

Fieldwork Educator Handbook

Colorado Mesa University
Occupational Therapy Program



2026-2027

Purpose of the Fieldwork Educator Handbook

This handbook was developed for fieldwork educators receiving students from the Colorado Mesa University Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program in order to provide information and guidelines on student fieldwork objectives and expectations, academic program details, communication guidelines, and additional resources for you as the fieldwork educator.

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A copy of this handbook is available on the Occupational Therapy 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). Their offices are 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.

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 obtaining state licensure are required to become an occupational therapist. The OTR/L credential indicates that an occupational therapist is registered with NBCOT and licensed to practice in their state.

ACOTE standards can be found at the following link:
<https://acoteonline.org/accreditation-explained/standards>

CMU Occupational Therapy Program

Mission

The mission of the Colorado Mesa University's Occupational Therapy Program is to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors necessary to become competent and ethical occupational therapy practitioners who are equipped to meet the needs of diverse populations (e.g., individuals, groups, and communities) in a variety of practice settings.

Vision

Colorado Mesa University's Occupational Therapy program strives to help students learn how to think (not what to think) by building skills in critical thinking, professional reasoning, and evidence-based practice; develop professional identities through participation in leadership, advocacy, and research; solve big problems through collaboration, innovation, and mutually enriching community partnerships; and foster a sense of belonging in a supportive classroom environment that emphasizes student-centered learning.

Philosophy

In alignment with the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy (2017), Colorado Mesa University's Occupational Therapy Program believes engagement in occupations is fundamental to health. All persons, groups, and populations (i.e., clients) have an innate need to engage in meaningful occupations across the lifespan (AOTA, 2020). A core philosophical assumption of the profession is that people of all ages and abilities require occupation to grow and thrive; in pursuing occupation, humans express a mind-body-spirit union (Hooper & Wood, 2019). Occupational therapy practitioners view this transactional relationship as the foundation for using occupation as therapy. This knowledge sets occupational therapy apart as a distinct and valuable service for which a focus on the whole person is considered stronger than isolated aspects of human functioning (Hildenbrand & Lamb, 2013).

In agreement with the AOTA's Philosophy on Occupational Therapy Education (AOTA, 2018), Colorado Mesa University's Occupational Therapy Program views humans as occupational beings, occupation as a health determinant, and participation in occupations as a fundamental human right. Students develop skills in critical thinking, professional reasoning, evidence-based practice, and professionalism. Through this process, students build the foundation of their professional identity.

To fulfill the mission and vision of Colorado Mesa University, the Occupational Therapy Program's philosophy reflects seven values: Love, Dignity, Courage, Humility, Resiliency, Curiosity, and Power.

References

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (4 ed.). *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(Supplement_2), 1-87. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

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Hooper, B., & Wood, W. (2019). The philosophy of occupational therapy: A framework for practice. In B. A. B. Schell & G. Gillen (Eds.), *Willard and Spackman's occupational therapy* (13th ed., pp. 43–55). Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

Fieldwork Experiences in Relation to the Curricular Design

The didactic, experiential, and assessment components of fieldwork experiences 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.

CMU Student Assignments During the Fieldwork Experience

Level I

Students will be required to complete two reflection assignments and 2-3 SOAP notes for their fieldwork seminar course. They will also provide one client informational handout or home exercise program to each site based on what setting the experience is in.

The FWE will complete the Fieldwork Competency Evaluation at the end of the experience, review it with the student, and submit it to the AFWC. The student will complete a site evaluation and submit it to the AFWC.

Additional assignments from the FWE can be determined with the AFWC, if appropriate.

Level II

Students will complete virtual check-ins with their peers, the AFWC, and additional faculty members during their first and second level II placements. During their second placement, students will be required to complete assignments to learn about the NBCOT process and licensure process, as well as take an Occupational Therapy Knowledge Exam in preparation for their NBCOT exam.

