Section VI: Fieldwork Education

Overview

Fieldwork education is designed to provide occupational therapy students with opportunities to integrate academically acquired education with practice. It is during the fieldwork experience that the student can learn, practice and refine skills of observation, evaluation, treatment planning, implementation and communication. In the fieldwork setting the student begins to define his or her future roles as a practicing occupational therapist and can develop the necessary self-confidence and affective characteristics essential to meeting the demands for this challenging field. Fieldwork provides many opportunities for feedback which promotes professional behaviors, attitudes and clinical expertise.

Fieldwork is an integral part of the education of an occupational therapist and must occur in an environment that provides those experiences which reinforce previous learning and which challenge and motivate the student to develop professionally and adapt to clinic situations. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator is responsible for the planning and implementation of integrated and sustained fieldwork experiences. The experiences occur under the supervision of and with the support of occupational therapists or other professionals. To ensure that the fieldwork activities support and enhance the goals of the program there is continual collaboration by clinical educators, academic faculty, and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. In keeping with Belmont University’s occupational therapy program’s mission and curriculum design, fieldwork experiences are designed to encourage values and behaviors that exemplify professional leadership, integrity and social consciousness to support the program’s goals to develop ethical practitioners to meet the immediate and future needs of the community.

The occupational therapy program requires both Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. Level I fieldwork is an integral part of the didactic portion of the educational program. Students are exposed to diverse settings to increase their understanding of occupational therapy and/or the health care arena. Level II fieldwork is the culminating educational experience for the Belmont University occupational therapy student.

Fieldwork Level I Hour Requirement

Level I FW I: 4 full-time days
Level I FW II: 4 full-time days in Nashville, TN area
Level I FW III: 4 full-time days

As part of the Level I Seminar course, the students engage in online assignments related to their fieldwork experiences. Specific questions are used to encourage critical and clinical reasoning, explore the differences in roles and education of the occupational therapy assistant and occupational therapist; the frames of reference being utilized; and the specific occupations being performed by the clients. Students are required to complete the fieldwork experience during the relevant semester with the concurrent intervention course (Occupational Performance I, II, or II). Failure to do so may jeopardize continuation to the next semester.

Level II Fieldwork is begun following successful completion of the fourth academic semester. Successful completion of Level II Fieldwork fulfills the requirement for graduation and enables one to be eligible to apply for the NBCOT Certification Examination.
As reflected in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, occupational therapy practitioners’
expertise lies in their knowledge of occupation and in knowing how engaging in occupations can be used
to affect human performance and the effects of disease and disability. Completion of the Weekend MSOT
Program assures that our graduates are prepared to help their clients engage in meaningful occupations that
subsequently affect their health, well-being and life satisfaction.

Level I Fieldwork

Level I fieldwork has been designed to integrate with the concurrent intervention courses and assist
the student in transitioning to their role as an occupational therapist. Students are exposed to a variety of
cultures and service delivery systems in three broad areas of practice: more traditional settings serving
pediatric populations, and adult/older adult populations, and emerging role community-based emerging
practice areas serving clients of any age. The integration of the fieldwork and the academic intervention
courses is accomplished by utilizing focus groups or written, electronic or telephone communication. Input
and feedback from the intervention course faculty, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, and representatives
from the Fieldwork Educators for each of the practice areas is used to develop objectives, clinical
experiences and assignments. The experiences include an opportunity to observe and assist in practice with
occupational therapists and other qualified health care professionals. The sites include role-emerging
settings, community-based settings, as well as traditional medical model environments to expose the
student to developing and existing opportunities for occupational therapy. The faculty, Academic
Fieldwork Coordinator, Fieldwork Educator, and students continually evaluate the experiences to ensure
their effectiveness. Preparation of the student prior to each Level I clinical experience includes review of
objectives and assignments for the individual fieldwork experiences. Note that a student must
demonstrate satisfactory progress on the Portfolio requirement in order to receive permission to
participate in Level I or Level II fieldwork.

Level I fieldwork is offered during three of the four academic semesters, and corresponds to the
related interventions course (pediatrics, emerging role practice with psychosocial focus, and adult/older
adult). A student may use his or her place of employment as a level I fieldwork site for the appropriate
semester (only one) if several criteria are met:

1) The student has the permission of the site (manager, director, corporate administration, etc.) to
complete a level I fieldwork rotation at that site.

2) The student understands that the hours may not be accrued during paid working hours.

3) Belmont and the site must complete the contract process prior to any hours being accrued.

4) The student understands that course requirements for that rotation are identical to those for any
other site, and that s/he is responsible for all assignments and required documentation.

