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# Fieldwork Level II and Occupational Therapy Students

The purpose of this position paper is to define the Level II fieldwork learning experience and to clarify the appropriate conditions and principles that must exist to ensure that interventions completed by Level II fieldwork students are of the quality and sophistication necessary to be clinically beneficial to the client. When students are appropriately supervised, adhere to professional and practice principles, and follow other regulatory and payer requirements, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) considers that students at this level of education are providing skilled occupational therapy interventions, consistent with their professional education level.

AOTA asserts that Level II occupational therapy fieldwork students may provide occupational therapy services under the supervision of a qualified occupational therapist in compliance with state and federal regulations. Occupational therapy assistant fieldwork students may provide occupational therapy services under the supervision of a qualified occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant who is under the supervision of an occupational therapist in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Occupational therapy Level II fieldwork students are individuals who are currently enrolled in an occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program that is accredited, approved, or pending accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE<sup>®</sup>; 2012). At this point in their professional education, students have completed the necessary and relevant didactic coursework that has prepared them for the fieldwork experience.

The Level II fieldwork experience is an integral and crucial part of professional education that allows students an opportunity to apply theory and techniques acquired through the classroom and Level I fieldwork experiences. Level II fieldwork provides an in-depth experience in delivering occupational therapy services to clients. This level of fieldwork focuses on the application of evidence-based, purposeful, and meaningful occupations as well as administration and management of occupational therapy service provision. The experience provides the student with the opportunity to carry out professional responsibilities under supervision and to observe professional role models in the field (ACOTE, 2012).

The academic program and the supervising occupational therapy practitioner<sup>1</sup> are responsible for ensuring that the type and amount of supervision meet the needs of the student and ensure the safety of all stakeholders. The following 10 general principles represent the minimum criteria that must be present during a Level II fieldwork experience to ensure the quality of services being provided by the Level II student practitioner:

1. The student is supervised by a currently licensed or credentialed occupational therapy practitioner who has a minimum of 1 year of practice experience subsequent to initial certification and is adequately prepared to serve as a fieldwork educator.

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<sup>1</sup>When the term *occupational therapy practitioner* is used in this document, it refers to both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants (AOTA, 2015). *Occupational therapists* are responsible for all aspects of occupational therapy service delivery and are accountable for the safety and effectiveness of the occupational therapy service delivery process. *Occupational therapy assistants* deliver occupational therapy services under the supervision of and in partnership with an occupational therapist (AOTA, 2014).

2. Occupational therapist students will be supervised by an occupational therapist. Occupational therapy assistant students will be supervised by an occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant in partnership with the occupational therapist who is supervising the occupational therapy assistant (AOTA, 2014).
3. Occupational therapy services provided by students under the supervision of a qualified practitioner will be billed as services provided by the supervising licensed occupational therapy practitioner.
4. Supervision of occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant students in Level II fieldwork settings will be of the quality and scope to ensure protection of consumers and provide opportunities for appropriate role modeling of occupational therapy practice.
5. The supervising occupational therapist and/or occupational therapy assistant must recognize when direct versus indirect supervision is needed and ensure that supervision supports the student's current and developing levels of competence with the occupational therapy process.
6. Supervision should initially be direct and gradually decrease to less direct supervision, as appropriate, depending on the
  - Competence and confidence of the student,
  - Complexity of client needs,
  - Number and diversity of clients,
  - Role of occupational therapy and related services,
  - Type of practice setting,
  - Requirements of the practice setting, and
  - Other regulatory requirements (ACOTE, 2012).
7. In all cases, the occupational therapist assumes ultimate responsibility for all aspects of occupational therapy service delivery and is accountable for the safety and effectiveness of the occupational therapy service delivery process involving the student. This also includes provision of services provided by an occupational therapy assistant student under the supervision of an occupational therapy assistant (AOTA, 2014).
8. In settings in which occupational therapy practitioners are not employed,
  - Students should be supervised daily on site by another professional familiar with the role of occupational therapy in collaboration with an occupational therapy practitioner (see Item 2).
  - Occupational therapy practitioners must provide direct supervision for a minimum of 8 hours per week and be available through a variety of other contact measures throughout the workday. The occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant (under the supervision of an occupational therapist) must have 3 years of practice experience to provide this type of supervision (ACOTE, 2012).
9. All state licensure policies and regulations regarding student supervision will be followed, including the ability of the occupational therapy assistant to serve as fieldwork educator.
10. Student supervision and reimbursement policies and regulations set forth by third-party payers will be followed. Necessary standards specific to payers should be reviewed before Level II fieldwork experience to ensure appropriate practices.

It is the professional and ethical responsibility of occupational therapy practitioners to be knowledgeable of and adhere to applicable state and federal laws and payer rules and regulations related to fieldwork education.

## References

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## Additional Resource

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2016). *OT/OTA student supervision and Medicare requirements*. Retrieved from [https://www.aota.org/~media/Corporate/Files/Secure/Advocacy/Reimb/Coverage/ot-ota-student-medicare-requirements.pdf](https://www.aota.org/~/media/Corporate/Files/Secure/Advocacy/Reimb/Coverage/ot-ota-student-medicare-requirements.pdf)

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