Additional assignments, such as a “Value Added” or student project, are encouraged to provide students with additional learning opportunities.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Level I

Each student must be evaluated using the AOTA Fieldwork Competency Evaluation at the end of their Level I fieldwork. The goal of Level I Fieldwork is to gain experience working with a professional in the given setting. The AOTA FWCE is sent out electronically to FWEs prior to the final week. A link to view the FWCE is included here: [LI FWCE](#).

Level II

Each student must be evaluated using the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) at the half-way point (6 weeks) and the end of their Level II fieldwork (12 weeks). The goal of Level II Fieldwork is for students to be ready for entry-level practice. The AOTA FWPE is sent out electronically to FWEs prior to the midterm and final week. A link to view the FWPE is included here: [FWPE](#).

Communication Guidelines

All formal communication between students, the FWE, and the AFWC will occur via email. Appointments can be made with the AFWC either in person, by email, or telephone/text. Meetings can take place in person or online. If there is a student concern regarding performance,

professionalism, or progress through the fieldwork experience, *please* communicate with the AFWC as soon as a concern arises. We want to ensure the student receives appropriate support to make meaningful changes, while also establishing clear expectations and goals for the student to work toward.

Schedule & Logistics

Level I

Students will attend fieldwork experiences weekly, for their assigned number of hours, during the assigned semester. These hours are determined by the AFWC in collaboration with the specific sites and communicated prior to the start of the FW experience. Weekly time logs need to be completed by the student in Exxat. This ensures that students maintain regular progress in their fieldwork and remain on track. The FWE will approve time logs for all Level I fieldwork experiences. If a student needs to be absent due to illness or emergency, it is the student's responsibility to notify the FWE first based on the established policies and procedures of the fieldwork site. Arrangements to make up the time missed will be made between the student and the FWE.

Level II

Students will attend the fieldwork experience following their FWE(s) schedule, full-time, for two 12-week rotations. Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism regarding attendance and punctuality during all fieldwork experiences. If a student needs to be absent due to illness or emergency, it is the student's responsibility to notify the FWE first based on the established policies and procedures of the fieldwork site. Arrangements to make up the time missed will be made between the student and the FWE. Students can miss up to two full days of fieldwork before being required to make up missed time. Unusual circumstances may occur where the student may need time off. The FWE is responsible for granting or denying any requests. Any time missed will need to be rescheduled with the FWE. This may include working weekends or extending the length of the fieldwork rotation.

Weekly time logs need to be completed by the student in Exxat. This ensures that students maintain regular progress in their fieldwork and remain on track. The FWE will approve time logs for all Level II fieldwork experiences.

It is strongly recommended that FWEs hold supervision meetings with students at least weekly, if not more frequently. These meetings are designed for students to receive feedback on a regular basis, and for FWEs to document progress throughout the fieldwork rotation. A link to view an example weekly review form is included here: [Weekly review](#). Nothing needs to be turned in from these meetings; they are intended to support the student by providing additional time to review materials and to collaborate with the FWE for guidance and clarification.

The AFWC, or a faculty member, will complete an in-person or virtual site visit at each fieldwork site part of the way through the fieldwork experience. A site visit provides an opportunity to discuss the students' progress, see each site individually, and gain a better understanding of what each site has to offer.

Fieldwork Educator Resources

Suggested Student “Value Added” Fieldwork Projects

Journal Club- Start an evidence-based journal club to discuss journal articles associated with occupational therapy practice.

Toolbox or Clinic Tool- This is a project students create to leave at the fieldwork site based on the needs of the clinic. This can be preparatory or occupation-based to assist with interventions.

Staff In-Service- This project topic can be determined by the student or the fieldwork educator. Often it is related to a topic area of need in the setting, an area that the student has done research in, or an area that the student has developed strong skills in.

Passion Project- Students can create a project based on a personal passion within the setting.

Protocol Creation- In collaboration with the fieldwork educator, create a protocol for a specific population within the setting.

Student Manual Creation- Have the student create a student manual for future Level II Fieldwork students.


Evidence-Based Practice Binder- Have students put together a binder with peer reviewed research articles for a topic of interest to the department.

