



WESTERN
NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT
PROGRAM**

MANUAL 1

LEVEL II FIELDWORK PREPARATION

FALL 2015

**WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM
LEVEL II FIELDWORK HANDBOOK
MANUAL 1**

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Introduction

Supervised field experience is an integral part of your educational program and professional preparation. It provides you with an opportunity to integrate academic knowledge with application skills in a clinical work situation. Your experiences on fieldwork will require progressively higher levels of performance and responsibility as you learn and practice the skills essential to the profession.

Description

Upon successful completion of the two-year course work, students will spend a total of 16 weeks (2 Eight week rotations) under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in at least two different settings to gain skill in the practice of occupational therapy (6 credits each placement). OTA 270 and 272 must be completed within 18 months from completion of academic portion of the program. Only one of the Level II classes may be repeated one time only. Prerequisite: All academic and fieldwork (FW) level I classes in the OTA program. All course work must be completed within five (5) years of admission to the program.

Clinical Sites

Clinical Education experiences are a required part of the OTA curriculum. Level II clinical fieldwork is performed in facilities around the country. The most common used facilities are those in New Mexico and the surrounding states. WNMU does have national corporate contracts that allow the student to select facilities in many states across the country. **All students should be prepared for the extra expense of transportation, housing arrangements, tuition, and if required, uniforms.** It is recommended that you begin saving money for your fieldwork rotations. The money you should save would be the equivalent of your monthly budget times 4 months. Fieldwork is a required part of the degree plan and must be completed in order to graduate and sit for the certification exam. Academic credit hours are given for successful completion of fieldwork; tuition and fees are paid for these credit hours. Level II fieldwork is a full-time assignment typically consisting of 40 hours per week that involves on-site clinic time as well as outside assignments and homework; students should carefully consider employment options during this 4 month period and not anticipate full-time work outside of their assignment.

Completion of coursework does not guarantee that a student will be provided fieldwork placement at a specific time or at a particular facility as this depends on the educational needs of the student and the availability of the training facilities. However, every attempt is made to plan a student's fieldwork experience in proper sequence.

Due to the high demand for Level II placements in the Southwest region of New Mexico

and the nationwide shortage of placements, we frequently do not have sufficient sites to accommodate all students who wish to be placed in local **or high demand** areas. Students who expect to complete both rotations in sequence in a high demand area are urged to consider at least one fieldwork rotation out of Southwest region of New Mexico.

The Fieldwork Experience

Western New Mexico University requires two Level II Fieldwork experiences for all students. Each placement typically lasts 8 weeks, and both must be successfully completed to graduate and be eligible for the national certification examination. Although some flexibility is allowed in scheduling, a minimum of 16 weeks of placement is necessary to meet Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Accreditation Standards. Although most placements occur on a full time basis (40 hours per week), it may be possible to complete a rotation at 50% of a fulltime equivalent at that site. A student who wishes to accept this length does so with the understanding that it will need to be approved through the facility supervisor/administrator and it will extend the total length of stay that is required to complete a successful Fieldwork Level II rotation.

Fieldwork is designed to offer the student the widest possible exposure to a variety of diagnoses and age groups. Specialization in a particular area of practice *is not* the goal of the two required fieldwork rotations.

Types of Fieldwork

All students will complete a 2-month rotation in adult rehabilitation. This can be in a wide variety of practice settings such as in-patient, rehab, out-patient, skilled nursing and home health. The other 2-month rotation can be in pediatrics, psychiatry, or alternate clinical arenas such as geriatric rehab, industrial rehab, cognitive rehabilitation or areas of emerging practice such as low vision, oncology or community settings. Unless specified by a particular facility, there is no specified order in which to complete these rotations. However, most children's hospitals prefer to take a second rotation student, and school system rotations are limited to the academic calendar. Fieldwork must be completed within 18 months of completion of the academic course work.