For Level I Fieldwork II in the summer semester of the first year, students will complete the emerging
role practice fieldwork placement in the Nashville, TN, region, requiring all traveling students to
allot adequate travel time, work leave, and funds to fulfill this requirement. Students will be notified
of Level I Fieldwork II scheduling as early as possible in March 2020.

Level I Fieldwork Objectives
Level I fieldwork experiences are integrated so as to provide exposure to professional practice and/or professional growth experiences concurrently with didactic and laboratory material presented in the intervention courses. The following general Level I objectives coordinate with the co-requisite intervention course and laboratory objectives and serves as a guide for developing the specific objectives and learning experiences for each of the Level I fieldwork practicums. The emphasis is not on independent performance at this level, but rather on the incorporation of professional modes of behaving, communicating, thinking and problem solving through directed observation and participation. Both development of professional behaviors as well as development of clinical skills are goals of the Level I experience. Student will be evaluated on both professional behaviors and clinical skills and should refer to the grading criteria on the forms to determine criteria for pass as well as failure.

**Level I Fieldwork Objectives for Traditional Settings**

Upon successful completion of the Level I experience the student will:

1. Conduct self in a professional manner as demonstrated by:
   a. Being dependable
   b. Showing respect for patient/client confidentiality
   c. Making appropriate use of time management skills
   d. Taking appropriate initiative and responsibility for own learning
   e. Accurately assessing own strengths and limitations
   f. Exhibiting an enthusiasm for inquiry and discovery
   g. Being content prepared

2. Exhibit good interpersonal skills as demonstrated by:
   a. Demonstrating professional verbal and non-verbal communication skills
   b. Interacting with persons of varying age, race, social-economic and cultural backgrounds in a therapeutic manner
   c. Accurately recognizing and discussing his/her own feelings and attitudes
   d. Seeking and obtaining feedback
   e. Modifying own behavior in response to feedback

3. *With supervision, demonstrate ability to begin transition to role of occupational therapist by:
   a. Being able to obtain pertinent client information from a variety of sources (client record/chart, interview, formal assessment, etc)
   b. Providing a rationale for selection of assessment tool(s) for specific clients and if possible, assist in administration and interpretation of same
   c. Identifying and discussing appropriate goals and treatment activities for clients based on results of evaluation process
d. Selecting and implementing a variety of treatment activities based on the client’s goals

e. Documenting and/or reporting client performance accurately, concisely, objectively and in appropriate detail

f. Suggesting appropriate adaptations in environment and activities to accommodate to client’s functional level

g. Identifying and reporting the need for program modifications in response to client functional performance

*Note: This objective pertains to Level 1 fieldwork completed under the supervision of an occupational therapy supervisor. However, due to the limited number of hours associated with the Level I experience, we recognize that not all students may have the opportunity to actively participate in all of these objectives with actual patients/clients. If client contact is not feasible for all of these objectives, it is expected that the student will meet the objectives through discussions with the Fieldwork Educator.

**Role-emerging Practice Fieldwork Objectives**

Upon successful completion of the emerging role practice Level I experience the student will:

1. Conduct self in a professional manner as demonstrated by:
   a. Being dependable
   b. Showing respect for patient/client confidentiality
   c. Making appropriate use of time management skills
   d. Taking appropriate initiative and responsibility for own learning
   e. Accurately assessing own strengths and limitations
   f. Exhibiting an enthusiasm for inquiry and discovery
   g. Being content prepared

2. Exhibit good interpersonal skills as demonstrated by:
   a. Demonstrating professional verbal and non-verbal communication skills
   b. Interacting with persons of varying age, race, social-economic and cultural backgrounds in a therapeutic manner
   c. Accurately recognizing and discussing his/her own feelings and attitudes
   d. Seeking and obtaining feedback
   e. Modifying own behavior in response to feedback

*3. Identify the potential occupational therapy role within the agency/program;
a. identify the sociocultural environment of the clients, population, and/or agency.

b. Describe the mission, vision, or goals of the agency

c. Describe how the goals of the agency are consistent with the occupational therapy scope of practice.

d. Identify client, population, and/or agency concerns or needs, as they relate to occupational therapy;

e. Propose how the client, population, and/or agency needs could be met through occupational therapy service provision or the contribution of an occupational therapist.

f. identify factors, including psychological and social factors as appropriate, that influence engagement in occupation across the lifespan.

*these are recommended objectives for the emerging role practice Fieldwork Experience. In certain circumstances, these objectives can be modified if agreed upon by the student, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, and Fieldwork Educator.

