

Fieldwork Educator Preparation

Fieldwork educators responsible for supervising Level II Fieldwork occupational therapy students shall meet state and federal regulations governing practice, have a minimum 1 year of practice experience subsequent to initial certification, and be adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator. If supervising in a role-emerging site where there is no on-site occupational therapy practitioner, the fieldwork educator should have a minimum of 3 years of practice experience after initial certification (see Fieldwork Models #9 below for more specific detail).

- a. Initial and ongoing education supporting the fieldwork educator role should include attention to the following:
 1. Principles and theories of adult education models, knowledge of learning styles, and diverse teaching approaches.
 2. Administrative aspects, including relevant regulations and content for development and management of the fieldwork program.
 3. The design of educational experiences supporting student development as an OT practitioner.
 4. Adaptation of supervisor strategies in response to individual student learning style.
 5. Enhancement of student clinical/professional reasoning through guided learning experiences.
 6. Provision of formal and informal evaluation of student performance.

- b. Methods for becoming adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator include but are not limited to the following:
 1. Attendance at an AOTA Fieldwork Educator Certificate Program (preferred).
 2. Completion of the Self-Assessment Tool for Fieldwork Educator Competency (SAFECOM). See link: <http://www.aota.org/Educate/EdRes/Fieldwork/Supervisor/Forms/38251.aspx?FT=.pdf>
 3. Attendance at continuing education events on the topic of practice education.
 4. Mentorship by an experienced fieldwork educator.
 5. Completion of on-line training modules.
 6. Documented readings of texts/papers on clinical/fieldwork education.

Fieldwork Models

There are a variety of fieldwork models that can be utilized, depending on the preferences of the fieldwork educator, the nature of the fieldwork site, and the learning needs of the students. Fieldwork models exist on a continuum from the traditional apprenticeship model in which one fieldwork educator has one student to a more collaborative approach in which a group of students work with one fieldwork educator. Each fieldwork model has an inherent theoretical approach to learning. The more collaborative the fieldwork model, the more active student learning occurs. Fieldwork models can also be classified as either role-established, which is a more traditional fieldwork site, or role-emerging, where occupational therapy services are being introduced and/or developed.

1. **1:1** – this is the traditional model of one student to one fieldwork educator, also known as the apprenticeship model.
2. **1:2** – one fieldwork educator to two students.
3. **2:1** – two fieldwork educators sharing one student.
4. **Multiple sites** – a model where one fieldwork educator has a group of students spread out at several fieldwork sites, usually all the same type of setting.
5. **Group** – a model where one fieldwork educator has a group of students, but maintains the traditional “fieldwork educator as expert” role.
6. **Peer** – a model in which students provide feedback to each other; this cannot be the sole form of supervision provided to students, as there must be an OT or OTA identified as the fieldwork educator.
7. **Off-site/role-emerging** – a fieldwork model in which occupational therapy services are in the process of being developed; the occupational therapy practitioner setting this up may be employed by the agency or the educational program.
8. **Collaborative** – a specific model of fieldwork education used with a group of students in which knowledge is constructed jointly between the fieldwork educator and the students. This is an active model of student learning that places more responsibility on the student for his/her own learning. The fieldwork educator does not function as the “expert” but more in the role of facilitator of learning.
9. **Role-emerging** – fieldwork sites are those at which the provision of occupational therapy services is being developed. The occupational therapy practitioner developing the services may be employed by the agency as a consultant, or may be employed by the academic program. When fieldwork placements occur in role-emerging practice settings, the occupational therapy fieldwork educator is typically only present on site for a limited amount of time. The ACOTE Standards require that the fieldwork educator provide a minimum of eight hours per week at the site (AOTA, 2012). In addition, the fieldwork educator must be easily accessible by a variety of means during the hours a student is at the site. Furthermore, the person serving as the fieldwork educator must have a minimum of 3 years-experience after initial certification, as this is considered advanced supervision.