Supplemental Fieldwork Experience:

A student who desires to complete an additional FWII placement in a specialty area may do so. However, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will only assist the student in site selection. This 3rd rotation is done after both required fieldwork rotations, and usually lasts 8 weeks. Students who choose this option should adjust their projected dates for graduation and certification accordingly, and be prepared for the additional time and expense involved.

Fieldwork Courses

<u>Course</u>	<u>Course Numbers</u>	<u>Total Credit Hours</u>
Level IIA Fieldwork	OTA 270	6 credit hours
Level IIB Fieldwork	OTA 272	6 Credit hours

Fieldwork Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the fieldwork experiences, the occupational therapy assistant intern should be performing at or above the minimum entry level expected of an occupational therapy assistant. After completion of fieldwork experiences the occupational therapy assistant intern should be able to demonstrate the following skills:

Fundamentals of Practice:

1. Adhere consistently to the American Occupational Therapy Association Code of Ethics and the site's policies and procedures.
2. Adhere consistently to safety regulations. Anticipate potentially hazardous situations and take steps to prevent accidents.
3. Use sound judgment in regard to safety of self and others during all fieldwork-related activities.

Basic Tenets of Occupational Therapy:

4. Clearly communicate the values and beliefs of occupational therapy, highlighting the use of occupation to clients, families, significant others, and service providers.
5. Communicate the roles of the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant to clients, families, significant others, and service providers.
6. Make informed practice decisions based on published research and relevant informational resources.

Evaluation and Screening:

7. Under the supervision of and in cooperation with the occupational therapist and/or occupational therapy assistant, accurately gather relevant information regarding a client's occupations of self care, productivity, leisure, and the factors that support and hinder occupational performance.
8. Establish service competency in assessment methods, including but not limited to interviews, observations, assessment tools, and chart reviews within the context of the service delivery setting.
9. Assist with interpreting assessments in relation to the client's performance and goals in collaboration with the occupational therapist.
10. Report results accurately in a clear, concise manner that reflects the client's status and goals.
11. Develop client-centered and occupation-based goals in collaboration with the occupational therapist.

Intervention:

12. In collaboration with the occupational therapist, establish methods, duration and frequency of interventions that are client-centered and occupation-based. Intervention plans reflect context of setting.
13. Select and sequence relevant interventions that promote the client's ability to engage in occupations.
14. Implement occupation-based interventions effectively in collaboration with clients, families, significant others, and service providers.
15. Grade activities to motivate and challenge clients in order to facilitate progress.
16. Effectively interact with clients to facilitate accomplishment of established goals.
17. Monitor the client's status in order to update, change, or terminate the intervention plan in collaboration with the occupational therapist.

Communication:

18. Clearly and effectively communicate verbally and nonverbally with clients, families, significant others, colleagues, service providers, and the public.
19. Produce clear and accurate documentation according to site requirements. All writing is legible, using proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Professional Behaviors:

20. Take responsibility for attaining professional competence by seeking out learning opportunities and interactions with supervisor(s) and others.
21. Responds constructively to feedback.
22. Demonstrate consistent work behaviors including initiative, preparedness, dependability, and work site maintenance.
23. Demonstrate effective time management.
24. Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills including but not limited to cooperation, flexibility, tact, and empathy.
25. Demonstrate respect for diversity factors of others including but not limited to socio-cultural, socioeconomic spiritual, and lifestyle choices.

AOTA Fieldwork Information Website:

AOTA offers a web page providing brief answers to questions frequently asked by students, such as fieldwork requirements (hours required, time off, types of fieldwork, repeating fieldwork), supervisor qualifications, grading, difficulties or failure, accommodations for a disability, finding sites out of the local area, and managing the workload stress of full-time field experience. In addition, student stories about their fieldwork experiences are available. Several responses refer students back to their respective academic programs for definitive answers. To access the student information page go to www.AOTA.org and follow the tabs to Students – For Current Students - Fieldwork.

Scheduling Fieldwork

Fieldwork is done after the completion of all other course work. All course work, both fieldwork experiences, must be completed prior to graduation and prior to sitting for the

Certification Examination.