Level II Fieldwork

The goal of Level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapists. Level II fieldwork serves to promote clinical reasoning and reflective practice; to incorporate and demonstrate the values, beliefs, and ethical commitments of the field of occupational therapy; to communicate and model professional behaviors attending to the developmental nature of career growth and responsibility; and to develop and expand a repertoire of occupational therapy assessments and treatment interventions related to human performance. Level II fieldwork includes an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients, focusing on the application of purposeful and meaningful occupation and/or research, administration and management of occupational therapy services.

Level II fieldwork is designed to provide students with extended practical opportunities for skill development and technique refinement pertinent to direct patient/client care. During this experience each student has the opportunity of learning to apply academically acquired knowledge to evaluating, planning, implementing and terminating occupational therapy intervention programs for clients in a wide variety of traditional and emerging service settings.

Students are required to complete a minimum of the equivalent of 24 weeks of full-time Level II fieldwork. This may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis, but may not be less than half-time as defined by the specific fieldwork site. Belmont University’s ability to establish fieldwork placements is dependent on our ability to negotiate schedules that meet the needs of the MSOT Program, the student, and the specific fieldwork site. As stated in the ACOTE Standards, students can “complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of four different settings.” Students need to be aware, however, that it is the individual sites that determine the length of the rotation and students who choose to accept placements of less than 12 weeks are held to the same criteria as students who have the full 12 twelve to meet all of the expectations scored on the FWPE.

Students are not permitted to complete Level II fieldwork where they are employed. To identify whether or not a student is considered an employee at the site they are considering, the student should determine whether as an employee in their current position, it would be possible for them to rotate/transfer to that site/setting/department without having to quit their current position. If the student
could do so without having to quit one job and be rehired in the other area, then for purposes of Fieldwork the site would be considered the student’s “employer”. If however, the other site functions autonomously from their current place of employment, the student may be eligible to complete their fieldwork at the other site. Determination will be made on a case-by-case analysis. The rationale for not permitting students to complete their Level II fieldwork where they are employed is based, in part, on:

- a desire to avoid the appearance of a “conflict of interest”
- to assure that the student is utilized as a student during their fieldwork, and not as an employee
- to assure that the student is able to practice their “professional level” skills
- to assure that the student is held to the same “entry-level” expectations as any other Level II student

Students are eligible to begin their Level II fieldwork placements upon successful completion of their entire Academic and Level I fieldwork requirements. Students must complete all Level II fieldwork requirements within 24 months following completion of the academic work.

**Fieldwork outside of the United States**

*The Standards for the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE, 2018)* stipulate that Level II Fieldwork may be completed outside the United States under the following conditions:

a) The fieldwork does not exceed 12 full-time weeks  
b) The fieldwork is supervised by an Occupational Therapist who has graduated from a program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) and has one year in practice.

Students who wish to complete fieldwork abroad must complete this experience as a second Level II Fieldwork. Requests for fieldwork abroad are contingent upon availability of appropriate fieldwork sites and ability to establish contractual agreements in a timely manner.

As with any other Level II Fieldwork, students will be responsible for costs of housing, meals, transportation and all other related fieldwork expenses. Students may be required to purchase additional professional liability insurance.

**Emerging-Role Practice Level II Fieldwork**

In a setting where there is no occupational therapist on site, the program must document that there is a plan for the provision of occupational therapy services and student supervision by a licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist, who will serve in the role of fieldwork educator. The student must receive a minimum of eight hours of direct supervision per week from the fieldwork educator, who must also be available to the student during all working hours via various modes of communication. An on-site supervisor must be identified and appointed to provide on-site supervision when the fieldwork educator is off-site. The fieldwork educator must be able to document at least three full-time years, or its equivalent, of professional experience order to fulfill ACOTE standards. Such fieldwork shall not exceed 12 weeks.

**Fieldwork Participants: Roles and Responsibilities**
Fieldwork experience requires that all individuals involved have a mutual understanding of the responsibilities of each person, facility, and organization. The following are recognized roles and responsibilities involved in the fieldwork experience.

Responsibilities of the Fieldwork Coordinator (Academic Setting) The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) is the faculty member at the educational institution who is responsible for monitoring the fieldwork experiences. The academic program director may act as the Fieldwork Coordinator or delegate the responsibility to another faculty member. If the responsibility is delegated, final authority and responsibility remains with the academic program director.