Fieldwork Data Form

A Fieldwork Data form is expected to be filled out and submitted by each FW site. A link to complete this form will be provided. The form is also available to view on the CMU MSOT Program website, under Fieldwork Information in the Fieldwork Educator Resources tab at the bottom of the page. This form provides site-specific information for current and future students to inform them about practice setting, types and methods of OT interventions, expected work schedule, safety precautions, and performance skills and client factors.

[CMU MSOT Program Page - Additional FWE Resources](#)

Sample Level II Schedule Progression

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Direct Supervision</div> 	Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific and clear student expectations, site-specific objectives • Orientation of facility: Policies and Procedures for Department; Introduce student to members of the department/interprofessional team • Orient student to facility documentation systems and provide weekly documentation expectations • Provide weekly productivity/caseload expectations (include specific treatment protocol expectations as appropriate) • Outline a schedule for supervision/feedback sessions (weekly at minimum) • Student observation of treatments, evaluations; observe with other disciplines as fitting for your site
	Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student observation of treatments, evaluations; observe with other disciplines as fitting for your site • Student may take on 1-2 patients if FWE feels comfortable and supervision is high
	Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student takes on responsibility of 1-3 patients • Student assists with evaluations, treatments • Continue with observations
	Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student takes on responsibility of 20-30% of FWE caseload. • Student should require moderate assistance with evaluation process (or less if appropriate for your facility) • Discuss “Value Added” Project & presentation/due date (if applicable)
	Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student takes on responsibility of 40- 50% of FWE caseload. • Student should require minimal assistance with evaluation.
	Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the midterm evaluation and review with the student (FWPE) • Student takes on responsibility of at least 50-60% of FWE caseload. • Student should be mostly independent with evaluations. • Discuss “Value Added” Project & presentation/due date (if applicable)
	Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student takes on 75% or more of FWE caseload. This includes evaluations and treatments.
	Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has responsibility of 75-100% of FWE caseload. This includes evaluations and interventions.
	Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has 100% responsibility of FWE caseload • Student should be independent in evaluations and interventions
	Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has 100% responsibility of FWE caseload • “Value Added” Project/presentation due (if applicable)
	Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has 100% responsibility of FWE caseload • “Value Added” Project/presentation due (if applicable)
	Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has 100% responsibility of FWE caseload • Complete the final evaluation and review with student (FWPE) • Student completes evaluation of fieldwork site and fieldwork supervisor (SEFWE)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Entry Level</div>		

Level I Fieldwork

Purpose

Level I fieldwork experiences are an integral part of the MSOT program's curriculum design. Opportunities for direct observation, participation, and clinical reasoning will be provided by qualified competent FWE's, who may or may not be occupational therapists. These experiences are designed to enhance initial learning of basic material and are not considered substitutes for Level II fieldwork experience.

Objectives

The fieldwork site agrees to adhere to these objectives when supervising students from the CMU MSOT program.

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

Professional Behaviors and Ethics

- Demonstrate professional behavior, including punctuality, appropriate dress, and respectful communication with clients, families, and team members.
- Adhere to ethical standards, confidentiality (HIPAA), and site-specific policies.
- Accept and respond constructively to feedback from supervisors and staff.

Understanding the Role of OT

- Describe the role of occupational therapy within the fieldwork setting and how it supports client participation in meaningful occupations.
- Identify the scope of OT practice and differentiate it from other professional roles on the interprofessional team.
- Explain how occupational therapy services align with the setting's mission, population, and service delivery model.

Observation and Clinical Reasoning

- Observe OT evaluations and interventions and identify key components of the OT process (evaluation, intervention, outcomes).
- Discuss clinical reasoning used by occupational therapists to select occupations, activities, and interventions.
- Identify occupational performance issues and contextual factors affecting client participation.

Psychosocial

- The student will **observe, describe, and discuss** psychosocial factors (e.g., motivation, emotional regulation/coping skills, social support, roles/routines, environmental supports/barriers) that influence a client's engagement in meaningful occupations.

Participation and Skill Development

- Participate in OT service delivery with supervision (e.g., preparing materials, leading portions of activities, documenting observations).
- Demonstrate basic therapeutic communication skills when interacting with clients and groups.

