the academic and fieldwork program.
  - Students are expected to take initiative for their own learning in addition to required course content.
  - Students are expected to analyze the information in fieldwork manuals and to review appropriate material necessary for their assigned placement.
  - Students are expected to take the initiative in regard to analyzing and synthesizing their perceptions of the learning experiences in both the academic and fieldwork phases of their education. If a student has concern about any phase of the learning experience, he/she will follow the appropriate channels of communication in the facility/agency.
- Academic – Instructor, Program Director of the Occupational Therapy Program, Department Head of the Kinesiology Department.
  - Fieldwork Experience – Immediate supervisor, then through the established channels of communication at the facility/agency. Both the student and the facility are encouraged to communicate with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator throughout the process.
- Students are expected to complete candid and constructive written evaluations of each course in which they are enrolled, including fieldwork.
  - Students who are in non-compliance with the above may be placed on professional probation or may have their academic or fieldwork registration canceled.

Adapted, with permission, from University of Utah and University of North Dakota  
Fieldwork Educator Manual

## **Level II Fieldwork Communications**

### **CORRESPONDENCE PRIOR TO ARRIVAL AT FIELDWORK II SITE:**

At least 6 weeks prior to the beginning of each Level II Fieldwork, a link with student information will be sent to the clinical site coordinator at the fieldwork location. After the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator has initiated this communication, you will be notified and then will be able to request the contact information of your assigned fieldwork educator from the clinical site coordinator. Keep in mind that this is the fieldwork educator's first impression of you. This is your first opportunity to present yourself as being positive, enthusiastic, organized, responsible, focused, well written, punctual, thoughtful and professional. The manner in which you present your thoughts in writing can be as important as what you say.

#### **Your initial contact should include the following:**

- Confirmation of the beginning and ending dates of fieldwork
- Request for information regarding reporting time and location on first day
- Anticipated schedule including days worked, start time, estimated ending time
- Request for dress code information
- Confirmation of additional requirements including immunizations, CPR, etc.
- An expression of your appreciation for their participation in your professional development
- Information of a personal nature such as particular interests or goals and how these relate to this fieldwork experience

Approximately one week prior to the fieldwork start date, you need to call your supervisor and confirm the start date and start time. Be sure you know exactly where to meet your supervisor and, if you are driving to the site, know where to park.

### **CORRESPONDENCE AFTER FIELDWORK:**

You are expected to write a letter of appreciation to the facility and staff within two weeks of the completion of your fieldwork experience. Please provide a copy of your letter to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

## **EVALUATION OF FIELDWORK II PERFORMANCE:**

Evaluation of student performance should be an ongoing process which occurs during formal and informal supervisory sessions. If your Fieldwork Supervisor does not initiate feedback sessions initially, please ask for them. Students should receive a midterm evaluation after 6 weeks of Fieldwork II using the midterm scoring system of the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapist (FWPE) . The student should also fill out the Level II Midterm Feedback form. The Colorado Mesa University does not require that a copy of the FWE be sent to the school at midterm. However, the student is responsible for completing the Level II Midterm Feedback on D2L to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator during the seventh week of Level II. The midterm evaluation is used to help students and supervisors identify strengths and areas of concern and to clarify objectives for the rest of the Level II Fieldwork placement.

The final evaluation, using the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) , and the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) need to be discussed and signed by the student and the Fieldwork Supervisor within one week of the conclusion of the fieldwork experience. Students' grades cannot be posted until this is received by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. A copy of each should be retained by the facility. It is recommended that the student download a copy as well.

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