The responsibilities of the Fieldwork Coordinator include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Assigning eligible students to fieldwork experience and confirming the assignment in writing to each Fieldwork Supervisor;
2. Assuring that all written contracts or letters of agreement between the educational institution and fieldwork education center are signed and periodically reviewed;
3. Making regular and periodic contacts with each fieldwork education center where students were placed;
4. Maintaining current information file on each fieldwork education center where students are placed;
5. Identifying new sites for fieldwork education;
6. Working with the program director in developing and implementing a policy for the withdrawal of students from a fieldwork education center;
7. Orienting students to the general purposes of fieldwork experience and providing them with necessary forms;
8. Reassigning students who do not complete original fieldwork assignments in accordance with the educational institution's policies;
9. Developing fieldwork experience programs that provide the best opportunity for the implementation of theoretical concepts offered as part of the didactic curriculum;
10. Maintaining a collaborative relationship with fieldwork education centers;
11. Sending necessary information and forms for each student to the Fieldwork Supervisor unless responsibility is assigned to the student;

Responsibilities of the Fieldwork Educator/Supervisor (Practice Setting)

Each individual responsible for student training in the fieldwork education center is considered a Fieldwork Educator (FWE). As the learning experience moves away from the educational institution and into the fieldwork education center, the titles of individuals responsible for the fieldwork programs are as varied as the individual setting. Fieldwork Educators may also be known as Clinical Educators, Clinical Instructors, Fieldwork Supervisors, or Student Supervisors. Two major areas of responsibility required of the Fieldwork II Supervisor are administrative functions and direct day-to-day supervision. Various arrangements can be made within the fieldwork education center for fulfillment of these responsibilities. The administrative responsibilities may be delegated to one individual who may be designated Student Training Supervisor or Student Fieldwork Coordinator. The day-to-day supervision of students may be delegated to one or more staff members. It is also feasible, particularly in smaller centers, for one individual to assume all of the administrative and direct day-to-day supervisory functions.

The administrative responsibilities of the Fieldwork Supervisor include, but are not limited to the following:
1. Collaborating with the Fieldwork Coordinator in the development of a program that provides the best opportunity for the implementation of theoretical concepts offered as part of the academic educational program;
2. Preparing, maintaining, and sending to the Fieldwork Coordinator current information about the fieldwork education center, including a statement of the conceptual models from which evaluation is derived, and upon which treatment is based;
3. Scheduling students in collaboration with the Fieldwork Coordinator;
4. Establishing objectives of the fieldwork experience and identifying the philosophy of the fieldwork experience center;
5. Contributing to the evaluation of each student at the midpoint and final. One copy of the final document must be signed by both the Fieldwork Educator and the student and submitted to the Fieldwork Coordinator of the academic educational institution in which the student is enrolled (the student is also entitled to a copy);
6. Being familiar with the policy regarding the “withdrawal of students from fieldwork experience” of each academic educational institution from which students are accepted;
7. Notifying the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator of any student for whom the fieldwork education center is requesting withdrawal;
8. Reviewing periodically the contractual agreement between the academic educational institution and the fieldwork education center and ensuring that these agreements are signed;
9. Providing regular and periodic supervision of students;
10. Prompting regular and periodic supervision of students;
11. Completing the final fieldwork evaluation form and submitting one copy (signed by the student and the Fieldwork Supervisor) to the academic institution (also keep one copy for center and provide one to student if requested);
12. Providing direct supervision of student initially; the supervision should decrease to less direct supervision as appropriate for the setting, severity of the client’s condition, and the ability of the student.

The direct day-to-day supervisory responsibilities of the Fieldwork Supervisor include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Providing an adequate orientation to the fieldwork education center and to specific school policies and procedures, usually in the form of a student manual;
2. Assigning patients/clients to the student;
3. Supervising the provision of occupational therapy services, documentation, and oral reporting by the student;
4. Assessing the skill and knowledge level of the student;
5. Meeting with the student regularly to review performance and to provide guidance;
6. Evaluating the student at the midpoint and termination of the fieldwork experience using the fieldwork evaluation instrument based on the center’s written behavioral objectives.

**Responsibilities of the Student**

The student is the learner who is enrolled in a course of study at an educational institution leading to a degree in occupational therapy. The student is expected to collaborate with the Fieldwork Educator and the Fieldwork Coordinator to ensure compliance with fieldwork experience requirements.

The student is responsible for the following:

1. Making contact with the Fieldwork Educator a reasonable time in advance of the starting date.
2. Ensuring that student has on hand all required fieldwork-related documentation including but not limited to TB skin test, immunizations, documentation of health insurance, flu vaccination, and CPR / BLS.

3. Undergoing and self-financing any required screens or checks required by the fieldwork site, as stipulated in the clinical affiliation agreement including drug screens and additional background checks.