- Apply foundational OT concepts—such as occupation, client-centered care, and activity analysis—to practice situations.

Documentation and Communication

- Observe and identify documentation formats used in the setting (e.g., SOAP notes, daily notes, goals).
- Communicate observations clearly and professionally through verbal or written summaries.

Interprofessional Collaboration

- Identify members of the interprofessional team, describe their roles in client care, and discuss how OT contributes to team-based care.

Professional Growth

- Articulate how fieldwork experiences contribute to professional identity development as an occupational therapy student.

Level II Fieldwork

Purpose

Level II fieldwork experiences are a core component of the MSOT program's curriculum design. According to the ACOTE Standards the "goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapists" (ACOTE, 2023). Within Level II fieldwork, experiences must include delivering OT services, applying purposeful and meaningful occupations and evidence-based practice, and administration and management of OT services.

Level II fieldwork requirements include a minimum of 24 weeks of full-time fieldwork, or part-time fieldwork that is equivalent to 24 weeks. Part-time is equivalent to at least 50% of a FTE at the fieldwork site. Part-time fieldwork placements must be agreed upon by the site and AFWC and documented as such prior to the start of fieldwork. These placements are usually divided into two 12-week periods. Fieldwork placements may take place in one setting (e.g., hospital), if covering multiple practice areas (e.g., acute care, inpatient rehab). In total, both Level II placements should take place in no more than four different settings overall.

Objectives

Level II fieldwork objectives are based on the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) for the Occupational Therapy Student. *The fieldwork site agrees to adhere to these objectives when supervising students from the CMU Occupational Therapy program.*

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

Fundamentals of Practice

- Demonstrate professional behavior, including reliability, punctuality, and appropriate communication.
- Consistently adhere to ethical, legal, and professional standards and follow site-specific policies and procedures.
- Demonstrate consistent safety awareness for self and others during all clinical activities and adhere to safety regulations including documentation and communication of incidents.
- Present a professional appearance consistent with site expectations.

Basic Tenets of Occupational Therapy

- Articulate the role and value of occupational therapy as a profession to clients, caregivers, colleagues, service providers, administrators, and the public.
- Use client-centered and occupation-based approaches in all aspects of care.

Evaluation and Screening

- Gather relevant client information through chart review, observation, and interview to guide the evaluation process and determine a client's occupational profile.
- Select and administer appropriate assessments based on client needs and setting, modifying assessments as needed.
- Analyze and interpret evaluation data to identify strengths, limitations, and occupational performance needs.

- Contribute to the development of appropriate goals in collaboration with the client and team.

Intervention

- Apply occupational therapy theoretical models and frameworks to guide practice and articulate rationale for the intervention process.
- Plan and implement individualized, occupation-based interventions while incorporating evidence-based practice into clinical decision-making.
- Demonstrate effective therapeutic use of self to build rapport and support engagement.
- Select, modify and adapt interventions and plans of care based on client response and progress to match client abilities and therapeutic goals.
- Provide education to clients, families, and caregivers as appropriate.

Management of Occupational Therapy Services

- Manage time and workload efficiently to meet clinical demands.
- Demonstrate increasing independence in planning and carrying out responsibilities.
- Work effectively as part of the interdisciplinary team while maintaining responsibility for occupational therapy services and interventions.
- Utilize resources, documentation systems, and site-specific procedures appropriately.
- Demonstrate an understanding of costs and funding systems related to billing and funding sources related to OT services.

Communication and Professional Behaviors

- Communicate clearly and professionally with clients, families, and team members.
- Accurately document evaluations, interventions, and progress in a timely manner.
- Seek, accept, and incorporate feedback to improve performance and enhance learning.
- Use reflective practice to identify strengths, limitations, and areas for growth.
- Respect diversity and provide culturally responsive care.

Psychosocial Factors

- Independently identify and address psychosocial factors that influence a client's occupational performance by incorporating appropriate, client-centered strategies into evaluation and intervention.