LEVEL I FIELDWORK: STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The 2006 Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist describe the goal of Level I Fieldwork to be two fold. First, Level I Fieldwork introduces students to the fieldwork experience and second Level I Fieldwork offers opportunities to develop a basic comfort level with clients and an understanding of the needs of clients. Additionally, Level I Fieldwork provides opportunities for occupational therapy students to gain progressive, relevant experiences as beginning practitioners develop clinical reasoning skills and relate coursework to the occupational therapy process. Opportunities for client observation, interviews, activity analysis, assessment and the students’ therapeutic use of self within the OT process will occur throughout the Level I Fieldwork process.

The emphasis of Level I Fieldwork at Eastern Washington University is on developing professional behaviors and effective communication skills, understanding occupation-based practice, and demonstrating a commitment to the common good throughout the occupational therapy process. Level I Fieldwork is integrated within the academic course work at Eastern Washington University. Each course will include a minimum of 15 hours of Level I Fieldwork beginning in the student’s first year in the professional Occupational Therapy Program, and fieldwork experiences continue throughout the duration of the Program. Fieldwork sites will encompass a variety of settings in the community allowing for the provision of services to diverse individuals and populations across the lifespan. Qualified personnel will provide supervision of students during Level I Fieldwork experiences. In addition to occupational therapy practitioners, supervision may be provided by psychologists, counselors, social workers, teachers, and other rehabilitation therapists.

Level I Fieldwork Objectives

Eastern Washington University identified 22 general objectives related to communication, work behavior, understanding of occupation-based practice and a commitment to the common good to be met during each Level I Fieldwork experience. Additionally, course instructors identify course-specific Level I Fieldwork Objectives and assignments based upon course topics and objectives. Fieldwork objectives, the course description and objectives, and assignments will be sent to the fieldwork site prior to the student’s arrival. Refer to the document
titled *General Level I Fieldwork Objectives* for further information about general expectations for the Level I Fieldwork experience.

**Scheduling of Level I Fieldwork Experiences**

Level I Fieldwork sites will be located throughout the greater Spokane region and eastern Washington. The course instructor(s) and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator jointly make decisions about student placement at Level I Fieldwork sites. A number of factors are considered including: a) the site's ability to provide appropriate experiences for the course content; b) an appropriate match of the student's learning style and learning needs to the site; and c) a consideration of the student's geographical preference and scheduling requirements.

Students are expected to contact their respective fieldwork sites at least one week prior to the initial, scheduled date of the experience. Additionally, some fieldwork sites may require an on-site student interview prior to confirming the fieldwork experience.

**Attendance**

Except for illness, personal or family emergencies, there are no acceptable reasons for absence from the scheduled fieldwork experience. If you must be absent from the Level I Fieldwork experience due to an illness or an emergency, the following guidelines must be followed.

♦ If an absence is anticipated, the student is to report this in advance to the site supervisor, course instructor(s), and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator so that arrangements to make up the time can be made.

♦ If an absence is sudden in nature the student must contact the site supervisor and appropriate course instructor(s). Messages may be left by voice-mail or e-mail.

♦ The student is responsible for arrangements to make up time lost due to absences. Time made up will be scheduled at the convenience of the site and site supervisor. The student must inform the course instructor(s) and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator of confirmed arrangements for make up time. If the time is not made up before the end of the quarter, an "Incomplete" will be given for the course. Fieldwork hours must be made up within 4 weeks of the quarter's end, or the student will be required to repeat the entire fieldwork experience.

♦ Punctuality is a professional behavior and of utmost importance to the student's successful performance on the fieldwork experience. If a student is going to be late, s/he must notify the site supervisor of the expected arrival time.
Documentation of student attendance will be completed by the site supervisor and forwarded to the Department of Occupational Therapy for placement in the student's academic file.

**Assessment of Student Performance for Level I Fieldwork Education**

At the conclusion of the fieldwork experience, the site supervisor will complete an evaluation of the student's performance in meeting the Level I Fieldwork objectives. The document titled *Student Evaluation for Level I Fieldwork* will be sent to the site supervisor prior to the scheduled fieldwork experience. The site supervisor will be asked to review the evaluation with the student at the completion of the experience. The course instructor(s) will be responsible for grading specific assignments to be completed during the fieldwork experience. Completion of the assignments will contribute to the student's overall course grade.

Students must pass all Level I Fieldwork placements taken in conjunction with occupational therapy courses. If a Level I Fieldwork placement is not satisfactorily completed according to the learning criteria of the Fieldwork I evaluation, it must be repeated at the first possible opportunity, within the current or following academic quarter. The course instructor will make the arrangements. A Level I Fieldwork placement may be repeated only once by the student during the Program. If a second Level I Fieldwork is unsatisfactorily completed, the student will be subject to dismissal from the Program. All required academic courses and Level I Fieldwork experiences must be passed before students are advanced to Level II Fieldwork.

**Student Evaluation of the Level I Fieldwork Experience**

All students must complete an evaluation of the Level I Fieldwork experience prior to the end of the quarter in which the experience was scheduled. Each student will be provided with an evaluation form at the beginning of the fieldwork experience. The student must provide the course instructor(s) with the original copy of the fieldwork evaluation form at the end of the quarter. Site supervisors and students may together determine how information from the student's evaluation of the fieldwork experience will be shared at the completion of the fieldwork experience.

**Student Self Reflection of the Fieldwork Experience**

Level I Fieldwork is an integral part of the student’s learning experience within the curriculum. The development of clinical reasoning skills, interpersonal
communication, professional judgment and behaviors, and knowledge and skills for occupation-based practice occur during fieldwork experiences. An important component of learning these skills is reflecting upon fieldwork experiences to gain insight, knowledge, and understanding of one’s professional development and socialization. Consequently, during each Level I Fieldwork experience, students will complete an assignment for self-reflection to enhance the learning experiences offered during the fieldwork education program.

Management of Problems Occurring During Level I Fieldwork Placement

If the student experiences a problem during the fieldwork experience, the student should discuss the issues immediately with the site supervisor and notify the course instructor supervising that site. The goal of the fieldwork education program is to provide students with positive learning experiences and the site supervisor, course instructor(s) and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator are all available to provide guidance to resolve problems.

If further intervention is necessary, the site supervisor and academic fieldwork coordinator will discuss the situation. A meeting with the student will be held. A plan for the resolution of the problem will be identified and written in the form of a learning contract for the student. The student, site supervisor, and course instructor will all sign the contract.

If student problems continue, the course instructor(s), site supervisor, and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will determine the need for further learning contracts. If the student is unable to pass the designated learning criteria for that fieldwork experience, the Level I Fieldwork experience must be repeated.