4. Complying with all policies and procedures of the fieldwork education center unless exempted, including prompt notification of student absences;

5. Fulfilling all duties and assignments made by the Fieldwork Educator and Fieldwork Coordinator, unless exempted, within the time limit specified;

6. Notifying the fieldwork education center and educational program of current address and telephone;

7. Completing and presenting to the Fieldwork Educator at least one copy of the student's evaluation of the fieldwork center;

8. Having available copies of the appropriate performance evaluation forms and student evaluation forms unless forms are sent by the Fieldwork Coordinator;

9. Being an active participant in the supervisory process

**Level II Fieldwork Objectives**

**Introduction**

Level II fieldwork as established at Belmont University consists of a minimum of the equivalent of 24 weeks of full-time Level II training under the supervision of a qualified, licensed occupational therapist. The purpose is to provide in-depth experience and gradual assumption of entry-level responsibility for the delivery of occupational therapy services to clients, whether they be individuals, groups, programs, or organizations. Students are required to communicate electronically on a weekly basis with the academic fieldwork coordinator and their peers in order to promote clinical reasoning and critical thinking and professional development through engagement.

Upon completion of the Level II fieldwork experience(s) the student will be able to integrate and apply theoretical concepts and didactic learning to the practice of occupational therapy. The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student (FWPE) is used to assess the student’s performance on each Level II fieldwork experience. Learning objectives and experiences are developed in collaboration with the student, individual sites and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. As indicated on the FWPE the 3 items under “Fundamentals of Practice” must all be scored at a “3” (Meets Standards) or above on the final evaluation in order for the student to pass the fieldwork experience.

Upon completion of the Level II fieldwork, students are required to complete the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience and encouraged to review this with the fieldwork supervisor. The SEFWE form is found on-line in the corresponding Blackboard course for fieldwork and should be downloaded and given to the Fieldwork Educator. The SEFWE should be signed by the Fieldwork Educator but must be signed by the student and submitted with the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student.

**Fieldwork Sites and Fieldwork Educators**
Fieldwork at Belmont University is an integral part of the occupational therapy curriculum. The faculty, clinicians, and students are mutually involved in the process.

The School of Occupational Therapy evaluates and selects fieldwork sites according to specific criteria that meet the needs of the curriculum and to assure that the facility is able to provide adequate supervision and experiences to enable the student to successfully meet the requirements of the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student. All sites utilized for student fieldwork placement meet the requirements and learning objectives of the curriculum. A clinical affiliation agreement is completed with all facilities. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Fieldwork Educator collaborate on objectives, practice activities and the advising of students. In order for a fieldwork site to be established and retained, it must provide a quality educational experience for the students. In addition, the School of Occupational Therapy and students must conscientiously cooperate and fulfill the duties/requirements of the contract.

Fieldwork Education Information

General fieldwork information will be updated periodically. All changes will be announced to students as they are made although students are ultimately responsible for staying current with policy revisions by reviewing “current student information” and program manual on OT web page at www.belmont.edu/ot then follow the links. Students are responsible for reading, understanding and following all current fieldwork policies. Level I fieldwork information will be posted each semester on the fieldwork Blackboard course. Students are expected to download any relevant document and complete as outlined in the Blackboard instructions. Students are required to provide the fieldwork supervisor with the corresponding syllabus, the evaluation form and the fieldwork objectives during the orientation to the fieldwork experience. A Level II fieldwork packet with appropriate information will be sent to the fieldwork site by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, or will be hand-delivered by the student prior to the rotation. Printed information regarding specific Level I and II fieldwork sites can be found in the physical files located within the School of Occupational Therapy, which can be accessed by appointment through the Program Assistant and/or the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. These files provide a description of the facility, specific requirements of the placement, a copy of the clinical affiliation agreement for that institution, and any site-specific learning objectives set by the Level II fieldwork site. Questions concerning Level II fieldwork should be directed to Belmont University’s Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

Advising

Level I fieldwork advising is done throughout clinical assignments by the Fieldwork Educator, Belmont University occupational therapy faculty, and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and/or faculty may visit Level I and Level II sites when necessary and are available for student advising or fieldwork concerns by phone and email.

Advising on Level II fieldwork is done collaboratively by the Fieldwork Educator and the Belmont University Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Student communication is required with the Fieldwork Educator prior to the rotation. The purpose of the pre-placement communication is to learn about orientation procedures, dress code, parking, and plans for supervision/communication with the student. Instructions and forms for each level of fieldwork are included in the corresponding Blackboard course and should be downloaded as needed. Review of the forms and discussion of experiences will be covered in the orientation session. It is important for students to be forthright about health problems or special needs learning styles so that necessary accommodations may be made far in advance of the placement.
An orientation session will be provided for students before Level II fieldwork experiences. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will be available to the students for advising on Level II assignments. Site visits will be made upon request of the facility or student.