Students make requests for fieldwork placements approximately 7-9 months in advance of their anticipated start date using the **Level II Student Site Registration Form**. Students are expected to know *when* they will start fieldwork and to attend the mandatory general information meetings announced by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC). Here they will receive more detailed information about the request process, instructions on how to access the listing of sites used by the School of Allied Health and deadlines to submit requests.

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator is responsible for student selection for FWII placements with input from the student. Students will be asked to review FWII facility files and select the top 5 choices. The student's interests, background, prior clinical experiences, and personal needs will be considered as much as possible. Availability of appropriate sites to meet fieldwork objectives may play a role in dictating placements.

Placement, reservations, selection and assignment begin once requests are received. Placements continue to be secured and confirmed right up through the final semester. Students are generally notified at group meetings as in the final semester of the curriculum. The approximate time of this meeting will occur in April. Some students may be required to participate in interviews or other pre-placement activities to confirm an assignment. Fieldwork placements may be secured and then cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances **by the site and/or tentative supervisor**. This is part of the fieldwork process and the student needs to be flexible and adapt if this occurs.

Suggested Dates for Fieldwork

Fieldwork is typically scheduled in three two-month sections starting in the summer going into the fall semester. You may request one fieldwork class in the summer and one fieldwork class in the fall or both fieldwork classes in the fall. This needs to be specified on the Level II Student Site Request Form. Although, WNMU makes every effort to be work with the student, there is **NO** guarantee that you will get what you request. Changes in these dates are negotiated between the facility and the School of Occupational Therapy.

Fieldwork Locations

The School maintains on-going agreements with a variety of clinical centers across the United States, although the majority is within New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Texas. We are constantly increasing the number of centers available to our students through contacts with other therapists and schools, visits by fieldwork faculty and referrals from current and past students. The School has a signed Institution-University Clinical Affiliation Agreement with centers that accept our students. These vary in complexity, but indicate the basic responsibilities of the School, the facility, and the student intern.

Clinical fieldwork sites used by WNMU are thought of in two different categories. First category is the Contract Sites. These sites can be found using the Fieldwork Search database. If you see a site on Fieldwork Search, this means that the site has an affiliation agreement with WNMU and the facility is willing to take students. The second category is the Non-contract sites. This category includes all other facilities that do we

have not worked with before. If a choice is made to pick a Non-contract site, the student needs to be aware that this site may not be willing to work with WNMU. Fieldwork sites are very difficult to arrange and the student may NOT get what is requested.

Students are not guaranteed both rotations in the same geographical location, or at the same facility. Every attempt is made to secure and schedule placements back-to-back to ensure anticipated completion of the program, with graduation, at the earliest possible date. However, students who require placement within a specific, single location may need to delay their final rotation to an 'off-peak' time. WNMU students are usually on Level II fieldwork rotations in June-July, August-September and/or October-December. Delaying a rotation until the January-February or March–April rotations may expand availability of location-specific sites.

The database of available sites is continually changing; new sites are added, and non-viable options are deleted. Students are *not to approach any clinical site* either inquiring about a student program or seeking placement without approval from the AFWC. If you believe you have identified a possible new site, contact the FW faculty or staff listed on page 2 of this handbook. They will follow-up on your lead.

Assignment of Placements

Once assignments have been confirmed by the School, students are given an opportunity to review their schedule. Once confirmed, students requesting changes in their assignments risk losing a confirmed placement for a place on a waiting list. Changes may result in less preferred placements or locations, a delay in scheduling fieldwork or cancellation of placements. All placements are considered confirmed and non-changeable 2 months prior to start date. After this, only cancellations by the site may result in a change of placement. Students are expected to make their own travel or housing arrangements once they have been assigned a fieldwork placement.

Procedures for Requesting Fieldwork

When to Make Your Request

Students should start thinking about both location and practice setting for fieldwork while in their first semester in the program. This is especially important for students wanting to go out-of-area or to sites where WNMU does not have an affiliation agreement.

