

General Guide for Planning International Fieldwork

Purpose:

1. Increase awareness and knowledge of subjects to be considered while planning an international fieldwork experience in relation to three types of fieldwork placements, including Level I fieldwork, Level II fieldwork, and non-Level I or II fieldwork.

Introduction: International fieldwork refers to a dual exchange. Students who are enrolled in an academic OT/OTA program in the United States may complete fieldwork experiences outside the United States. If these experiences are considered part of the students’ required fieldwork, placements must comply with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy (ACOTE®) Standards (ACOTE, 2007 a,b,&c). In addition, students enrolled in an academic OT/OTA program outside of the United States may seek fieldwork opportunities within the United States. This scenario does not require ACOTE standard compliance. While there is sensitivity to overall ACOTE Fieldwork Standards for academic OT/OTA programs within the United States, this guide does not include all relevant fieldwork Standards. This document is meant to be used as a guide for planning an international fieldwork experience by raising awareness to areas to consider. Accompanying guides and documents should be reviewed for other essential elements to consider when planning an international fieldwork.

Areas of discussion: Three major categories where the guidelines will be applied need to be identified.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
<p>Level II fieldwork goal: To develop competent, entry-level, generalist occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. (ACOTE, 2007 a,b&c)</p> <p>The experience should provide the student with the opportunity to carry out professional responsibilities under supervision and for</p>	<p>Level I fieldwork goal: To introduce students to the fieldwork experience, to apply knowledge to practice, and to develop understanding of the needs of clients. (ACOTE, 2007,a,b&c)</p> <p>The experience may include exposure to populations</p>	<p>May have broader goals and include student’s professional development interests, academic OT/OTA program’s social justice overtures, and student professional and personal growth.</p>

professional role modeling. (ACOTE,2007,a.b.c)	and/or observations beyond occupational therapy specific settings in relation to the academic OT/OTA program’s stated objectives.	
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Note: There are additional separate Standards for an experiential component required for doctoral-level-educational programs (ACOTE, 2007a).

Collaboration: A fieldwork consortium may include the academic OT/OTA program, the fieldwork educator, and the student.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Ensure that the academic fieldwork coordinator and faculty collaborate to design fieldwork experiences that strengthen the ties between didactic and fieldwork education. Standard B.10.2, (ACOTE,2007a,b,c)	Ensure that the academic fieldwork coordinator and faculty collaborate to design fieldwork experiences that strengthen the ties between didactic and fieldwork education. Standard B.10.2, (ACOTE,2007a,b,c)	The fieldwork site may have links with the academic OT/OTA program. An academic OT/OTA program in the receiving country may be involved in referrals to fieldwork sites.

Selection: Both the WFOT Web site and journal are good initial resources for contacts in the country of choice.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Document the criteria and process for selecting fieldwork sites. Ensure that the fieldwork program* reflects the sequence, depth, focus, and scope of content in the curriculum design. ACOTE Standard B.10.1, (ACOTE,2007,a&b)	Document the criteria and process for selecting fieldwork sites. Ensure that the fieldwork program* reflects the sequence, depth, focus, and scope of content in the curriculum design. ACOTE Standard B.10.1, (ACOTE,2007,c)	Wider opportunity for choices, as it does not have to meet ACOTE requirements regarding fieldwork but must meet programmatic accreditation standards.

*Fieldwork program refers to the fieldwork site’s curriculum.	*Fieldwork program refers to the fieldwork site’s curriculum.	
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Communication: Disclosure and transparency are crucial in communicating among fieldwork site, academic OT/OTA program, and student. Try to access Web site and written documents, aiding in clarification for fieldwork site in conjunction with personal correspondences.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
<p>For international fieldwork another member of the faculty may have more expertise than the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC).</p> <p>Ensure that the AFWC is responsible for advocating the development of links between the fieldwork and didactic aspects of the curriculum, for communicating about the curriculum to fieldwork educators, and for maintaining memoranda of understanding (MOU) and site data related to fieldwork placements. ACOTE Standard B.10.4, (ACOTE,2007,a&b)</p>	<p>For international fieldwork another member of the faculty may have more expertise than the AFWC.</p> <p>Ensure that the AFWC is responsible for advocating the development of links between the fieldwork and didactic aspects of the curriculum, for communicating about the curriculum to fieldwork educators, and for maintaining MOU and site data related to fieldwork placements. ACOTE Standard B.10.4, (ACOTE,2007,c)</p>	<p>Does not have to meet ACOTE requirements regarding fieldwork but must meet programmatic accreditation standards. However, clarity in communication is crucial regarding student role, curriculum, didactic aspects, appropriate supervision, safety, etc.</p>

Verification: Written documentation is preferred over a telephone log. Written verification enables all parties to be able to refer to the agreement over time.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
“Documentation that a memorandum of understanding was reviewed by both parties	“Documentation that a memorandum of understanding was reviewed by both parties	Written verification is still preferred, as it ensures

may include a signed agreement, letter, fax, e-mail or other written documentation.” ACOTE Interpretative Guide (ACOTE, 2009)	may include a signed agreement, letter, fax, e-mail or other written documentation.” ACOTE Interpretative Guide (ACOTE, 2009)	expectations of experience.
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Duration: In addition to number of weeks, clarify length of workday and days of the week worked. For example, in some countries, a work day may be longer but include a longer lunch break. In other countries, the work week may consist of 6 shorter days or include part of the weekend. Consider discussing appropriate use of non-assigned hours with the student.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
For OT students completing FW outside the U.S., “must not exceed 12 weeks.” ACOTE Standard B.10.22 (ACOTE, 2007,a &b) For OTA students completing FW outside the .U.S., “must not exceed 8 weeks.” ACOTE Standards B.10.22 (ACOTE, 2007,c)	Try to adhere to educational program’s stated objectives/requirements.	Flexible, does not have to meet ACOTE requirements regarding fieldwork but must meet programmatic accreditation standards.