**Attendance**

Attendance on all clinical days is required unless the student is ill or excused by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Fieldwork Educator. Telephone numbers will be provided for the Level I and Level II fieldwork sites. The student must follow the procedures of the facility and notify the facility immediately if they will be absent. All absences from fieldwork must be reported to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator via email or phone. A schedule for making up the time missed due to absence must be acceptable to the facility and approved by the academic fieldwork coordinator and/or assigned faculty.

Tardiness is not acceptable and may be cause for failure from the site. If there is an emergency a call must be made to the facility. Absenteeism and tardiness may affect the grade or result in failure.

**Level II Fieldwork Attendance**

Absences are allowed for severe illness and / or death in the student’s family. A student is allowed a maximum of three absences from Level II fieldwork without requiring make-up days. Following each absence, a student must provide documentation to both the AFWC and the FE, within 48 hours after the absence, clearly indicating the reason for the absence. Regardless of the SOT Attendance Policy, whether or not a student must make up the missed days is at the discretion of the fieldwork educator and/or the site. More than three absences from fieldwork will require a meeting with the AFWC, the FE, and the student and may require a learning contract. Medical appointments, travel, out-of-town company and studying for exams are a few examples of unexcused absences from fieldwork.

**Background Checks**

Depending on where a student is placed for fieldwork, federal and state laws may require that the student submit to the following, prior to being accepted for fieldwork. The student is responsible for the cost of background checks required by a fieldwork site.

The federal legislation that made national criminal history background checks on employees and/or volunteers available to public schools was the National Child Protection Act of 1993, and the most relevant section is codified as 42 U.S.C. 5119a. By the definition in 42 U.S.C. 5119c (9)(A)(I), a child care provider means "a person who is employed or volunteers with a qualified entity."

Section 5119a (a)(1) of the above Act specifies that: "A state may have in effect procedures (established by state statute or regulation) that require qualified entities designated by the state to contact an authorized agency of the state to request a nationwide background check for the purpose of determining whether a provider has been convicted of a crime that bears upon the provider’s fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities." Thus, the federal law alone does not require fingerprinting; the significant authority rests with each state. The unique state legislation will specify whether state and/or national criminal history background checks on employees and/or volunteers are required or not required. Many public school districts started performing both state and national criminal background checks based on fingerprinting of employees and/or volunteers as a result of new state legislation in response to this Act.

**Social Networking Policy**
Communication with fieldwork supervisors or Belmont OT faculty through a social networking site is strongly discouraged. Please use email, face to face conversations or phone conversations as a means to communicate. Professional communication is an expectation regardless of the type or vehicle of communication including but not limited to e-mail communication, blackboard discussion postings, or through other types of communication in which you may engage.

Drug Testing Policy

Students may be required to undergo drug testing by a fieldwork site prior to engaging in a level I or level II fieldwork rotation. This is not a Belmont University School of Occupational Therapy requirement, but we are obligated to support a site’s policies and procedures if we have entered into a contractual agreement with that site. Therefore, if a drug screen is required by a site, the student is required to identify a testing site, obtain the test, pay for any such testing, and ensure that the results reach the required recipient.

Fieldwork Performance Intervention Policy

On occasion it becomes necessary to terminate a Level I and/or Level II fieldwork placement. This may occur for a variety of reasons and with a variety of consequences. In all cases, client / patient, student and staff safety is our primary concern.

This policy is intended to provide an overview of the possible situations which may result in the termination of a fieldwork experience.

I. Student is terminated due to extraordinary circumstances such as: student extended illness; personal or family hardship; natural disaster (flood, tornado etc.); supervising therapist is no longer available and no replacement is available at site; facility closes unexpectedly; etc.

When the reason for the termination is NOT due to any unprofessional behaviors by the student or their failure to meet competency, the student will not be penalized for the termination. The student will receive an incomplete for the rotation. Once the issues leading up to the termination have been resolved, arrangements will be made, in collaboration with the student, to secure a new site based on the availability of other sites. Graduation may be delayed dependent on the timeframe needed for acquiring a new fieldwork site, contract, and start date.

II. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) receives notification from the Fieldwork Educator that student is demonstrating unprofessional behaviors, is not competent to perform assigned tasks, and/or is a safety risk to self, patients and/or staff.