A fieldwork meeting will be held in the fall of the third semester. At this time, the student will review the Fieldwork Manual 1 and be given instructions on how to request fieldwork rotation sites.

Progression to Fieldwork

Before a student progresses to fieldwork, a Degree Plan must be signed by the student's advisor stating the student is eligible to begin their final clinical coursework. It is the student's responsibility to schedule an appointment with his/her advisor to check eligibility for Fieldwork. This should be done during regular advising periods, before the

student begins course work for the final academic semester.

Eligibility

In order to be considered eligible for Level II Fieldwork placement, the WNMU OTA student must adhere to the following. All required information is to be submitted during your first semester and kept current (at the responsibility of the student) throughout the duration of the program.

- Complete all academic courses with a 2.7 GPA or higher
- Abide by all OTA Program, Department of Allied Health and University policies and procedures.
- Meet standards of ethical academic and clinical performance as specified in the American Occupational Therapy Association Code of Ethics (Appendix H) and the Western New Mexico University Student Code of Conduct (www.wnmu.edu/univ./StudentHandBook/StudentHbk98.html).
- Provide medical records and tests as required by the OTA Program. These records are electronically maintained and tracked by a web-based system, Certified Profile (see Appendix N). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all records remain current. Students need to be aware of the possibility of additional information required by individual fieldwork sites. Students are required to have the following:
 - Proof of Measles, Mumps and Rubella immunization (MMR.) (Note of clarification regarding MMR documentation: If you were born prior to 1957 you need 1) documentation of rubella immunity, or 2) documentation of immunization for rubella. If you were born after 1957 you need 1) shot records indicating two MMR vaccinations, or 2) documentation of rubella and rubeola immunity.)
 - Proof of Hep B vaccination or positive titer
 - Proof of Tdap vaccination or positive titer
 - Proof of Varicella (Proof of vaccination or positive titer)
 - Maintain current CPR certification.
 - Provide annual TB testing results
- Apply for and pass criminal background checks during third semester of program.

In the event an OTA student has not met the above standards, he or she will not be considered eligible for fieldwork placement and may risk being dismissed from the program.

How to Make a Request for Fieldwork II

Selection

Students should do some investigation about potential fieldwork sites before making requests. A listing of all Fieldwork Sites is available to students and faculty on Fieldwork Search: Information includes name, address, pertinent contact personnel, type of experience offered, and some basic descriptive information about the center.

Fieldwork Search Access

Fieldwork search is a web-based program that will allow you to access the database on or off of WNMU campus. This directions are as follows:

- a. Off-Campus web address: <http://FWSearch.wnmu.edu:591>
- b. On-Campus web address: <http://10.10.184.30:591>

You will need a student-level account and password. WNMU has licensed five access accounts for FW Search. Therefore, only five students at a time may access this program. The account user names and passwords are as follows:

Account	Password
FSI Student	fsistu_1
FSI Student2	fsistu_2
FSI Student3	fsistu_3
FSI Student4	fsistu_4
FSI Student5	fsistu_5

All facilities for which information are available have working agreements with Western New Mexico University. However, the availability of a given facility for a specific fieldwork experience is negotiated between the facility and the School at the time a request is made. Presence of information on FW Search does not necessarily indicate that the center is currently available.

Once the student has made their selection for fieldwork placement, they submit the LEVEL II STUDENT SITE REQUEST FORM to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator by the specified deadline. It is important that students list choices in the order of preference, include only viable choices the student is prepared to attend. Include any information that may be of relevance to the AFWC.

Complete all sections of the request form in as much detail as possible. The more you can describe your priorities for location, type of experience, preferred patient population, and special considerations, the more likely your request can be met. If your requested sites are not available, centers with similar characteristics will be pursued.

Be sure to make a copy of your request form before you turn it in.

Canvas Access

The student will have a Level II canvas shell available. This will be used to distribute information and for communication purposes. It is very important that the student checks this shell weekly and respond to any requests made by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Any delays in tasks assigned by the AFWC by the student may result in a delay of fieldwork placements.