Qualification: Level of qualifications for fieldwork educators for fieldwork experiences

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
“Ensure that students attending Level II fieldwork outside the United States are supervised by an occupational therapist who graduated from a program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and has 1 year of experience in practice.” ACOTE Standard B.10.22,	Ensure that qualified personnel supervise Level I fieldwork, working knowledge of occupational therapy is preferred. However, the fieldwork educator does not have to be an OT or OTA.	Does not have to meet ACOTE requirements regarding fieldwork but must meet programmatic accreditation standards.

(ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)		
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Supervision: Level of supervision differs between Level I and Level II fieldwork

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Decreasing supervision throughout fieldwork, ensuring that at end of fieldwork student is working at entry-level status.	Consistent supervision, so student is able to gain exposure and observe various therapy experiences.	Not required to meet ACOTE fieldwork supervision specifications.

Legal and Pragmatic Plan: If the fieldwork will earn academic credit there must be a plan in place for what will be accomplished during the placement.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
<p>Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU).</p> <p>Document a policy and procedure for complying with fieldwork site health requirements and maintaining student health records in a secure setting. ACOTE Standard B.10.6, (ACOTE,207,a,b&c)</p> <p>Verify that international fieldwork will meet the requirements for state licensure.</p>	<p>“If a fieldtrip, observation or service learning opportunity is used to count toward part of Level I fieldwork, then a memorandum of understanding is required.” ACOTE Interpretative Guide (ACOTE, 2009)</p> <p>Document a policy and procedure for complying with fieldwork site health requirements and maintaining student health records in a secure setting. ACOTE Standard B.10.6, (ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)</p>	Academic OT/OTA program or university may have study abroad requirements to be met.

Accreditation: If the fieldwork will earn academic credit there may be specific institutional or accreditation standards imposed by regional accreditors that must be met.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Review and meet ACOTE Fieldwork Standards.	Review and meet ACOTE Fieldwork Standards.	Verify institution’s accreditation requirements

(ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	(ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	regarding credit for international experiences.
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Risk Management: Try to anticipate potential issues and establish preventative measures in advance.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Have written clarity regarding responsibilities of student, academic OT/OTA program, and fieldwork site. Contact information and procedures in emergency situations should be delineated. Assure that liability insurance is in place as well as mechanisms for handling student health needs.	Have written clarity regarding responsibilities of student, academic OT/OTA program, and fieldwork site. Contact information and procedures in emergency situations should be delineated. Assure that liability insurance is in place as well as mechanisms for handling student health needs.	Have written clarity regarding responsibilities of student, academic OT/OTA program, and fieldwork site. Contact information and procedures in emergency situations should be delineated. Assure that liability insurance is in place as well as mechanisms for handling student health needs.

Evaluation of Supervision: AOTA form (*Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience*) is not specifically required.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Document a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of supervision (e.g., student evaluation of fieldwork) and for providing resources for enhancing supervision (e.g., materials on supervisory skills, continuing education opportunities, articles on theory and practice). ACOTE Standard B.10.19, (ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	Document a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of supervision (e.g., student evaluation of fieldwork) and for providing resources for enhancing supervision (e.g., materials on supervisory skills, continuing education opportunities, articles on theory and practice). ACOTE Standard B.10.19, (ACOTE,2006)	Feedback from student regarding supervision could be provided via e-mail, journal entry, form, or debriefing after experience.

Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience: Determine whether objectives were accomplished/ expected outcomes met.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Fieldwork experiences should be implemented and evaluated for their effectiveness by the academic OT/OTA program. ACOTE Standard B.10.0, (ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	Fieldwork experiences should be implemented and evaluated for their effectiveness by the academic OT/OTA program ACOTE Standard B.10.0, (ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	Evaluation is important to determine whether the experience should be repeated for future students.

Evaluation of Student Performance: AOTA form (*Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student*) is not specifically required.

Level II fieldwork	Level I fieldwork or equivalent	Non-Level I or II fieldwork*
Document mechanisms for requiring formal evaluation of student performance on Level II fieldwork. (AOTA,2002 a & b, or equivalent). ACOTE Standard B.10.21 (ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	Document all Level I fieldwork experiences that are provided to students, including mechanisms for formal evaluation of student performance. ACOTE Standard B.10.13, (ACOTE,2007,a,b&c)	Although not required to meet ACOTE fieldwork specifications, feedback is helpful for guiding the student toward future experiences and future growth.

* Example of Non-Level I or II fieldwork: Mission trips, research data collection, service learning, preceptorship, experiential component, volunteer organizations, team interventions, university global center overtures, clinical training application workshops, etc.

Resources:

[ACOTE Fieldwork Standards](#), including OTA, OT, and OTD standards
[WFOT](#), searching information for each country

References:

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007a). Accreditation standards for a doctoral-degree-level educational program for the occupational therapist. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 641–651.

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007b). Accreditation standards for a master's-degree-level educational program for the occupational therapist. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 652–661.

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007c). Accreditation standards for an educational program for the occupational therapy assistant. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 662–671.

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (2009). *ACOTE Standards and Interpretive Guide*. Available online at: <http://www.aota.org/Educate/Accredit/StandardsReview.aspx>

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2002a). *Fieldwork performance evaluation form for the occupational therapy student*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2002b). *Fieldwork performance evaluation form for the occupational therapy assistant student*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

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