The Fieldwork Educator and AFWC counsel the student on corrective actions. A learning contract is established to attempt to remediate/correct the identified issues. The learning contract will typically include remedial activities or goals that a student must meet to continue with the placement. The fieldwork educator (FE) monitors student progress and provides formal (verbal and/or written feedback) to the student and AFWC at appropriate intervals.

If the student does not meet the expectations outlined in the learning contract the fieldwork placement will be terminated and the student will receive a grade of “F” for the placement and the student is dismissed from the program.
Failure may occur prior to midterm. Immediate removal (prior to the scheduled ending date) from the site and/or a failing grade may be given for any fieldwork placement for the following:

- violation of patients’ rights
- violation of the rights of others
- violation of the AOTA Code of Ethics
- unprofessional behavior as determined by fieldwork site and/or academic site
- unsafe practice
- substance abuse
- failure to complete any of the specified requirements
- continued unsatisfactory performance
- lack of sufficient progression towards goals as outlined in learning contract
- insubordination
- excessive tardiness
- risks to patient care
- not demonstrating skills/abilities that are expected of a Level I or II student
- a score below a “3” on items 1 – 3 of Section 1 of the FWPE (Fundamentals of Practice)

As described in the online Graduate Catalog under Progression Towards Graduation (a grade of WF (withdrawal failing) or F (failure) will result in immediate dismissal from the Weekend MSOT Program.

If a student fails a Level I or Level II placement, they may apply for re-admission although acceptance is not guaranteed. In addition, if a student is re-accepted, the fieldwork course cannot be repeated until the course is offered in a subsequent semester.

Conduct

The AOTA Code of Ethics applies to all Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences in addition to any specific behaviors required by the specific clinical sites.

Confidentiality - HIPPA

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLYING WITH ALL RELEVANT STATE AND FEDERAL CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS, INCLUDING THE HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996 (HIPAA), TO THE EXTENT APPLICABLE. STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH TRAINING IN THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRIVACY AND SECURITY PROVISIONS OF HIPAA. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE DISSEMINATED PRIOR TO THE STUDENTS BEGINNING ANY OF THEIR REQUIRED FIELDWORK (LEVEL I AND LEVEL II). STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO DOCUMENT IN WRITING THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING IN AND HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI), THE APPROPRIATE USE OF PHI FOR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, THE SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY OF PHI, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF INAPPROPRIATE USE OF PHI.

Financial Responsibilities
The student will be responsible for all expenses associated with the fieldwork experience except for the professional liability insurance covering Belmont University students when they are engaged in clinical education. Each student should anticipate additional cost for housing, meals and transportation if relocation for Level II fieldwork is necessary.

**Grading and Evaluation of Student Performance**

Evaluation of student performance during the Level I and Level II fieldwork experience is an ongoing process which occurs during the formal and informal supervisory sessions by the Fieldwork Educator, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, and/or faculty. The specific grading system and forms used to evaluate student performance will be contained in the relevant course syllabi and/or provided on Blackboard. Both professional behaviors and clinical skills are assessed as part of the evaluation. It is the student’s responsibility to review these evaluation forms and raise any questions regarding the expectations with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator prior to beginning the fieldwork placement. **Note that a failing grade received for a Level I or a Level II placement results in immediate dismissal from the occupational therapy program.**

**Required Health Documentation and Immunizations**

In addition to the Belmont University health form, the fieldwork student may need to comply with specific health requirements for individual fieldwork sites, such as specific immunizations or physical exams. These will be at the student’s expense. It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the site prior to the rotation, based upon information provided by the AFWC. The student must communicate with the fieldwork clinical coordinator prior to the starting date of the affiliation in order to learn about expectations, dress code, orientation, and any suggested preparatory readings or activities.

During Level I and Level II fieldwork the occupational therapy student will continue to have access to Belmont University’s Health Services clinic, although this service is not typically available during weekend hours. The student will be expected to show proof of personal health insurance coverage before being accepted for Level I and Level II fieldwork placement. Students may contact Belmont Central for information on low cost student health insurance if they have no other health insurance coverage.

Each student is required to have a physical examination and specified immunizations at the student’s own expense each year. The necessary forms are provided to the students the summer prior to initial enrollment. These forms need to be signed by the examining physician prior to matriculation in the program, and need to be updated **YEARLY**. If the student fails to provide the necessary information by their yearly deadline, they will be suspended from all classes until the necessary information is provided. Students are required to monitor their own immunization and health documentation and to provide documentation of currency to the SOT office. Examples of this requirement are TB skin testing, annual influenza immunization, American Heart Association CPR and BLS certification, and health insurance documentation. Occasionally, a student may be required to submit to additional immunizations and/or additional testing prior to fieldwork at a specific site. The cost for these is the student’s responsibility. Failure to monitor expiration dates for required documentation can lead to delays in placement for fieldwork, and ultimately delayed graduation.