Changes

If you request changes after you submit your REQUEST FOR FIELDWORK II PLACEMENT FORM, put those *changes in writing, by letter, fax or E-mail*. Telephone or verbal requests will not be accepted. Make changes as soon as you know a change is needed. Delay may result in a less desirable schedule or cancellation of placements. Once you have received your tentative schedule of placements, any request for changes in primary location must be submitted in writing, and are subject to review by committee. *Once placement is confirmed with a facility, changes may not be possible.*

Setting Priorities

We do our utmost to meet individual student needs and accommodate special circumstances, but we do attempt to work within the following parameters. Exceptions must be approved by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

The following are criteria that is followed:

1. Students are not assigned to a site where they have received tuition or other assistance from a FW II facility in return for subsequent employment.
2. Students are not assigned to the same site for more than one rotation.
3. Students will be assigned to sites offering the wider range of experiences in preference to a site offering a more restricted experience, or experiences that repeat those already completed.
4. When possible, requests from facilities as to the preferred student will be honored, i.e., 2nd placement only, previous pediatric experience, serious interest in psychiatry.
5. When a specific fieldwork center is requested due to financial need or because of family considerations, every attempt will be made to accommodate that request within the above parameters. There is no guarantee that such requests can be honored.
6. If a student requests a specific fieldwork site for personal reasons, these reasons must be documented, and should reflect serious professional interests. There is no guarantee that such requests can be honored. Personal requests may be better met by delaying fieldwork.
7. Although an attempt will be made to place each student in at least one "top-three" choice setting, this cannot be guaranteed.

Requesting Fieldwork – Contract Sites

Go to FW Search to research site information, as outlined above. Fill out the LEVEL II STUDENT SITE REQUEST FORM and submit by the established deadline.

Requesting Fieldwork – Non-Contract Sites

Whenever possible, use FW Search to locate centers where WNMU already has an Agreement and where students have trained in the past. If requesting sites that WNMU does not have a contract with the following information needs to be provided to the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator:

- Name and address of the facility
- Phone number and e-mail of therapist or contact person if you have one
- Type of Fieldwork

Once this information is received, the School will contact the center to initiate the placement process and ensure all necessary paperwork (agreements, liability insurance, etc.) has been completed.

Registration for Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a required part of the degree plan and must be completed in order to graduate and sit for the certification examination. Academic credit hours are given for successful completion of fieldwork; tuition and fees are paid on these credit hours.

FW2 interns register for 6 credit hours in the summer and 6 credit hours in the fall. Or 12 credit hours in the fall depending on the placement schedule.

Stipends or Other Financial Support

Very few centers offer financial assistance to interns such as a stipend, room & board, meals, or a parking pass. WNMU cannot promise to schedule a student where financial support is provided or to ever guarantee the stipend will still be available by the time the student fieldwork commences. Students should be prepared to complete their four (4) months of fieldwork without any remuneration from the facility.

Workload Concerns While on Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a full-time clinical commitment, not unlike having a full-time job. In addition, outside readings/reports/special projects are often required. Life events over which you have some control (getting married, continuing education classes, even pregnancies) should be scheduled around fieldwork if at all possible. You will have your hands full completing fieldwork; adding additional stresses or responsibilities is not recommended. Pregnancy is not covered by ADA accommodations (see below). Sites are free to refuse placement to pregnant students; delay in progression is quite possible.

ADA Accommodation

Disability Services at WNMU

Services for students with disabilities are provided through the Academic Support Center's Disability Services Office in the Juan Chacon Building, Room 220. Some examples of the assistance provided are: audio materials for the blind or dyslexic, note takers, readers, campus guides, audio recorders, a quiet testing area, and undergraduate academic tutors. In order to qualify for these services, documentation must be provided by qualified professionals on an annual basis. Disability Services

forms are available in the Academic Support Center. The Disability Services Office, in conjunction with the Academic Support Center, serves as Western New Mexico University's liaison for students with disabilities.

(A. Bruton. Portions of this manual adapted from Texas Woman's University School of Occupational Therapy Handbook.)