**Liability Insurance**

The occupational therapy students are covered for professional liability insurance with a single limit of not less than $1 million per occurrence and $3 million in the aggregate. This document will be provided to the level 1 and II fieldwork sites.
Monitoring and Site Visits

Site visits and telephone monitoring are primarily made by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, but may be made by any member of the School of Occupational Therapy. The purpose of the monitoring is multidimensional and may include, but is not limited to:

- student performance evaluation, midterm and final
- weekly meeting forms documenting supervisory meetings
- clinical site evaluation
- clinical instructor evaluation
- assistance with implementation of clinical education program
- assistance with managing student performance problems
- clinical staff education and development

If a site visit is needed, the visit will entail meeting with the student and the fieldwork supervisor both individually and together to discuss the types of learning experiences, strengths and weaknesses of the student performance and strengths and weaknesses of the student’s academic preparation. The discussion will be documented and appropriate information will be shared with the academic faculty.

Placements

Assignments for Level I and Level II fieldwork are made by the facility and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator based upon student input, availability of sites, course requirements, and student needs. Aside from Level I Fieldwork II, students provide the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator with a list of no fewer than three preferred sites in their regions for placements for each of the required fieldwork experiences. If criteria determined by the SOT are fulfilled by the sites, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will attempt to place students at one of the three facilities. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will provide the student with a list of regional sites where students have completed fieldwork rotations in the past. Students are not to formally request placement with any facilities but, after exploration / consideration of a site, are expected to provide accurate contact information for the Fieldwork Educator and/or student coordinator at a given site. Only the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator is to have discussions with the site regarding establishment of a fieldwork contract and potential placement of a student. If a placement is canceled the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will discuss an alternate plan with the student. If this occurs, the placement may be delayed which may result in postponement of graduation. The University does not make housing arrangements for students. The School of Occupational Therapy suggests that the student not work while completing Level II fieldwork placements because there are usually assignments that need to be completed in the evening and on weekends. Should students find it absolutely necessary to maintain employment during the Level II placement, the student must advise the Fieldwork Educator in writing prior to scheduling the fieldwork placement.

Requests to Change Fieldwork Site Policy

The School of Occupational Therapy Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) works very diligently to obtain fieldwork placements that are educationally and experientially enriching for our students. Student input is often sought prior to confirming slots. Occasionally a student may not be consulted about a particular placement due to extenuating circumstances. In those cases, every attempt to make the best possible match between student and site is made.

Once a site has been confirmed for a student, Belmont’s position is that the commitment to the site and to the Fieldwork Educator (FE) must be honored. For that reason, Belmont AFWC will not change confirmed sites except in cases of emergency or extreme hardship.
Any such request must be made in writing to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator at least **two months** prior to the projected start of fieldwork. Upon receipt of the written request, the AFWC must assemble a panel of no fewer than 2 faculty and 2 AFWC to process the request and either grant or deny the request. The AFWC has three weeks from the time the initial request is received to assemble the panel. From that point, the panel has two weeks to make a determination and respond in writing to the student.

Granting the student’s request may significantly delay the student starting fieldwork as another placement must be sought, the clinical affiliation agreement confirmed, and confirmation of a slot for the student obtained from a Fieldwork Educator at the site. Please note that this could delay graduation.
A student with a disability who wishes to request accommodations must make a formal request to the Director of Student Support and Disability Services (460-6407). Reasonable accommodation in the classroom, labs, and clinical settings does not mean that students with disabilities will be exempt from performing skills. The School reserves the right to make the final determination regarding the implementation of accommodations. Indicate below whether you require accommodations for any of the Occupational Therapy Essential Functions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Functions - Students must demonstrate all functions in a safe, reliable, and efficient manner.</th>
<th>Are Accommodations Necessary?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently: 67 – 100% of the time</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read, write, speak, and understand English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermittently: 34 – 66% of the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carry</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stoop/squat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step up and down</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Occasionally: 1 – 33% of the time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lift objects weighing a minimum of 50 pounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Push/pull</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kneel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crawl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you checked YES, please explain:

I understand that I cannot receive reasonable accommodations without registering with the Office of Disability Services.

Signature: ________________________________

Name: ___________________________ Date: _____________________